

Project Completion Report

Name of the Organization: National Development Programme (NDP)

Name of Project: Right to Information for Good Governance (R2iG)



Project Duration: 1st January'2021 to 31 March'2022 (15 Months)

Contract Persons: Name: Nargis Parvin Mukti
Designation: Project Coordinator
Phone: 01749558949
Email: r2ig.ndporg@gmail.com

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Background:

National Development Programme (NDP) is a non government development organization working for the betterment of the poor and disadvantages people of Bangladesh. The goal of NDP is to improve livelihood and to establish rights of the poor people thus contribute towards achieving National Developmental Goals. Therefore the primary focus of the organization is reduce discrimination, establish human rights, reduce gender base violence-GBV, reduce violence against women and children-VAWC, reduce domestic violence, Gender & Rights and Empower of women, mainstreaming minority group and people with disability. NDP has been working for the people to established their rights and ensure due services from the state and duty bearer through create mass awareness of community people, increase capacity of the distressed people, linkage building with duty bearer, sensitize duty bearers etc.

The Right to Information Act 2009 was a ground breaking decision on the part of the Bangladesh government and paved the way for all citizens to get information from public authority as a right.

The rationale for the law is clearly stated in the preamble, “The right to information shall ensure that transparency and accountability in all public, autonomous and statutory organizations and in private organizations run on government or foreign funding shall increase, corruption shall decrease and good governance shall be established. It is expedient and necessary to make provisions for ensuring transparency and accountability.”

There are four preconditions to free flow of information and right to information (RTI): (1). information preservation, (2) enthusiastic information receivers and providers, (3) legal structure for RTI, and (4) administrative and operational ability for implementing RTI. In Bangladesh legal structure of RTI has been established through the introduction of Right to Information Act (RTIA) in 2009. RTIA was enacted in the parliament on March 29, 2009 and was published as a gazette on April 6, 2009 with the approval of the president. The objective of the law was “to ensure free flow of information and people's right to information”; however, much remains to be achieved in the other three areas.

The first annual report of Information Commission, in 2010, mentions some challenges. These include: increasing public awareness on RTI Act, applying digital system for preservation of information, managing information as per catalogues and indexes, creating a culture of self disclosure of information, appointing authorized officers and taking initiatives necessary for increasing their skills, creating a culture of giving information in the secrecy loving bureaucracy, incorporating the RTI Act in the mainstream and monitoring its implementation.

The Information Commission recommends that, to implement the RTI Act, the authorities should expedite fast appointment of authorized officers and provide them with the necessary logistics, fix fees for availing information, appeal filing and lodging complaints, reducing time for giving information, expanding the area and volume of suo moto disclosure, releasing information in websites by cataloguing or indexing them, engaging the NGO bureau as an authority to monitor steps taken by NGOs to comply with the RTI Act, taking steps to have video conference based hearing, voluntarily publishing information on public interest, preparing Citizen Charters for each of the organizations and publicizing them, accepting citizens applications online and providing information in the same way, regularly updating websites, giving full financial independence of the Information Commission, includes the private local and multinational companies in the RTI and finally vesting powers with the Commission so that when an authority refuses to implement

decisions or orders of the Commission arising out of a complaint, charges of contempt of court can be brought against it.

Despite formulation of the Right to Information Act-2009 to promote transparency and accountability in public sectors that strengthens rule of law and establishes good governance, its use is noticeably insignificant in Bangladesh. Its success relies on readiness of the authorities to disclose information and proper use of the information by the citizen. Unfortunately neither the people are aware about RTI and its effective use, nor are the authorities ready to provide the information considering it as their obligatory responsibility (Bari, 2016). While with the support of Access to Information-(A2i), the Union Information Centers (UICs) and government departments are making some information available but those information are not reaching to the most vulnerable (Hossain,2015). Designated Officers of RTI and UICs of Sirajganj district lack capacity to make information available and reach to most vulnerable. Despite effort of Information Commission the current awareness on RTI remains very low among citizens (RTI Implementation Plan-20).

In this context promoting accountability, transparency and strengthening democratic institutes through using RTI as an important tool that can be replicated in wider scale through sensitize government departments to practice proactive disclosure and provide information as per citizen's demand; creating awareness among citizen and key stakeholders about RTI and effective use of information in seeking their rights and entitlements; building capacity of the UICs to provide information citizen friendly and efficient technological means and enhancing skills of the Designated RTI Officers to meet the information demands of the citizens, especially the most disadvantaged section of the community NDP undertook a project name "Right to Information for Good Governance-R2iG" under SOUTH ASIA SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM-SASGP, Bangladesh provided by The Asia Foundation. The 15 months project was implemented by National Development Programme (NDP) successfully from January 01, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

Project Information

Project Name: Right to Information for Good Governance (R2IG)

Project Goal : To create a success story of promoting accountability, transparency and strengthening democratic institutes through using RTI as an important tool that can be replicated in wider scale.

Project Specific Objectives:

1. To sensitize government departments to practice proactive disclosure and provide information as per citizen's demand.
2. To create awareness among citizen and key stakeholders about RTI and effective use of information in seeking their rights and entitlements.
3. To build capacity of the UICs to provide information citizen friendly and efficient technological means.
4. To enhance skills of the Designated RTI Officers to meet the information demands of the citizens, especially the most disadvantaged section of the community.

Expected Project Outcomes:

1. The key stakeholders of the working area are actively participating to promote R2i;
2. Increased getting of rights and entitlements due to awareness about RTI and use of information by the most disadvantaged section of the community;
3. Enhanced RTI service delivery skills of UICs that created access to information of the disadvantaged section of the community;
4. Increased practicing of proactive disclosures of information by the government departments with more citizen friendly ways.

Expected Project Result:

- Increase public sector accountability and transparency;
- Strengthen the rule of law;
- Promote civil society participation and media in these efforts;

Direct and indirect project reach (target groups/number):

SL. No.	Target Group	Number	Remarks
1	UP representatives	56	
2	UIC entrepreneurs	4	
3	CSO staff	30	
4	Journalists	15	
5	RTI volunteers	80	
6	Government departments (district and Upazilla level)	60	
7	Government line department staff (Union level)	40	
8	Designated Officer of RTI	30	
9	Community People	45,000	
	Total	45,315	

Project Staff

SL	Designation	# of people	Remarks
01	Executive Director	01	
02	Director (Program)	01	
03	Project Coordinator	01	F
04	Project Officer	01	F
04	Accounts cum Admin Officer	01	
06	Community Mobilizer	04	2M. 2 F
07	Support Staff	01	

Working area:

District: Sirajgonj

Upazial : Sirajgonj Sador

Union:

1. Kaliahoripur
2. Shialkol
3. Saidabad
4. Khoksabari Union



At a glance project progress:

SL	Name of activities	Event		Remarks
		Target	Achievement	
01	Participatory assessment of capacity gaps of UICs in providing information to grass-roots level	8	08	Two time done this work
02	Project inception & sensitization meeting at District and Upazilla level	2	02	DC Office and Union Office
03	Organize sensitization meeting with Union Parishad	4	04	
04	Formation of district level RTI Coordination Committee with the leadership of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and District Information Officer as Member Secretary	1	01	
05	Linkage building meeting with Information Commission (IC) and Access to Information (A2i)	8		Cancel this activity.
06	Advocacy workshop/ meeting with government departments and others stakeholders	3	03	
07	Organize quarterly coordination meeting with all stakeholders	4	04	
08	Provide 3 days residential training to journalists, CSOs, etc. on RTI	1	01	

09	Provide 2 days residential refreshers training to journalists, etc. on RTI	1	01	
10	Development of community level RTI volunteers 3 days training and mentoring support	4	04	
11	Provide 2 days refreshers training to RTI volunteers	4	04	
12	Provide 3 days training to staff / entrepreneurs of UICs & CSOs, on information collection, management and RTI and support to UIC	4	04	
15	Provide 2 days refreshers training to staff / entrepreneurs of UICs on information collection, management and RTI and support to UIC	4	04	
16	Provide 2 days training to UP Chairman, Secretaries and other staff of government line departments attached to the Union Parishad	4	4	
17	Provide 1 day refreshers training to UP Chairman, Secretaries and other staff of government line departments attached to the Union Parishad	4	04	
18	Provide 3 days training to designated officers of RTI of various institutions on their roles & responsibilities, information management, voluntary disclosure, etc, issues	1	01	
19	Provide 2 days training to designated officers of RTI of various institutions on their roles & responsibilities, information management, voluntary disclosure, etc, issues	1	0	Not held this activities
20	Review and update of list designated officials of RTI of the government and other departments in the working area	01	01	
21	Development and distribution of posters and leaflets on RTI / Setup Bill Board	65000 / 05	05	Setup 05 Bill Board
22	Conduct mass media campaign folk song/drama at community level	100	100	
23	Project Monthly Reporting	15	15	
14	Project Quarterly reporting	5	05	
15	Monthly Staff Coordination Meeting	15	15	05 M, 04 F

Narrative description of activities:

1. Inception and sensitization meetings with District and Upazila levels:

The Asia Foundation supported and NDP implemented Right to Information for Good Governance Project started January 2021 at Sador Upazila`s under Sirajganj District. Total 40 (M-26, F-14) attend the session.

The project adopts a partnership model coordinating a variety of government and non-government actors operating at different layers of society to achieve better and for the improvement of the living conditions of vulnerable people in the 4 Union`s Sirajganj Right to Information for Good Governance Project area. Our inception workshop aim is project concept, implementing process-procedure, techniques, mechanism and objectives disseminate to participants through project inception workshop. Sirajganj DC office and UNO office are all over outstanding role play and nice cooperation through administrative & facility support. Participants were participated in workshop attentively and spontaneously. People are not aware about their right information.



2. Sensitization meetings with Union parishad :

Md. Rasidul Hasan, Chairman, Khoksabari Union given the inaugurate speech. All member of Union parishad presented there. Local community leader, teacher religious leader. 04 no meeting held on the 4 union and total participants attend 70 (M-54, F-16) . Participant`s knowledge about Right to Information is very low. If we proclaim the RTI to the community people by many activities it will be more effective outcome of the project. Local Government hides legal information from the people for fear of corruption and mismanagement. Lack of supervision of local Government`s activities by the people.

3. District level RTI coordination committee meeting:



In order to activation the RTI district committee organize a meeting at district level. Total 30 (20 M, 10 F) participants attends this meeting in different level stakeholders. ADC (General) attend this meetings. He said all participants taken a responsibility to increase awareness to the community level participants to the RTI . He also said every department have field level different group and all participants attend those meeting and sharing RTI.

3 days training to journalists, CSOs, etc. on RTI and 2 days refresher training to Journalist on RTI and Investigation Journalism:



R2IG project organize 3 days training and 2 days fresher training to the journalist on RTI and Investigation Journalism. Total 31 no journalists of Sirajgonj district attend the training. One day training session facilitate the Department Head of

Journalism Department at Rajshahi University. Participants are known about how to investigation when we prepared a report. What is our role in this regards. Most of the participants sharing their opinion what barrier face to collect the data or information. Govt. Officials are not

providing accurate data to us so we cannot prepared a meaningful report. On the other hand they are sharing there in no law against the investigation journalism. So need advocacy to prepare a law for journalist for reporting. Total participants attend 31 (27 M, 04 F.) this training

4. 3 days training on RTI to the volunteers and 2 days refreshers training to RTI volunteers group:



R2ig project organize 3 days training on RTI and 2 days refresher training on RTI to the volunteers group. Total 80 (M-50, F-30) no volunteers attend the raining and orientation. They are known about their role and responsibilities to provide support to found community people in any information and support for govt. to use RTI'2009. They are providing support to 25 no persons about to application to found social safety net activities, skill development training, education support form govt. official and also birth registration.

5. Provide 2 days training and 1 day's refresher training to UP Chairman, Secretaries and other staff of government line departments attached to the Union Parishad:

We organize 2 days training 01 days refreshers training to the UP chairman, Secretary and other Govt staff und R2IG project into the 04 union. Total 94 (77 M, 17 F) persons attend this training. Chairman , Secretary and others staff known about their role and responsibilities about RTI act'2009 . They discussed about this training always they are taken initiative to provide support to those people who are entitled to found support and they also checking accordingly so that anybody who not entitled this support to found support. Govt Officials are sharing their opinions they provide different Govt information as per their department wise. Most of the govt department who are sitting UP level



6. Gap analysis to the UDCs :



We conduct participatory assessment of capacity gap to provide information to grass-roots level so that create better understanding of the requirement and present situation of UDC service delivery. After participatory gap analysis UDC prepared a plan and follow the plan accordingly perform work to minimize the gap. They input their all information about their online portal and formation where

people need and also preserve /documented it accordingly Total session held on 2 times in the 04 UP ant total participants attend 64(M-44, F-20) those sessions

7. Capacity building 3 days training and 1 days refresher training of UDC Entrepreneurs and others Govt. Staff for data management and their role and responsibility :

R2ig project organize 3 days training and 01 days refresher training of UDC Entrepreneurs and others Govt. staff for how to provide information, data management and their role and responsibility. 16 no participants attend this training. In this training they prepared an action plan. After this training they back to their working area and follow the action plan and done their responsibility. They provide information when people are came to know and provide support so that they can found any information accordingly. UICs to collect information and provide information to grass-root people in citizen-friendly way as a business-model. Total 14 (M-11, F-03) attend the training .



8. 3 days training on RTI and Good Governance for CSO and 01 day refresher training on CSO:

R2ig project organize 3 days training and 01 day refresher training on RTI and Good Governance for CSO: 14 no CSO representative identifying their roles and responsibilities to providing information to the community people and how to building awareness to RTI and rights. They are preparing an action plan in the training. After the training they are going to their office and working area and perform awareness building on community people and capacity building on rganization staff. Total 16 (M-06, F-03) participants attend the training .



9. 2 days training to designated officers of RTI of various institutions on their roles & responsibilities, information management, voluntary disclosure:



We organize 2 days training to designated officer in the sirajgonj district. Total 29 (M-25, F-04) person attend the training. ADC – General of Sirajgonj provide order to nominated one person of very department in the information providing officer and hung their name designation with mobile no in the out sider of room . He said also finalized the information officer every department send their information into the DC office email in a week. In this training designated officers are preparing an action plan to give input in their

department information in web portal.

10. Showing mass media campaign folk song/drama at community level:

In order to building awareness of community people on RTI that will increase Access to Information-A2i during the project . R2ig project organize and perform theatre (Gamvira) in different area of our selected Union and Upazila . Total 100 theatre and total 50,0000 participants seen the theatre . Participants provide opinion to seen the theatre we found different information in our rights, how to found different information in different Govt. Officials and how to fill-up application to found information.



11. Mass awareness on RTI:

In order to community increasing Information-project. R2ig R2IG project 5Bill Board in working area. 01 I set up to was our the people are seen the Bill different RTI Act'2009.



building awareness of people on RTI that Access to A2i during the project. In this regard prepared and setup different place of We setup 4 Union and in front DC Office. It assumption most of going in the place and Board and found information about

12. Monthly Staff Coordination Meeting :



In the project period we organize 15 no monthly staff meeting. In this meeting we discussed about our progress, challenge, lesson prepared a next monthly action plan and preform those activities

Major achievement of the project:

- **The key stakeholders of the working area are actively participating to promote Right to Information Act'2009**

R2IG project organize different sensitization meeting, project inception session, Advocacy meeting, seminar, workshop, training and also gap analysis session to promote Right to Information Act'2009. District level high authority and others Govt. Official participate in all activities of the R2ig project in order to promote right to information act'2009 and give order to different sector to providing actual information to the community people and others participant so that they can claim their rights and entitlement. Also increase role and responsibility to their own position.

- **Increase responsibility, accountability to Govt. Officials provide support and information for the community people to receiving their rights**

We organized different workshop, training, meeting about their roles responsibility against Right to Information Act'2009. Most of the department play a good role to providing information, support to provide skill development training and financial benefits. We thinks Govt. Officials increase their accountability and responsibility.

- **Increased getting of rights and entitlements of the community:**

After receiving different training most of the department cooperate to the community people so that they can found and receive different support under social safety net. Minimum 30 no community people and child receive widow allowance , disable allowance, Old aged allowance, house to abason project and also education allowance . Local Elected Body of the Union Parisha taken action to verify the application before finalized the nominated participants. Not only Govt. or service provider increases their roles and responsibility but also community people are aware the different roles, act, and their rights and they are willing to go to different place for receiving their rights and entitlements.

- **UDCs to provide information citizen friendly environment and provide support to the community people**

UDC entrepreneurs and others Govt, staff who are sitting in Union Parishad they are provide different information in the community people as per their demand. UDC entrepreneurs create a citizen friendly environment so that all type of community people came to know about their different information and also birth registration, different online application, online money received from their relatives. Community people can not going to others place to receive any information or service. They can easily found different information support to UDC. UDC entrepreneurs are uploading all information the Union Parishad in their UP web portal so that anybody easily found all information to the web portal.

Challenges face to implement the activities:

- It was very short time for complete the 3rd quarters all activities after long time of lockdown Covid-19.
- For election the members of Union parishad were busy so it was very difficult to attend two days long training for the participants of Union parishad.
- Most of the participants are not so much interested to encouraged about RTI act
- To attend the meeting / training of government department stakeholder need the permission from Upazila/ District level.
- Most of the project area was under water drown of Jamuna river so communication barrier is one of challenge for doing actives.
- Lack of selected responsible person of provides information to the community.
- Govt staff does not want to provide any information from government agencies in timely manner. Just throw tomorrow.
- Govt . Official are not nominated designated information Officer in their department.
- The mentality of hiding information of government officials.
- Do not provide sufficient time of Govt Official in any program or providing information. They see very busy.
- Participants are not interested to provide information willingly
- Taken permission from Govt. Department to attend any training and meeting for Govt staff.
- Govt staff does not want to provide any information from government agencies. Just throw tomorrow.
- Information of Information Officer hanging in the department wall. They said NGO prepared it and hanging it accordingly.
- Volunteers are unemployed. They want to help the people but they lack money.
- Not found any guideline to performing activities.
- Participants do not want to come to the training because of their travel bill is low.
- **One day refreshers training to designated officers of RTI of various institutions on their roles & responsibilities, information management:** This work could not be done on time due to the fact that Covid'19 was present for most of the year and could not keep pace with the government officials. Again, this work was done last month, so there was no short-term refreshment.

Description of the ways of overcame the challenges:

- Deputy Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner (G), provide sufficient support to implementation the activities.
- Union Chairman provide support to implantation the project activities that is training, gap analysis, and bill board setup.
- By the support of secretary of district level RTI committee.
- By the support of Upazila level district government officer
- By explain the attachment of citizen rights and information right to the stakeholders and community.
- We delivered messages on COVID-19 safety protocols from time to time to aware people who attended the campaign/meeting/training and ensured the social distancing using mask, hand sanitizer
- Motivated the youth volunteers properly, they will be the strong supporter of community to building awareness and claiming of their rights.
- Regular motivation to the project stakeholder to organized their plan wise activities which were then taken in the training session.

Lessons Learnt:

- District commissioner of Sirajgonj was very cooperative who provide administrative & facility support during the implementation of activity.
- The administrations of Union Parishad are interested to develop their information system.
- Community people lack knowledge on activities of local govt. at their region.
- Lack of knowledge about Right to Information Act-2009 for this people is not aware about their right information.
- If we motivated the youth volunteers properly, they will be the strong supporter of community to proclaim the awareness of RTI.
- If we motivated the youth volunteers properly, they will be the strong supporter of community to building awareness and claiming of their rights.
- Regular motivation to the project stakeholder to organized their plan wise activities which were then taken in the training session.
- CSO members are organize different event in their office and field level and discussed RTI law'2009.
- If we motivated the youth volunteers properly, they will be the strong supporter of community to building awareness and claiming of their rights.

Case story

1. Youth Group enroll their responsibilities



The Youth volunteer group of Dukhiabari Saidabad Union is very active and sincere about their responsibilities. They all are ongoing students and interested to working the social act. They received 3 days long training about Right to Information from NDP R2iG project. There they made a work plan how they would help about information service to the communities.

After return from training they did the following act;

- For awareness disseminate they made a cultural group and perform drama, song, folk song about RTI. They helped 6 people t
- The volunteers doing meetings with family, friends and the public are working to raise awareness about the right to information
- They help the extreme community for Corona vaccine registration, collecting Disability, elderly allowance, birth registration card etc
- They applied by using “K” form of RTI act-2009 For collecting information to Upazila, Social service office, Union parishad, upazila hospital.
- They are receiving different level skill development training at Youth Development department

2. Civil Society Repetitive (CSO) play a good role to found service in the Community people

Civil Society Organizations (CSO) are various NGOs of Sirajganj who work for the social and economic development of the common man. They themselves receive financial support from various organizations and provide skill development training to the community people besides doing small business.

They do some awareness work on the rights of ordinary people, but their views on the Right to Information Act 2009 were not very clear. Little was known about what was in this law, what to do. NDP is implementing R2IG project in Sadar upazila of Sirajganj district with the support of Asia Foundation. As part of this work, representatives of civil society organizations were trained on the 03-day Right to Information Act 2009 and our responsibilities in implementing this Act.

In this training, they create a work plan that they will discuss with the staff and participants their working area about the Rights Act 2009 so that they get their fair pay based on the rights law.

Representatives of civil society organizations are alerting the general public to their rights, where to get services, how to get services, etc.

Here is what happened after their discussion:

- The general public has come to know all the services that they will get under their social security
- What to do for all the services that will be available under the Union Council.
- What services can be obtained from government offices, type of training, and what to do to get all this information and services.

- With their help, 05 participants received assistance under the social security net.
- They have orientated their office staff on human rights, rights, good governance and the Right to Information Act.
- At various times they have been advocating for the rights of the general public and access to information with government office information providers and local government representatives.

The CSO members said that they have learned a lot from this training and the opportunity has been created to help the general public. They also say that the benefits of cooperating with money outweigh the benefits of cooperating with information and that people can be known as a collaborative person and that is why one person account is what everyone wants.

3. Saidabad Union Parishad

Saidabad is a union under Sirajganj Sadar Upazila of Sirajganj District with a total area of 30.317 square kilometers. Its very beautiful for Januna total population of the among them 20,311 are 18,439 are female. Gap Union parishad was R2iG project and was its development. They parishad's website and setup a digital They provide all services need. Though there have standing committee of



natural view is River. The union is 38,750 male and analysis of the done from made a plan for update Union information signboard. to the People as thirteen number Union parishad

but the committee list were not update. By the project gap analysis meeting they update the all committee list and provide the committee information in the website. People receive service with pleased and friendly relation.

4. The curse of the unemployed life-Awal on the way to Freedom



Awal Hassan is 45 years old. Even after passing BA, the golden nose deer did not join his forehead. He doesn't know what to do or where to go. No girl wants to marry an unemployed boy. Again, Mao harassed him in many ways. But what will Awal do? He closed his mouth and endured everything.

Later, Awal started working in the field with his father. In addition to their 33 acres of land, they cultivate other people's land with mortgage. Later, Awal started working in the field with his father. But their crops do not grow

well on that land because they cannot use advanced technology or have little idea about technology. One day at a stakeholder meeting of the R2 IG project, he can learn about all kinds of services, and

the union-based agriculture officers, who are there, give various advices on crops. He later contacted the Agriculture Officer of Shialkole Union and sought advice on improved crop technology. Awal received a one day training from there and in the same month he bought 17 varieties of mustard seeds from there.

He has got much higher yield than last time by taking fertilizer seeds and care in the mustard field on the advice of the agriculture officer. He thanked the NDP RTUIG project for its success. He said that if he had not known about this at that time, he would not have been able to enjoy the benefits today.

He says that from today onwards he will inform other farmers for advice.

5. Raju's leadership: Raju is from Punorbason village under Saidabad Union. His father is a day laborer. He completed his study through hard struggle and taking preparation for BCS. He received 3 days long training about Right to Information from NDP R2iG project. He is a very sincere, encouraged, skilled and active young. He wanted to do



something better for his society because the people of Punorbason are very undeveloped, needy and uneducated. They are not able to achieve their rights as a citizen. After receiving the training Raju find out some gap of Punorbason village by analysis system and made a develop plan. Then he joined a Union Parishad's meeting and highlighted his village's scenario to the chairman for develop and creates a list of people who are eligible for various allowances. Raju helped 21 people for apply the allowances card. After final processing these people will get the allowances and benefited to self.

6. Ratna Rani receiving sewing training course



Rotna Rani 38 years lives in Shampur under Sialkol Union with his husband and three children. Her husband catches fish from canal and two daughter read in primary school. Somehow days were passing in poverty; she wanted to do some help for her family. Then Rotna got message from R2iG project staff about the Youth Develop Training center and apply for sewing training. Now Ratna is receiving sewing training course for three months. There she gets 100/- taka daily for convinces but she spends a little and the rest of money is deposited. After complete the course she will buy a sewing machine with the deposit money and earn money for her family.

7. The direction of light over darkness



Salma Khatun is 39 years old but has been physically disabled since birth. However, her disability did not stop her. She has been mentally preparing to manage her own life since childhood. Salma's father Md. Abdur Razzak, mother, Anwara Begum, village Saidabad. Her father is a poor farmer. By eating day after day, their family of 04 people was running in any way. Salma used to cooperate with her father in all matters. When Salama's father realizes that his daughter has a problem with her right hand, he is scared and desperate to marry her. When Salma was not yet 18 years old, her

father married her to a boy from a nearby village, but that boy was also disabled. She lives with her husband Anwar in her father-in-law's house. Salma's husband is a day laborer and she keeps chickens at home and sometimes spends her days working in other people's houses.

In this way 2 daughters come to their house. It is very difficult to manage a family of 4 people. Salma talks to Al Mamun, a volunteer from Saidabad village, and asks her to be a member of the women's group. From there, Salma learns about the Right to Information Act, and with Mamun's help, she goes to the District Social Service office for a disability card.

The district social service officer did not want to hear from them at first. But when Mamun says that every citizen has the right to information and services under the Right to Information Act, the social services officer listens to them because he understands that they know about it.

The district social service officer then sent a doctor to Salma and when the doctor informed him of her physical disability, the social service officer arranged for a card based on his application.

Salma currently has a disabled card and has been managing the household for the past two months. Salma said no one evaluates without knowing the information and does not want to pay fair dues.

8. The sad day is over for Shilpi



One cannot understand how helpless a person can be without seeing it with our own eyes. After that if she is a disabled person. Yes, that's right, her story. Name Shilpi Khatun, father Md. Abdul Quddus, mother Shanowara Begum, village Khalishakura, Khoksabari, Sirajganj Sadar Sirajganj. Shilpi was born in 1989. She is a physically disable person. She is neglected by her parents and other family members. But what is her fault in this. Allah is almighty and god gave birth to shilpi in this way. But we don't want to understand her pain.

The Shilpi's father is a van driver. Daily he earns 200-250 taka. Mother used to work in someone else's house and manage the family of 08 people including 6 sons and daughters. She is 04 out of 6. Unlike other siblings, she was not given much care and food.

Shilpi's parents knowing her condition, give marries her in the nearest village of their house. She cannot perform any work in her in-laws house. Her in-laws divorced her and sent her to her father's house, saying that she could not work but could eat because of her physical disability. The level of

torture began again. In this way, she has to struggle with life all the time. No one in the area thinks or sees such a helpless person. Suddenly one day the Shilpi's sees where the people are going. She finds out and seen that NDP has started work on RTI project for good governance in their area and there is a variety of information provided support to getting help. Then she comes there and tells her life story. One of the staff of the project discussed about this matter in a female member and chairman in this union.

The chairman then asked Shilpi to make an application for disability allowance. Shilpi applied for the project on 20/04/2021 with the help of R2iG project staff. Fate is her benefit. Last July'21, the application for disability allowance came to the notice of all and they decided to give her the allowance. In this connection shilpi has been receiving disability allowance of tk. 300 per month from the union by last two month. Now the value of her has increased among the family members.

Shilpi said I had to suffer a lot because I didn't know the information. So she thinks that everyone needs to know the information.



Sahera moved into a new house two months before she was selected to get a house 4 months ago. Sahera is very happy now and prays for NDP.

9. Finally the house belongs to Sahera Beagum

Sahera is a hard worker in the work in a garment factory in drive a rickshaw. In this way continued. Sahera live in the District. The father of laborer. Sahera No. 2 among and write up to 5th grade. In a her in a nearby village. The husband is not very good.

Later she moved to Dhaka in a garment factory herself.

Working day and night, she husband. Her husband then drives a rickshaw in Dhaka city. Two children come to their house. Their struggle continues.

Sahera Khatun fell ill due to hard work for day and night and she cannot perform her garments job regularly. Once a time she stopped her job due to sick. At that time it was not possible for her husband to manage the family with one income. The husband sent her to the village home with the child. There is no place in Sahera's father-in-law's house. Then she moved to her father's house. There is nothing left to do. Later, Sahera's father saw her in this condition and gave her a small grocery shop. Sahera started business there. Now she is so ill that she has to need 1000-1500 tk per month for medicine. But she has no capacity to maintain this expenditure. She uses a room for living in her bother. Wife of brother constantly tells him to leave the house.

Sahera do not found any direction of where to go and what to do. Later people may find out that there is a discussion about knowing and getting various information through NDP's R2iG project. Later Sahera also goes there and can learn a lot. One day a volunteer found out that some people



garments sector. She used to Dhaka and her husband used to their family of 4 members Khoksabari Union Sirajganj Shahera, Saheb Ali was a siblings. She was able to read needy family, her father married condition of the house of her

with her husband and took a job The straggle of her life began. bought a rickshaw for her

Two children come to their house.

would be given houses in the union. Sahera then went to Khoksabari Union with the help of a volunteer and applied for a house. Later, she also talked to UNO sir in the upazila. Sahera moved into a new house two months before she was selected to get a house 4 months ago. Sahera is very happy now and prays for NDP.

10. Jaheda apply for widow allowance



Jaheda Khatun 47 years old is a widow lives in Paikpara under Kalahoripur Union with his two children. They have no any property except 33 percent land. She runs her family with great difficulty. In the midst of such hardships, she has educated his sons and daughters. Jaheda have no idea about Widow Allowance. Her son Jahidul received RTI training from R2ig project of NDP. There he gets message about the service of Union

Parishad. He also learned how to apply for collect any information from any institute. After return the training he discussed with her mother about widow allowance and then he went with his mother to Kaliahoripur Union Parishad for getting the allowance. Talking with Chairman and Secretary of Union he applied widow alliance for his mother. Union Parishad ensured Jaheda Begom the allowance because she has all qualifies of selecting member.

11. Sukur Ali very happy to apply for elderly allowance card



Sukur Ali 70 years old is a helpless man of Jogotgati village under Sialkol Union. He has three sons and one daughter, but they are also helpless for caring him. One day Sukir Ali's wife Amena attends to the R2iG project's yard meeting. There she got the information of elderly allowance from Union Parishad. Amena delivered the message to Sukur Ali and Apply for elderly allowance card. Union Parishad ensured Jaheda Begom the allowance because he has all qualifies of selecting member.

Recommendation:

- Need to implementation long term project.
- Perform advocacy activities with Govt Officials so that they can take necessary steps centrally by the Government of Bangladesh and to monitor the implementation of that policy. So that the information of all office citizen charters and information providers chat is hung on the out sider of room wall.
- After closing the project organization need to provide support to volunteer so that the poor people will be able to get their information services and realize their rights.
- In this project about understanding their importance as stakeholder.
- Provide support the secretary of district level RTI committee so that UP committee will functioning accordingly.
- Perform advocacy work to the organization with District level RTI coordination team so that they can provide sufficient equipment to UP level UDC for their better functioning .

Conclusion:

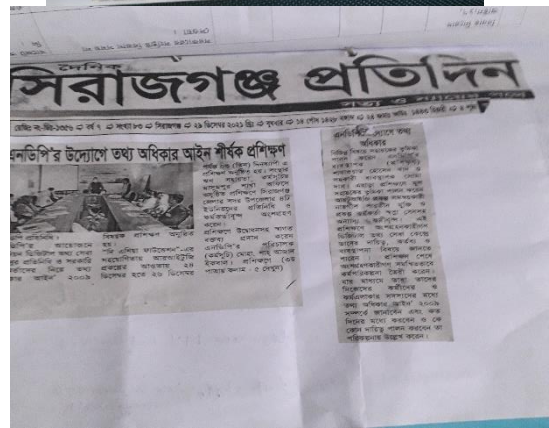
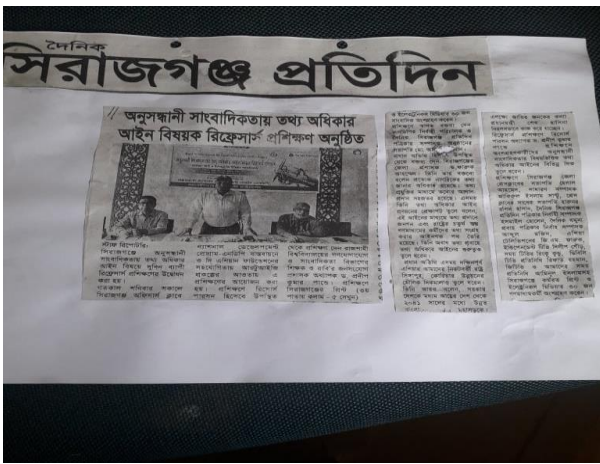
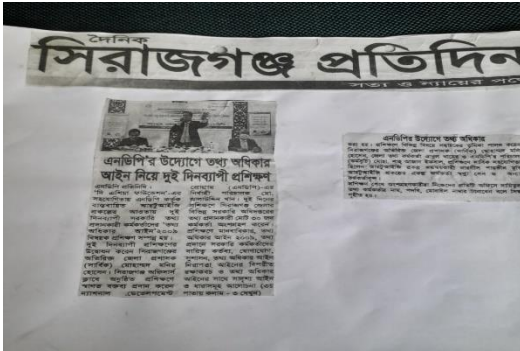
National Development Programme (NDP) piloted the project “Right to Information for Good Governance-R2iG’ in 4 Union of Sirajganj district. Through the implementation of the project we have achieved a lot e.g respective Govt. official now are responsible to provide information to the information seekers; increased accountability, responsibility and participation to the Govt. Official, Local Govt. representative and NGO persons concerned right to information; Union Digital Center Entrepreneurs are now more capable to perform their responsibility accordingly; increased active participation of CSO and Media persons; the stakeholders were playing active role to building awareness of community people about RTI Act’2009; increased receiving of rights and entitlements due to building awareness about used RTI information for disadvantage community people and increase community friendly environment to the Union Digital Center.

To achieve all these kinds of achievements we had to face a big challenge of COVID/19 breakthrough. Almost entire the whole project period COVID challenge was existed that hampered our in person’s activities severely that impacted project achievement a lot. Other few challenges what we have faced those are; very short time duration in terms of project concept; Union Parishad election keep away the UP members from project activities; people’s less interest about RTI as it is comparatively new concept and common people could not understand about it impact of their life; less interests shown by the government officials etc. We have overcome the challenges through virtual & mobile communication and also maintain communication through maintaining COVID protocol strictly. Respected Deputy Commissioner of Sirajganj was very much favorable as RTI was the government’s agenda so the willingness of the DC, Sirajganj helped the project activities one step ahead as a result we have finally achieved a tremendous success from the project.

Finally we would like to say that RTI is a government agenda, GoB is trying to implement the act, through the project we observed government officials also wanted to implement but due to some reasons like lack of people awareness on RTI, corruptions in government offices, absence of accountability and transparency in government offices, less capability of UDIC’s the right to information act 2009 could not fully be implemented. Therefore it requires vast level awareness of different levels stakeholders and ice break of common people that can be possible by implementing medium term project in wider spaces.

Annexure

Paper Cutting:



Report Prepared by

Nargis Parvin Mukti
Project Coordinator
R2iG Project
NDP