

FY2009 Women Leader Empowerment Seminar in
Asia Pacific Region

Country Report

Kamrun Nahar

Bangladesh

Naripokkho

Country Overview

Name : The People's Republic of Bangladesh

- Parliamentary form of government, headed by the Prime Minister
- Bangladesh has got a population of about 143.90 million, Male- 74.0 and Female- 69.81 Million.
- Bangla is the official language of the country. English is the second language and widely used.
- Bangladesh is a land of religious freedom and tolerance. People of all caste, creed and religion live here in perfect harmony.
Approximate ratio of population on the basis of religion is as follows: Muslims 86.6%, Hindus 12.1%, Buddhists 0.6%, Christian 0.4% and other 0.3%.
- Poverty is deep and widespread; almost half of the population lives on less than one dollar a day.
- Per Capita GDP/GNI US\$554 / US\$482 (2005-06)
- GDP/rate of growth US\$ 68.14 billion /6.71% (2006-07)

Situation of VAW statistics & salient features)

Source: Police headquarters, GOB

Year	Violence for dowry	Acid throwing	Abduction	Rape	Murder after rape	Trafficking	Injured	other	Murder	Total
2004	3081	198	1594	3097	17	68	134	4564	62	12815
2005	3130	177	2069	2796	22	138	49	2949	97	11427
2006	3417	135	2087	2566	14	107	75	2558	109	11068
2007	4146	137	2736	3495	33	113	74	3374	142	14250
2008	4487	120	2874	3387	65	105	87	3023	131	14279

Social Legitimacy of VAW

- Wife beating and hitting is not viewed as a crime, and is socially accepted by both women and men.
- Blaming the “victim” and imposing further restrictions on women is a common response to violence against women.
- Poetry, literature, songs, drama, cinema and other media portray gender stereotypes and perpetuate the ideology of women's subordination.

Legal Status of Women

- Women's rights in respect to equality and affirmative action are guaranteed in the Constitution of Bangladesh.
- Bangladesh is a state party to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- Women, irrespective of their class, caste, religion and ethnicity, are discriminated against in personal laws related to their rights in marriage, the dissolution of marriage, guardianship of children and inheritance as well as in laws related to their right to transmit nationality to their children or husbands and in their standing on giving evidence.

Legal Framework

- Acid Attack Crime Repression Act 2002 and Acid Control Law 2002
- Suppression of Violence against Women and Children Act 2000 as amended in 2003
- SAARC Convention on Trafficking in Women and Children for Purposes of Prostitution

Government Policy on VAW

- The National Women Advancement Policy 1997/2008 addressed VAW in a comprehensive manner.
- The National Strategy for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction (NSAPR) recognized gender equality as a key goal and recognizes VAW as a key issue for development.

Civil Society Intervention

- Advocacy for Reform and Formulation of law and policy
- Monitoring of GOB services for VAW
- Campaign, Networking
- Legal Aid and Counselling, Mediation and arbitration
- Medical Treatment and Psychological Counselling
- Shelter for Victims of Violence
- Creating Community Level Pressure to Ensure Access to Services and Justice for the Prevention of VAW
- Rehabilitation/Reintegration and Socio-economic Support

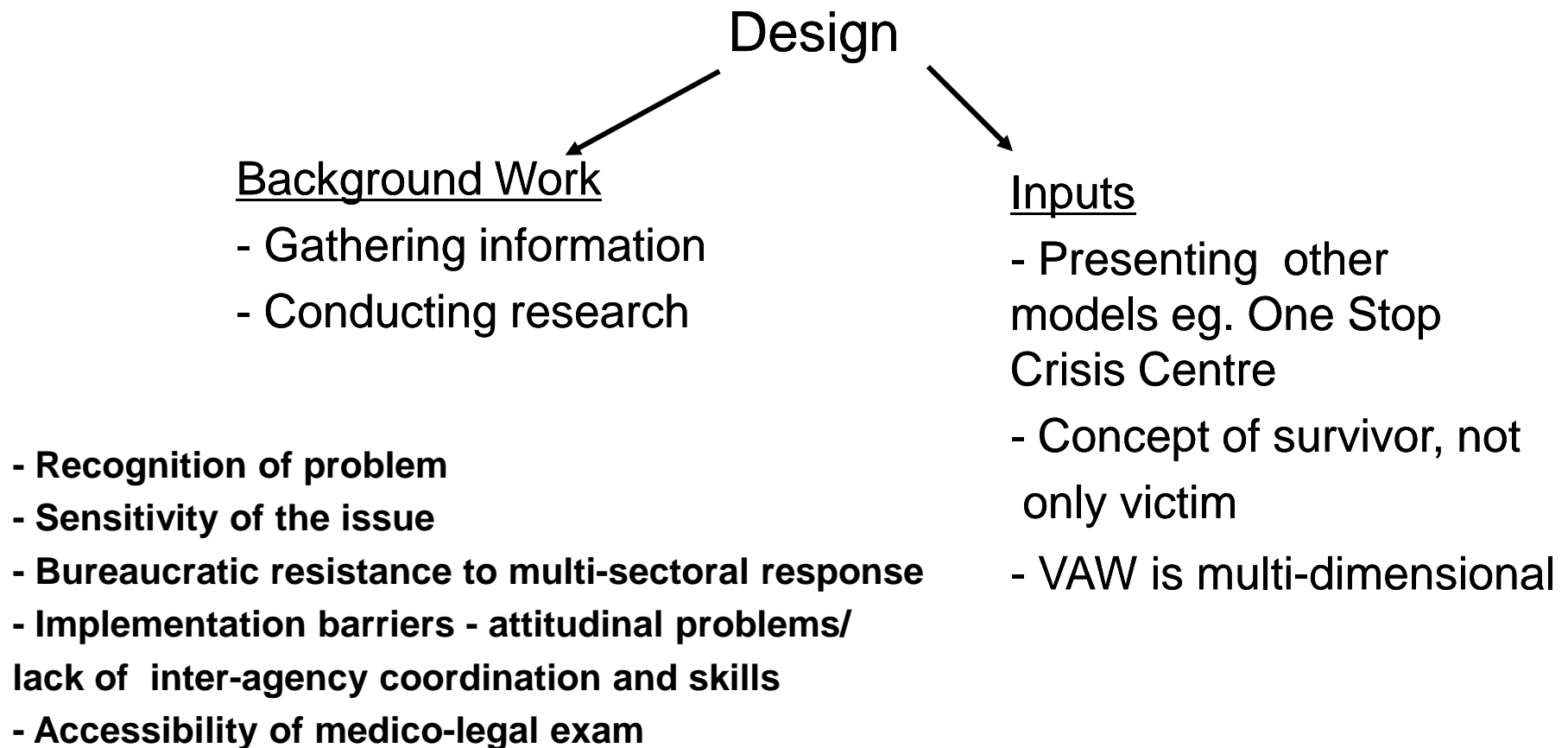
Overseas Development Aid

- A total of about US\$ 59.03 billion of external assistance was committed up to June 30, 2008 of which, 11.14 % food aid, 18.76 % commodity aid and 70.10 % project aid.
- Since independence (1971) up to 30 June 2008, a total amount of about US\$ 48.52 billion of foreign aid was disbursed, of which 43.91% was grants and 56.09 % was loans. 13.27 % was disbursed as food aid, 22.48 % as commodity aid and 64.25 % as project aid.
- Government reports show-the share of grants in the total aid package has declined over recent years. The decreasing volume of grants has resulted in a larger proportion of loans in the total aid package.

Source: Economic Relation Department Government of Bangladesh

**GOVERNMENT MULTI-SECTORAL PROGRAMME ON VAW (MSP-VAW):
best practices to combat VAW**

**1996 – Lobby Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to convene an
inter-ministerial working group**



Major Obstacles to Eradicate VAW

- Access to, and service from law enforcing agencies and health system
- Lack of accountability and effectiveness in dealing with VAW
- Lengthy, expensive, often corrupt and very unfriendly judiciary system to women

Conclusion/Policy Recommendations

- Interventions of violence have to be designed at different levels.
- At the community levels, there is a need for shelters, facilities for child care, education and training opportunities, credit, housing as well as employment opportunities for women.
- At state level, women need equal rights, women sensitive health and law enforcing policies, judicial procedures.