

Thematic Strategy Paper

Security and Rights of Women and Girls (SRWG)

**Prepared by
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List of Acronyms

COPE	Creating Opportunities for the Poor and Excluded People
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DFID	Department for International Development
EPR	Excluded People's Rights in Bangladesh
FYP	Five Year Plan
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IGA	Income Generating Activities
LF	Logical Framework
MJF	Manusher Jonno Foundation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
NLASO	National Legal Aid Services Organisation
PCR	Project Completion Report
PNGOs	Partner Non Government Organisation
RTI	Right to Information
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRWG	Security and Rights of Women and Girls
ToC	Theory of Change
UKAid	A British Initiative for International Development Assistance
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

1. Introduction

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) is a national Non-Government Organisation (NGO) that promotes human rights and good governance through funding, policy advocacy and capacity building of NGOs and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). MJF assists in supporting entitlements of people by building their capacity to demand basic services and raise voice against rights violation through support to local /national CSO's and people's movements. MJF also works on the supply side to promote organisations responsiveness towards the demands of people, especially the poor and marginalized. MJF's work includes policy advocacy which has facilitated enactment of some of the most progressive and pro-poor laws and policies in the past 16 years. MJF is known for testing innovative approaches and willingness to take risks.

MJF has gained credibility over the years as an organisation with high standards of financial and programme accountability along with an effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system capable of reporting on achievements, results and lesson learned. MJF is governed by a nine-member Governing Board comprised of eminent personalities from civil society.

MJF received grant from Department for International Development (DFID) in 2002 as a project of CARE Bangladesh to implement HUGO (Human Rights and Governance) Project. MJF later started its journey as an independent organisation, obtaining registration from NGO Affairs Bureau and Joint Stock Company. Since then MJF received international development grants from the British Initiative for International Development Assistance (UKAid) in two more phases. In 2013, MJF received over 26 million GBP for the Creating Opportunities for the Poor and Excluded People (COPE) Project which was completed in June 2017. In October 2017, UKAid awarded a five-year Project titled '**Excluded People's Rights in Bangladesh' (EPR)** to MJF.

MJF Vision:

A world free from poverty, exploitation and discrimination where people live in dignity and human security.

MJF Mission:

Promotion of human rights and governance through partnership with different stakeholders including duty bearers to ensure dignity and well-being of all people, especially the marginalized.

MJF will support CSO's to work on the following programme areas.

- a. Tackling Marginalization & Discrimination (including rights of ethnic people theme)
- b. Security and Rights of Women and Girls
- c. Decent & Safe Work (Protection of Workers and Working Children)
- d. Youth & Social Cohesion
- e. Strengthening Public Institutions

This thematic paper builds on the strengths and experiences MJF work over the last 15 years. The paper premised lessons learned, contextual realities, EPR Business Case, priorities of 7th Five Year Plan (FYP) of Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a series of consultations with all level of MJF staffs, stakeholders, experts and academics. The paper largely clarifies specific problems associated with this thematic issue, programme brief, implementation approaches, coverage, lesson learned, intended key results, Theory of Change (ToC) and monitoring mechanism for the next 5 years.

2. Security and Rights of Women and Girls

The Security and Rights of Women and Girls (SRWG) theme of the Excluded People's Rights programme aims to create an environment for women where they can take decisions, access public services and participate in political, social and economic activities equally without fear of violence and threats.

Definition: MJF defines SRWG as their right to be safe and protected from all forms of violence, within family, communities and workplaces. The programme. SRWG will work towards the political, social and economic empowerment of women through strengthening their capacity, tackling inequality, discrimination and marginalisation, improving working conditions, changing policies and laws that discriminate against women, influence negative norms, behaviour and practices towards women at home and outdoors, ensure justice in case of violation and make government more responsive to the problems and challenges faced by women and girls.

Economic development and influencing society towards positive social norms and beliefs helps gradually reduce gender inequality over time. This has been taking place in Bangladesh, as evident from national surveys that show changes in social attitudes and behaviours as well as increasing participation of women in education and employment. However, economic development is often not enough on its own to bring about gender equality and reduce gender based violence. Multiple and holistic interventions and approaches are required to reduce inequality, gender based violence and empower women. There are also indications of rising tensions within society that has accompanied the growing economic and social empowerment of women. This needs to be tackled through interventions targeted at increasing social awareness and changing social norms about the status, position and role of women in society.

3. What Causes Gender Inequality and Gender Based Violence?

Gender inequality is caused by a combination of economic underdevelopment and socio cultural factors such as social norms, beliefs and regressive traditions¹. That economic underdevelopment contributes to gender inequality which can be ascertained from the fact that women in developing countries fare worse relative to men compared to women in developed countries on a variety of measures. Disparities in health, education, and bargaining power within marriage tend to be larger in poorer countries. Furthermore, gender inequality is usually also greater among the poor within countries. Attitudes toward gender-based violence also vary systematically with economic development. All of this is true in the case of Bangladesh and this is evident from a range of survey data. Economic development can reduce inequality by reducing the difficult choices that the poor families face, which are often resolved at the expense of women's wellbeing. Evidence suggests that discrimination against women increases during periods of crises. Thus increasing the ability of poor households to weather crises can disproportionately help women².

Negative cultural beliefs and practices play an important role in perpetuating gender inequality and gender based violence. Examples include the practice of dowry, patriarchal beliefs about the superiority of men and concepts of female "purity" which society needs to protect. Many of these cultural beliefs and practices are institutionalised in social structures and legal systems, which gives legitimacy to gender inequality. Poverty intensifies the cultural forces that lead to male preference. Gender-based violence can be caused by an ideology ingrained in society which promotes male dominance and superior status over females. Patriarchy and institutionalization of male dominance is legitimized by cultures and is the key to structural violence. It promotes women's inferior subordinate and subservient status.

¹ Seema Jayachandran, 2015, Roots of Gender Inequality in Developing Countries, Annual Review of Economics

² Esther Duflo, 2012, Women Empowerment and Economic Development, Journal of Economic Literature

Women's empowerment is defined as improving the ability of women to take independent decision and access various services such as health, education, earning opportunities, enjoy fundamental rights, and political participation. The relationship between economic development and women's empowerment run in two directions. Development alone can play a major role in driving down inequality between men and women. However, continuing discrimination against women can hinder development whereas empowerment can accelerate development. Poverty and lack of opportunity creates inequality between men and women, so that when economic development reduces poverty, the condition of women improves. Economic development, however, is not enough to bring about complete equality between men and women. Policy action is still necessary to achieve gender equality.

Lack of information also creates barriers towards security and rights of women and girls. Accessibility and availability of information are prerequisites for women and girls as violence survivors to access justice and other services. The Right to Information (RTI) Act can be used by women and girls to ensure that they get the information they need in order to access justice and prevent further violence.

Rates of partner violence against married women has been reported highest in the rural areas i.e. 74.8 percent and lowest in the city corporation i.e. 54.4 percent.³ The overriding cause of domestic violence is the dominant role of male family members and the lower status of women in the family where men believe they have the right to beat and humiliate women.

4. Situation in Bangladesh

Women in Bangladesh face barriers and disadvantages in nearly every aspect of their lives. They are commonly not allowed to make independent decisions on most important aspects of their lives such as their lives such as health, education, employment or when and who to get married or have children. Traditional attitudes of the society often prevents them from going to the market or take up jobs. They face systematic discrimination, which begins at home in their childhood and continue throughout their lives whether at the workplace, in the community or in public institutions. Women in Bangladesh are often considered a financial burden by their families and most are married off as children. In 2014, three in four women aged 20-49 were found to have married before they turned 18 and around one in three girls aged 15-19 had given birth or were pregnant⁴. Not surprisingly, Bangladesh has the second highest rate of child marriage in the world. Girls who marry early are more likely to be abused by their husbands, report less reproductive control and have early and high-risk pregnancies resulting in higher health complications and maternal mortality. There is strong evidence that child marriage causes girls to drop out of school, which results in lower educational attainment⁵.

Women in Bangladesh are vulnerable to a range of violent acts, which includes domestic violence, early/forced marriage, trafficking and forced prostitution, child sexual abuse, rape, acid attack, threats of dowry-demand, threats of violence, etc. The feeling of insecurity, violence and the threat of violence greatly influences a woman's ability to participate in public life, to seek employment, to enjoy a rewarding work life, and inherit of property. Even where women have equal rights to participate, discrimination, threats of violence and sexual harassment at home and outside, often stops them from effective participation, restrict their mobility, freedom, and deprive them from exerting their fundamental human rights. Violence against women is widespread in Bangladesh: A 2015 national survey found that 50% of married women were physically abused and 27% were sexually abused by their husbands at least once

³ Survey Report on VAW, BBS, 2015

⁴ Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2014, Ministry of Health Family Welfare Bangladesh

⁵ Field, Erica, and Attila Ambrus, 2008, Early marriage, age of menarche, and female schooling attainment in Bangladesh, *Journal of Political Economy* 116(5): 881-930

in their lifetime. Overall, 73% of women suffered from at least one form of physical, sexual, emotional or economic violence caused by their husband⁶.

Despite the legal provisions and commitments to national and international human rights treaties and conventions, the rights of women and girls in Bangladesh are grossly undermined. The issue of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) especially domestic violence was long considered a private matter for families to deal with. Bangladeshi rural communities are often strongly patriarchal. Women in these communities, particularly those suffering from domestic violence, find it difficult to make crimes public. If they go to a local leader or court, they are often seen as bringing shame on their family. If they do bring a case, the legal system can work against them. The traditional manner of resolving disputes, through a committee of respected elites (or, *shalish*), is often male-dominated and oppressive for women. In the traditional *shalish*, women are often unable to attend their own hearings in the traditional *shalish*, and are treated with disrespect if they do go. However for the last 10 years through Access to Justice and VAW programme, MJF is supporting lawful *shalish* which are in line with Human Rights principle.

Women face substantial discrimination in accessing justice due to discriminatory laws or attitudes of public servants. For example, section 155(4) of the colonial era Evidence Act 1872 allows men accused of rape to question the “moral character” of the victim in court and use this “evidence” to undermine the validity of the allegations. The burden of proof lies on the rape victim which is discriminatory towards them. Rape within marital relationships is not recognised as a crime unless the wife is younger than 13, nor is ‘mental torture’ or emotional violence considered a crime. Women are commonly harassed at police stations, courtrooms and public institutions⁷. The VAW women cases are often filed and tried under inappropriate sections of Nari O- Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain and also number of false cases are filed under this act. BRAC study found number of inconsistencies among four specific VAW legislations namely Nari-O -shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain, 2000, Dowry Prohibition Act 1980, Domestic Violence Act, 2010 and Family court Ordinance 1985. Number of provisions are identified which require more clarification or little amendment so that can operate without confusions. For example provision relating to ‘custody of child’ in the family court ordinance and in the domestic violence Act, 2010 should be made more clarified and specific as to which law will apply in which situation.⁸ MJF would like to initiate advocacy addressing some of the inconsistent issues.

Over the last three decades Bangladesh has made significant progress in reducing some of the stark inequalities suffered by women. The number of girls in primary school exceeds the number of boys and a greater proportion of girls complete primary school. Public services such as schools, healthcare and family planning employ a much higher proportion of women workers than in most developing countries. Women have entered the economic workforce rapidly and in large numbers, led by garment making. The government, NGOs and society at large have worked towards reducing various aspects of gender inequality, including in education, maternal mortality and child survival. The increase in women's active role in the society and in the economy has unlocked a virtuous circle which has helped further enhance the status, agency and empowerment of women.

The Bangladesh Demographic and Health Surveys show a substantial increase between 2004 and 2014 in the proportion of women participating in household decisions related to their health care, major purchases and visiting relatives. However there has been a small decline over this period in the proportion of women making these decisions solely on their own.

⁶ Violence Against Women Survey, 2015, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

⁷ Understanding intimate partner violence in rural Bangladesh: prevention and response, 2017, Overseas Development Institute

⁸ Brac study on low conviction rate in the VAW cases and inconsistencies in the legislative framework

MJF's baseline survey (2012) of 90 villages in 20 districts found that out of total 15,930 respondent of domestic violence; physical torture is 43.6%, mental torture/repression is 36.0%., financial pressure is 15.5% and sexual harassment is 4.9%. This survey was carried out after 5 years of MJF VAW project implementation in those villages which could be the reason for violence rate to be lower in these model villages compared to the 2015 national survey.

In Bangladesh the rapid expansion of the readymade garment industry led to millions of young women joining the labour market. There are currently between 2.5 - 3 million young women working in the garments sector.

Although social norms and cultural beliefs related to the status of women in society can be deeply rooted, there is strong evidence that these can evolve and change through education, awareness, economic development as well as the efforts of governments and NGOs. The results of a number of nationally representative surveys suggest that the status and agency of women in Bangladesh is improving over time. The government, NGOs and the private sector have all contributed to this in different ways to this.

For example, the introduction of secondary school stipends for girls by the government in 1994 led a large increase in the enrolment of girls in secondary school. This resulted in increased autonomy, lower fertility and better health and labour market outcomes for the girls that benefited from this policy⁹. The rapid growth of the readymade garment industry, which currently employs around 4.5 million women, directly resulted in a large increase in educational attainment for girls, increased age of marriage and childbirth and reduced fertility¹⁰. It also induced more women to work outside the home. These effects are due to girls staying in schools longer as work in the garments industry rewards literacy and numeracy and young women choosing to delay marriage and childbirth in order to work in factories.

NGOs have worked to empower women by raising their awareness through interventions at the community and household level. Evidence from carefully designed studies show that empowering girls can help them stay in school for longer. However empowerment may not be enough to change outcomes such as child marriage. The same study found that that a small financial incentive given to families with unmarried girls aged 15 reduced the likelihood of child marriage by 25% and increased the average age of marriage by five months. A well-designed, intensive empowerment programme for girls did not lead to a reduction in child marriage.

Social norms and attitudes related to the status and role of women in society can also improve over time through greater exposure and interaction with the outside world. For example, the introduction of cable television in rural areas of India led to a significant reduction in son preference and the acceptance of spousal abuse as well as increased participation of women in household decision making¹¹.

Research suggests that there in growing tensions in Bangladeshi society between traditional gendered norms and changing gender roles and responsibilities as a result of women's increased access to education and employment. This in turn has increased their mobility and empowerment – tensions that can drive violence against women by their husbands.

There is some evidence of a backlash against state and NGO efforts to promote gender equality, with many men perceiving legal changes and women's programmes as being disadvantageous

⁹ Youjin Hahn, Asadul Islam, Kanti Nuzhat, Russell Smyth, and Hee-Seung Yang, "Education, Marriage, and Fertility: Long-Term Evidence from a Female Stipend Programme in Bangladesh," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 66, no. 2 (January 2018): 383-415

¹⁰ Rachel Health and Mushfiq Mobarak, 2015, "Manufacturing growth and the lives of Bangladeshi women," *Journal of Development Economics*, vol. 115(C), pages 1-15.

¹¹ Robert Jensen and Emily Oster, *The Power of TV: Cable Television and Women's Status in India*, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*

to them. And in terms of divorce, there seems considerable resentment among men about the banning of *talak*.

5. MJF's Previous Work

MJF's works with individuals, communities, local government and the national government simultaneously. This is because change needs to happen at all levels starting from changing negative attitudes and raising awareness of individuals, up to legal and institutional reforms. MJF interventions are based on the underlying causes identified above. And the approach is to increase the awareness of individuals and communities and help them organise themselves in order to collectively demand their rights from government. MJF works through partner NGOs and civil society organisations located across Bangladesh.

6. Lessons from previous work

MJF's experience over many years has helped to learn about what is effective or promising and also what worked well.

What Worked Well

- Engagement of men and boys in project activities helps in changing their behaviour and social norms plus they become allies to prevent VAWG. Engaging them has resulted in their initiative to stop their peers to stalking girls and preventing early marriage in their locality by participating in action committee of the community.
- MJF field experience shows that causes of child marriage are complex, interlinked and challenging to prevent and stop. However, in the previous program sensitization of community groups, committee and students on causes and consequence of child marriage made a difference. It was explained as a fundamental HR violation which motivated them to prevent child marriage in their family and take prompt action when a child marriage was arranged in their working area.
- When any VAW incidence is reported, action committee and Community Based Organisation (CBO) leaders immediately take the victim to the hospital and police station. In most of the cases police are not willing to register the case as FIR. CBO leaders have applied pressure on the police officials to file the case. In many instances CBO leaders were successful in having cases filed properly.
- Preventing dowry is another challenging issue. According to Dowry Prohibition Act, 1980: Dowry means any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly by one party to a marriage or to the other party to the marriage. Usually in Bangladesh when marriage is arranged groom family demand some cash or kind from the bride family during marriage or after marriage. When bride family do not meet this demand, grooms family or groom create pressure, torture to the bride and/or bride family which is one of the primary cause of domestic violence. So the previous program emphasized on prevention of dowry, MJF shared local and national evidence with community groups to make them aware against this social problem. Besides this, field staff have sensitized community groups that demanding dowry is illegal and a criminal offence. Group leaders have raised awareness among the potential bride and grooms family to arrange marriage without dowry even though it is challenging.
- Economic independence enables women to negotiate and engage in domestic decision making, which reduces violence and gender discrimination because it gives confidence, sense of security, increased mobility and gains respect from family members.
- Girls need trade-based skill training, life skill training, and education, engagement in sports and cultural activities to build their self-confidence and to raise voice against discrimination and violence.

- Signing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Government department has assisted in improving internal governance of those service providing agencies/ institutions. For example MJF MoU Department of social services to support Shelter Homes. The MoU with National Legal Aid Services Organisation on **activating Supreme Court Legal Aid and district Legal Aid fund to support legal services for violence victim and marginalized people** resulted in good working relationship with law ministry, National Legal Aid Services Organisation (NLASO), Supreme Court register office which strengthened policy level work and contributed to outcome indicator like women have better access to legal aid.
- Microfinance gives women more bargaining power in the family.
- Victims/survivors of VAW need some direct support like counselling, interim shelter, legal aid, emergency medical support and in special cases, rehabilitation.
- Most commonly, victims report to immediate family members, in-laws or neighbours. Most of the incidents are settled as family matters with occasional interventions from local social power structure. Very few of these cases reach the police station or courts. In cases of serious injury they go to health centres. Mediation can be effective for the victimized women /girls, if it is done lawfully.
- Survivors and partner organisations both need to be engaged to change the attitude of various service providing institutions i.e. police station, medical hospital, court, Union Parishad for ensuring better services for women and girls.
- The Project Completion Report (PCR) team observed that MJF approach of collective women's leadership helped to increase perceptions of women's groups as legitimate and credible in their communities. MJF ensured women's local grassroots activism, one such example was MJF's success in driving forward the Hindu Marriage Registration Act, which grew from the demands of local community activism.

What Did Not Work Well

Due to MJF and many other organisations advocacy many laws and policies were amended, and enacted but there is implementation gap and performance/achievement does not match with expectation. In the new programme more consultations will be arranged with service providing agencies so that they become aware about the laws and are motivated to implement them. Policy advocacy with ministries and public service providing agencies will be strengthened for implementation of women's right related laws.

- MJF has worked with several service providing institutions where system has improved but when identified champions are transferred those who take their place do not act/ cooperate in the same way.
- Gender insensitivity of law enforcing agencies and political patronage for perpetrators creates barriers for victims to get justice. Resources is also a problem and due to lengthy process of judicial system it is difficult to continue cases of violence against women and girls resulting in women and girls victims not getting justice.
- Comprehensive Hindu marriage law was not enacted due to resistance from Hindu leaders. Marriage Registration Act was passed but is not being implemented properly due to resistance from Hindu community. MJF will work further on formulation of comprehensive Hindu marriage law. More consultation meeting and advocacy meeting will be arranged with Hindu religious leaders to overcome the barriers and to formulate comprehensive Hindu marriage law.

7. Programme Brief:

Goal: Enhanced rights of women and girls to access economic, social, political and legal rights in a secure and safe environment.

Outcomes:

- Women and girls victims/survivors have access to medical and legal services.
- Men and boys changed their perceptions, attitudes and practices towards gender equality/ women rights.
- Incidence of violence against women and girls reduced.
- Women have increased opportunities for income generation and control over their own resources and income.
- Women effectively advocate for changes, amendment and adoption of laws and policies that protect their human rights.

Outputs:

- Community people including men and boys are aware on women rights issues.
- Men and boys are engaged in initiatives to prevent violence against women and girls.
- Duty-bearers of public service institutions are more sensitised and proactive to providing services and resources.
- Women are skilled on different IGA and trades. Women are making decisions on income generation and utilization.
- Women's knowledge and skill on advocacy and lobbying have increased in regard to laws and policies review, amendment and adoption.

8. Programme Approach

Our approach is based on social mobilisation, leadership building, creating income opportunity, advocacy, strengthening and ensuring public service provisions, campaigns and research.

Social Mobilisation: MJF through partners could organise local women and help them develop organisational and leadership skills in order to raise their voice collectively. Along with our partners, we help women amplify their voices from local to national level through negotiation, protest and demonstration against all rights violations. Partners also facilitate community level meetings, dialogue with service providers and local government bodies, home visits to monitor cases of domestic violence etc.

Promoting women's leadership: One of the important approaches is to foster leadership amongst women and ensure that more women are placed in leadership and decision-making positions at the community level. Many NGOs too do not have women in senior positions. MJF works with partner NGOs to help ensure that women have the skills necessary to take up senior positions. To break the norms of male leadership and resistance against women's leadership, capacity building of local women's organisations and human rights groups could be supported to promote women leadership. There is a mandatory condition in the MJF partnership policy to recruit 35% female staff.

Skills development: MJF's partners are encouraged to link disadvantaged women and girls with government skill training and microfinance institutions for income generation, self-employment and job placement for women and girls. Women and Girls could be linked with government training like department of youth, women affairs, social services etc. and non govt. training UCEP, PKSf etc. Partner organisations may also organise skill training in some cases. Skills training has to be combined with gender training to reduce potential risk.

Advocacy: There are several laws and policies that perpetuate discrimination towards women and girls. In addition, some essential laws will be enacted to protect women and girls. Advocacy issues will be selected through a process of consultation with women's rights organisations. Some of these include inheritance laws, removal of special provision for girls to be married under age of 18 (MJF will gather evidence on abuse of this clause and report to policy makers), section 155(4) of the Evidence Act 1872 in which women have to prove being raped; absence of victim and witness protection laws, fixing of dower (*meher*) as per market

rate, Citizenship Act, obligatory Hindu marriage registration, recognition of women's unpaid work etc.

MJF will facilitate advocacy with state institutions as well as with private sector institutions from local to national levels and continue advocacy with National Legal Aid Services Organisation (NLASO) to activate Supreme Court Legal Aid and District Legal Aid fund to support legal services for violence victim and marginalized people. MJF will also work with educational institutions to support implementation of the High Court Directives to install functioning Anti-sexual Harassment Committee to prevent VAW and protect girls/women. MJF will continue advocacy to implement Hindu Marriage Registration Act and Hindu women's inheritance rights. As the government has no law on victim and witness protection, there is a directive from the High Court to adopt victim and witness protection Act, MJF will initiate advocacy for victim and witness protection Act.

Strengthening and ensuring public service provisions: Women and girls victims of violence could be linked with relevant institutions and department for accessing different services like legal aid, health care, shelter, and counselling services. Linkage with the Government's legal aid and NGO legal aid service providers will be expedited to ensure access to justice for victims. Cases on VAW will be monitored during trial procedures. Multi-dimensional actions, such as work with police stations, District Legal Aid Committees and District Courts, Upazila Health Complex, district hospital, government and NGO managed safe home etc. will be undertaken to respond to the incidents of VAWG. Legal literacy to local and women's organisations to track and monitor cases of VAWG cases; build their skills to advocate for better quality of services from the police, legal aid authorities, courts and other state agencies.

MJF governance unit will provide capacity building support to strengthen public service provision institutions related to VAWG such as law enforcing agencies, health complex, local administration, etc. The different social accountability tools i.e. Social Audit, Community Score Card and citizens charters to be used to monitor state interventions/public services like performance of police station, hospital, court in responding to violence and rights issues of women and girls. Given MJF experience in working on RTI, this will be used as a tool to get information on entitlements and challenge lack of accountability in the service delivery mechanism. Capacity of partner organisations will be built on social accountability tools and RTI usage to increase citizen engagement.

Lobbying and Campaigns: Campaigns to promote a positive image of women, to raise their status in society and family, to change attitude of society towards women from negative to a positive one. The National campaign **Equality through Dignity** which is aimed at raising status of women will be continued. The goal of this campaign is to reduce violence and discrimination against women by raising their status in the family and society. The hypothesis is, if women are respected they will face less violence and discrimination. One of the strategy to raise their status is to highlight their contribution in all its dimension both paid and unpaid work. This will result in the evaluation and recognition of their role and contribution leading to women's economic empowerment, dignity and elevated status. The campaign touches on the root causes of violence and discrimination and is focused on changing mind set and attitude of families and society which accepts VAWG.

Diagram on SRWG Programme Approach:



The new programme will work to reduce gender inequality and gender based violence by tackling the underlying causes described above.

9. Programme Coverage

Target population: Men, boys, women and girls; victims and survivors of violence.

Stakeholders: Integration and involvement of all level of stakeholders will be ensured, because it is everyone's responsibility to contribute towards ending VAWG to ensure women's security and rights. This will include government agencies, local government, NGOs, service providing agencies, policy makers and such others.

Geographic location: The Programme will be implemented all over Bangladesh. Northern part of Bangladesh will be preferred, particularly Rangpur and Rajshahi Divisions since women of these two divisions are more vulnerable to violence as per findings of national survey 2015 (BBS).

10. Institutional capacity of MJF

MJF has experienced and reputed human resources like Executive Director, Director, Gender adviser, Programme Coordinator, Senior Manager with sufficient knowledge and expertise on gender issue, violence against women, women's right and security. MJF was involved with the successful policy advocacy to enact the Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act, Hindu Marriage Registration Act, and amendment of some other policies and laws like Legal Aid Services Act. MJF has a MoU with the NLASO and pioneered efforts to gender-sensitise microfinance, now included as mandatory rules within the Micro-Credit Regulatory Authority.

The strength of MJF is its convening ability, to bring diverse stakeholders together for collaboration and learning. MJF has working experience and institutional linkage with relevant ministries and departments like Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA), Ministry of labour, Department of Social Service, DWA, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, NLASO. More linkage is required with Police department and Department of Health, One Stop Crisis Centres and counselling institutes. Accommodation is necessary during the ongoing trial of the cases and up to the final settlement of the cases. Apart from referring violence victims to government run safe homes, SRWG programme will support some shelter homes through partner NGOs. MJF will initiate stronger income generating support for women and girls and for victims and witnesses.

11. Integration of cross cutting issues

Marginalized women are more vulnerable to violence. SRWG programme will support women and girls across different communities like minority and indigenous people, sex workers, climate victims, children of violence victims and provide support to them. Women and girls with disability are especially vulnerable to violence and face barriers to effectively seek help, care or redress from the health, justice, or other sectors. Monitoring participation of people with disabilities in programmes activities is important.¹² Women with disability will be supported to access to justice and increased mobility. There is also absence of sign language oriented interpretation / lawyers in the court environment, incapacity of speech impaired women victims to speak about their situation. At present there is no statistics on sexual harassment at garment sector and MJF is conducting such a study funded by EU project. It is hoped that specific data to address sexual harassment at garment sector will then be available. MJF will advocate for integrating the VAWG issues in different sectors (including health, education, economic empowerment, legal aid etc.) and at multiple levels (national, local).

12. Risk Analysis

Risk arising out while implementing SRWG programme will be dealt with by MJF's overall risk management strategies to be furnished by M&E department.

13. Monitoring Evaluation and Learning: (MEL)

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) has been developed in light of its core principles of a rights based approach. In the EPR Project it will be focused on gaining knowledge and evidence and explore best practices to evaluate progress and apply learnings to enhance programme efficiency and effectiveness. MJF will adopt a simplified M&E system for the EPR programme, which will emphasize routine process monitoring and tracking results from the grassroots level. During inception phase, MJF will develop a detailed plan for process monitoring and framework for capturing evidence and learning. Based on the Logical Framework (LF) and ToC, MJF will revisit its M&E framework to make sure that all programmes are well aligned with the ToC and on track to achieve milestones of the LF. However, the LF and ToC are living documents and will undergo revisions to outline data requirements, data sources, data collection and analysis, and how monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken, including key evaluation questions. The revised M&E system will guide MJF and its' partners' projects to track the regular progress and capture the changes.

M&E system will emphasize learning and sharing to gain critical analysis from wide range of relevant stakeholders and embrace critical insights to fine tune programme strategies. This system will give emphasis on systematic documentation of lessons from the EPR. A number of surveys and action research will be undertaken to collect programme and projects M&E

¹² <http://www.whatworks.co.za/documents/publications/114-disability-evidence-brief-new-crop-3/file>

information, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Detailed indicators will be finalised through a participatory discussion process with DFID and MJF. However, some of the research questions and indicators are suggested in the following table:

Name of the Programme	Key research question (suggested)	Key Indicators
Security and Rights of Women and Girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How men and boys engagement contributed to improve women rights situation? ▪ How society changed their perceptions, attitudes and practices towards women rights or gender inequality ▪ Are women being able to take important decisions in the family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of men and boys engaged to stop and prevent violence against women and Girls at community level. ▪ Changes in perception among men and boys ▪ Proportion of women who have role in household decisions making

MJF will also develop beneficiary feedback mechanism to understand programme success, challenges in relation to strategies. MEL of MJF will communicate its evidences and changes to donors, other development actors, decision-makers, champions and other audiences, using a range of medium (report, documentation, sharing session, workshop, press& social media), and will use it to advocate for reform.

MJF sees this thematic paper as a living document which will be reviewed periodically to integrate new ideas, learning and experiences while working with the women and girls.

TOC: Security and Rights of Women and Girls

