Indigenous Peoples Assessment and Measures

Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework
Project Number: 40515
August 2010

Bangladesh: Sustainable Rural Infrastructure Improvement Project

Prepared by the Local Government Engineering Department, People’s Republic of Bangladesh

The indigenous peoples planning framework is a document of the borrower. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of ADB’s Board of Directors, Management, or staff, and may be preliminary in nature.
A. Introduction and Background

1. The Sustainable Rural Infrastructure Development Project (SRIDP) will upgrade to an all weather surface (from the current dirt roads) approximately 700 km of union and upazila roads in 21 districts of Western Bangladesh. It will also upgrade market facilities in 92 growth centre markets, including dedicated spaces for female traders in 50. In some market areas, water supply and solar power will also be installed. Based on the performance of five previous phases of the project in other areas, it is anticipated the enhanced access of the rural population, who are largely dependent on agriculture, to improved markets, will have marked positive effects on livelihoods.

B. Indigenous Peoples in Bangladesh

2. According to the Population Census of Bangladesh 2001, about 1.14 million indigenous people, in 52 groups, live in Bangladesh of which about 51.378 per cent are males and 48.63 per cent are females. The total households are about 289,948 with a sex ratio of 106. Among the total population majority are concentrated in the districts of Rangamati (257,679), Khagrachori 192,647 and Bandarban (142,651). But a reasonable number of population also live in the districts of northern Bangladesh including greater Rajshahi, Greater Bogra, Greater Rangpur, Greater Dinajpur, Greater Barial, Greater Mymensing, Greater Sylhet and Greater Khulna. The project districts account for about 2 per cent indigenous peoples.

3. A number of reports and studies, most notably a study of the Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR)\(^1\), assert that Bangladeshi indigenous peoples (IPs) face daily discrimination. In particular, the study reports that 50 percent of these people are not getting fair price of their agricultural products while 49.39 percent complained that they are not getting treatment in public hospitals. Further, 30.12 percent of indigenous people have no access to educational facilities while 22.89 percent of them face threats and violence. IPs do have some opportunities however. Although IP women still face discrimination in a patriarchal system, relations between IP women and men are traditionally more flexible than in mainstream Bangladeshi society, particularly with regard to women’s ability to travel and undertake paid employment outside the house. This, combined with some IP women’s traditional skills in weaving and manufacture of handicrafts bodes well for participation in project employment and translating better road access into improved livelihoods.

C. Indigenous Peoples in the Project Area

4. The beneficiary population of the project, calculated based on the households living within 2km of the roads to be upgraded, is approximately 3.7 million. Of these, just less than 2% are estimated to be indigenous peoples based on district population data. It is known that indigenous peoples of the groups Santal, Urao, Mahali and Pahari live in the project districts. Although project preparation activities have not extensively surveyed the population in the survey’s zone of influence, and therefore cannot say with any certainty this estimate is correct, it is known from consultations that IPs reside mainly in the north of the project area. In particular, one area of concentration has been identified in Shahpur village of Perganj Upazila, Rangpur District. Here, about 300 Urao people reside, accounting for about 80 households. This framework has been prepared based on consultations with these Urao people. During project

\(^1\) Legal and human rights of ethnic minorities in Bangladesh, BSEHR, March 2008.
implementation, the framework can be updated based on consultations with other groups of indigenous peoples, and tailored accordingly.

5. The Urao people are Buddhist rather than Muslim like the majority Bengalis. Most of their houses are built either of straw/thatched roof or corrugated iron sheet with bamboo walls. Other indicators of poverty in the village include the lack of adequate sanitation facilities. The participants of FGD pointed out that in Shahpur village, there are no standard sanitation facilities and most of the village dwellers generally use a hanging latrine open space for defecation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Distribution of Households by type of Toilet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of Latrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanging latrines or covered by gunnysack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open ground with a hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring slab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Respondents mentioned that once the transportation network was improved and they started to feel the benefits of improved livelihoods, they aspired to improve their hygiene facilities, since they understood the flow on benefits to community health.

7. The literacy attainment among the indigenous community is very low as only four students in the community (2 males and 2 females) have passed S.S.C level and most other members are functionally illiterate (11 out of 17 participants in the focus group discussion were illiterate). Most community members are involved in agricultural activities especially day laboring as many of them do not have minimum educational qualifications and most also have limited access to land.

D. Consultations with Indigenous Peoples

8. The participants in the focus group expressed the view that the proposed project would have the following impacts on their community:

1. **Access and Transportation:**
   (i) Due to the improved road network the plying of vehicles of both motorized and non-motorized such as rickshaw, van, bicycle, motor-bike, tempo, three wheelers, nosimon, korimon, bus, minibus, microbus, ambulance etc. would be more easy and effective, reducing travel times.
   (ii) The children of the indigenous community would able to have relatively easy access to different academic institutions.
   (iii) In case of emergencies for carrying critical patients, ambulances would be able to access their village and also travel to hospitals faster than at present.
   (iv) Various agricultural inputs like insecticides, chemical fertilizers, herbicides, improved varieties of seeds, pesticides and irrigation equipment would be more easily transported from upazila sadar to their more remote area due to the improved road network.
   (v) The members of their indigenous community would able to buy and sell their agricultural products in the nearest hat and bazaar at fair price, without the need to wait for traders.
(vi) It would be easier for the cultivators to carry the agro-products from fields to their homestead compounds.

(vii) The community people would able to go to local *hut* and *baazar* by van or tempo at the earliest possible time.

(viii) The members of law enforcing agencies like the police and the para-military authority would have easier access to the area and therefore vigilance of criminal acts and activities should increase, and incidence of thefts and bag snatching may decrease as everyone would be able to travel more quickly and safely using public or private transport instead of walking.

2. **Employment and Income Generation Activities:**

9. The improved road network would able to create more income and employment opportunities to the most neglected indigenous community people in terms of:

   (i) Buying and selling medicinal products as people’s mobility would improve, particularly connections with the district head quarter i.e., Rangpur *sadar*.

   (ii) Members of the indigenous households would able to drive various kinds of vehicles, which would create income earning opportunities for them.

   (iii) Some members of indigenous community would be able to get involved directly in transport sector jobs such as being a truck helper, bus driver, or other light vehicle operators and conductors.

   (iv) Some female members of the community would able to get involved in NGO supported development activities.

   (v) Many male members of the indigenous community would able to work as daily laborers in the *upazila sadar* and nearest Madargonj *baazar* instead of just locally, and return home before dawn and or dusk.

   (vi) Some community members would able to get involved as construction workers when the road construction begins.

   (vii) Both female and male members would be able to get work in rice mills, sawmills and other petty business at the local level.

10. The following seasonal calendar shows how the members of indigenous community people would able to get involved in various income earning opportunities year round due to the improved transportation and communication network. Especially during August-November, availability of work is scarce and daily wage rates often drop since demand is high, so this would be the ideal time to avail of road construction work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the months</th>
<th>Employment Opportunity</th>
<th>Status of Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April - May</td>
<td>Peak</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June – July</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August - September</td>
<td>Slack/lean</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October - November</td>
<td>Slack/lean</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December – January</td>
<td>Peak</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February – March</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Visit, 2010 Derived from ‘Seasonal Calendar’ of PRA*

11. In greater Rangpur, particularly in sample village of Shahpur, poverty incidence is very high. According to the last (2005) Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the poverty head count rate for the entire country was 40 per cent. But in the greater Rangpur region (Rangpur, Gaibandha, Nilphamari, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat) the poverty rate was 57%. The extreme poverty rate is 25% for the rest of the
country, while it is 43% in the sample district – significantly higher. Even the practice of monga is prevalent in most of the participant’s households. The participants of FGD unanimously asserted that there are four categories of people at Shahpur village under Pachgachi union. These include large farmers (owners of a significant amount of land or businesses); middle farmers (petty traders and small farm land owners); poor (marginal farmers and the landless poor (including grocers and tenants)); and the ultra-poor (landless people and day laborers). Most of the members of the Urao community belong to poor (six of 17 focus group participants) and ultra-poor (11 of 17). On the whole, the ultra-poor forced to maintain subsistence livelihoods.

12. Most of the participants of the indigenous community focus group have noticed a trend of development over the last few years as the road network has slowly improved in nearby areas. Already the village people move more easily from one place to another than they did in the past, including to the city or town for urgent and essential services like health care, education, income earning, trade, commerce and business. It was reported that the members of women of indigenous community go to Madarganj for buying their daily essentials, and many girl students of the indigenous community commute to different academic institutions. Community members also travel for recreation, family-reunions etc. Some of the female members go to Shahpur hut and bazaar for selling produce and purchasing of agricultural products. Other members go to Rangpur sadar for getting better health care services than are available locally. Moreover, it is the women folk who create social networks and social interactions among themselves and with the women of nearby villages.

13. The female participants of indigenous community informed that there has been a qualitative change in the lives and livelihoods of women folk and one of the reasons for such change is the improved communication network. It was further revealed from the Focus Group Discussion that many members of indigenous community had ideas about how they could become entrepreneurs. For example, some women would able to be more effectively involved in agricultural production activities. On the other hand, some would be able to get involved in micro-credit lending activities and participate in small scale business enterprises in the areas of petty trading, grocery selling, rice husking, potato picking, treadle pumping, vegetable growing and selling, animal husbandry, etc. Development of the road network would provide the impetus for many to invest in additional livelihood activities. Women also expressed an interest in showcasing their culture with cultural performances and this would definitely help them to be more outgoing and developing further careers in the sector of art, music, song and other related performances.

14. The participants of the FGD informed that in general, the Urao tribe is patriarchal in nature and there is a tendency of men to dominate in most areas of life. Women are also discriminated against in terms of wage and salary. For example, the male daily wage is taka 120 but for the same task a women worker draws only 80 taka. The women of Urao community have limited power in the process of decision making but this is changing with reduced isolation. The women who live in the most interior or remote areas have experienced little or no change in their attitudes. In contrast the women with improved access to a better communication and transportation network have been able to have more liberty and power of decision making including exercising the power and authority. Similarly, many women who live in more remote areas are subject to frequent violence and abuse but the women who have better access to health and justice facilities, and other women, plus NGO workers, through a better road network are relatively secure.
E. Objectives of the IPDF

15. The ADB defines indigenous peoples as social or cultural groups who are distinct (possessing in varying degrees self identification and recognition by others; collective attachment to habitats and natural resources; separate customary cultural, economic, social or political institutions; distinct language) and vulnerable (historically, economically, socially).

16. Since the indigenous peoples of the project areas are some of the poorest members of their respective communities, and are socially separate from the main population (with different religious practices, social networks and interactions), the project objective is to ensure the active participation of indigenous peoples and their tangible benefit from the project.

F. Suggested Strategies

Strategies to Enhance IP Participation

(i) Within the first year of project implementation, the Project will complete a baseline survey of the project area to identify beneficiary groups and identify the number and ethnicity of any IP groups living in the project area.

(ii) If IPs are found in the area, the survey will also determine the potential positive and negative impacts on IPs; whether these groups are involved in sale of agricultural products or interested in project construction and maintenance work, or taking up shops in the growth centre markets (GCM); how they can be involved in the other project activities such as livelihood training; whether there will be any change in their livelihood activities as a result of the project; whether they could be integrated into the regular farmer or maintenance groups of LGED or need to be organized in separate groups; and (vii) any special efforts that need to be integrated in the Project activities.

(iii) Based on the findings, the Project will develop an action plan to ensure equal participation and access for different IP groups. The action plan will address issues like, selection criteria, method of organizing, need for awareness raising program and subjects, selection of trees for roadside planting, types of training, requirement of additional support etc.

(iv) The Project will develop an information dissemination plan to IPs, which does not rely on printed material due to the very low levels of literacy among the IP population, but rather involves face to face information updates in selected upazilas with concentrations of IPs.

(v) The Project will allocate resources and technical support for the implementation of the action plan integrating the activities in the annual work plan.

2. Strategies to Enhance Project Benefits to IPs and Mitigate any Negative Impacts

(i) Although no land acquisition is expected in this project, since roads will be improved and sealed on their existing alignments, the Project recognizes that IPs are particularly vulnerable to impoverishment from land acquisition due to traditional and collective rather than formal title to land. Therefore the project will screen carefully for land acquisition in IP areas and avoid it wherever possible. Where roads to be improved border IP areas, IP should be meaningfully consulted regarding the types of trees selected for roadside planting, and the
usual LGED methodology for sharing any fruit or wood from the trees adopted (with shares going to land owners, the tree maintenance team and the local upazila).

(ii) In all cases involving utilization of land in IP areas, meaningful consultation with IPs and their male and female representatives will take place regarding: aspirations, needs and preferred alternative options; local social organization, cultural beliefs, resource use pattern of the affected IPs; potential positive and negative impacts on IPs; measures to avoid, mitigate, compensate for adverse project effects; measures to ensure project benefits will accrue to IPs; measures to strengthen social and technical capabilities of the partners NGOs to address IP issues; budget allocation; technical assistance; and monitoring.

(iii) The IP actions may take the form of: incorporating IPs (who might be excluded from the Project) in the beneficiary groups, for example road construction and maintenance teams, tree nursery groups, roadside tree maintenance teams, market associations, etc; incorporating IP specific needs (that may not be addressed by the Project) into the Project plan, and a common action plan incorporating IP’s needs where IPs live with the non-IP people in the same project location; and additional awareness raising, training, access to credit and other activities addressing the needs of IPs. Staff training activities will include topics related to local IPs.

(iv) The IP Action Plan will be submitted to ADB for approval and concurrence.

G. Implementation Arrangements

17. The Project Management Office (PMO), which will have a combination of LGED and consultant staff including a sociologist, will be responsible for addressing IP concerns and ensuring their participation through preparation and implementation of an Indigenous Peoples Development Plan (or plans, if geography or major differences between various IP communities dictate it). The Project, upon completion of the Survey will clearly identify IPs and prepare the IPDP.

H. Budget

18. The Project budget will allocate adequate resources for various components and activities of the Project to implement the IPDF. This will mainly be through the allocation of staff, and time to ensure adequate consultation and dissemination of project information.

I. Monitoring and Evaluation

19. LGED through the PMO will be responsible for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the IP action plan within this IPDF. The Project will collect baseline data and regularly analyze project outputs, and impacts considering impact on IPs and include this in a regular MIS and reporting system.