Women Empowerment for Curbing Corruption

Corruption means making private gains by abusing power - power in the Government or outside, it may be political, economic or even social power. Because of its links with power, corruption has a natural bias against those who are outside the power structure of society. In that respect, the women are most vulnerable and among the hardest hit due to corruption.

Corruption is the principal impediment to women's advancement. Although Article 27 of the Bangladesh Constitution stipulates 'equality of all citizens in the eyes of law', in reality women are victims of corruption, discrimination, deprivation and various kinds of repression. Women are routinely denied their rights and opportunities. Since corruption leads to diversion of resources meant for social development, it affects the poorest, the women and other disadvantaged sections of the society most severely.

Corruption is also a key impediment to the empowerment of women. Because of corruption women are deprived of access to fundamental rights. According to a TIB research, corruption in the education sector prevents access of women to education. The ultra-poor girl-students are even deprived of their stipends. Women are equally denied access to healthcare services due to corruption with all its implications for maternal health and damages to the health and vitality of the next generation.

The legal and institutional structures are far from conducive to gender equality. Laws relevant to family, marriage or divorce, inheritance, property rights or custody of children are fundamentally biased against women. Moreover, because of weaknesses in law enforcement as a result of pervasive corruption, those who violate women's rights or resort to repression or other forms of violence against women are seldom brought to justice.

Although the female labourers put in equal amount of labour as their male counterpart, and sometimes even more, they are not often given equal wages. Even the female workers who constitute the overwhelming majority of the workforce in the ready-made garments sector - the principal foreign exchange earner for the country - suffer deprivations and adverse working conditions. It is the female workers who suffer most when buildings collapse because of faulty construction and violation of building codes.

The anti-corruption movement and the movement for women's rights are intertwined with each other. It is not possible to achieve one by excluding the other. Research and experience show that the incidence of corruption is relatively low in situations where women's representation is higher in top policy-level positions in politics, state, administration and public-private bodies and initiatives.

The slogan for this year's International Women's Day as declared by the United Nations was "Women in Decision-making: Meeting Challenges, Creating Change". The key message is about changing the attitude of all sections of people towards women if discriminations against women are to be eliminated. Women voices and women participation must be ensured at the policy and decision-making process which are critical to meeting challenges of development in Bangladesh. Advancement of women and recognition of their due role and contribution can lead to specific measures towards reducing corruption. Women themselves will have to be proactive, vocal and incorruptible.

We want women empowerment as a precondition for development and social change in Bangladesh as much as we want it for reducing corruption in the country.
International Women’s Day

Corruption is a Major Obstacle to Women’s Advancement

Eminent litterateur Selina Hossain presented the keynote paper at the roundtable discussion on ‘Corruption and Women: Experiences and Transformations in Professional Lives’ arranged on 7th March 2006 at the BIAM Multipurpose Auditorium, New Eskaton, Dhaka. The welcome address was delivered by the TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman. Moderated by human rights activist Dr. Hamida Hossain, leaders of women’s rights movement participated in the open discussion.

Speakers at the Roundtable

“A natural tendency of corruption is that it harms the women most”
Corruption makes women more vulnerable. As the females are under-privileged and remain outside power-centres, consequently the institutional and moral decays due to corruption are reflected mostly among the women community. Obtaining services in areas pertaining to fundamental rights such as education, health, justice, security, etc. depend on whether one has the capacity to bribe or pay additional money. As the women generally lack this capacity, the impact of corruption is more noticeable among them. This is the reason why TIB is trying to wage a gender-sensitive social movement against corruption.

Dr. Iftekharuzzaman
Executive Director, TIB

“Corruption is a major obstacle to women’s advancement”
If attempts are made to identify the main hindrances to women’s advancement, it would be seen that corruption is certainly a major one. Besides, our society is characterised by a fundamentalist orientation and absence of democracy. These attributes are also holding back our women. If one fights these alone, then more victimisations follow. For this reason, I consider forging unity as most important.

Khusi Kabir
Coordinator, Nijera Kori

“Women are mostly affected due to political favorism”
In our country any legal action is hardly taken against corruption, nor is anyone socially punished. People who are involved with large scale corruption are not treated as a hated person in society; rather they are considered respectful persons. Whilst buildings are collapsed due to their corruption or events like fire-burning in the factories and death of uncountable people are occurring. Women are mostly affected due to political-favorism in administration. Various positions in service sector are occupied by men through male favorism. For all these reasons, women are deprived.

Shaheen Anam
Team Leader, Manusher Jonno

“Corruption has formed as an institutional shape in our state structure”
Corruption is not only prevalent in our state-structure; it has formed as an institutional shape here. The reason why women are not tilting towards corruption is because they are victim of sexual exploitation. Canards are spread fast if she is involved with any incident of corruption. It is another kind of corruption. It hurts the women in a special way, makes her lag behind in movements. While speaking about corruption, we should be careful about this special notion.

Dr. Meghna Guhathakurta
Executive Director, RIB

“Women’s empowerment is a powerful tool for eradicating corruption”
Empowerment of women would not be possible without eliminating corruption – is an extremely negative assertion. I do not know whether it would be at all possible to eradicate corruption in my lifetime. But shouldn’t there be women’s empowerment because of that? Rather, it seems to me that curbing corruption would be possible if there is women’s empowerment. Women’s empowerment may not be the only means for eliminating corruption, but it certainly is a powerful tool.

Barrister Tania Amir, Lawyer

“Women should be of sharp spirit”
It is not sufficient for women to occupy positions of power, her female spirit should be kept sharp. There is imbalance of power at every step of this society. It is therefore essential to have conceptual clarification. If those who are supposed to resist are not conscious, then that resistance would not bear fruit.

Shamim Akhtar
Film Maker, Journalist

“Wanted corruption-free society in all areas”
We seek an honest mother, an honest woman. We seek a corruption-free society in all areas. Women are still less involved in corruption. Women have diversified skills. They have remained backward for ages. They are neglected and deprived from opportunities in life due to corruption. If we become conscious now in all areas, only then the women can build corruption-free family, society and a prosperous Bangladesh.

Angela Gomes
Executive Director, Banchte Shekha
“Our girls are relatively less corrupt”
How well a woman proves her skills, is not recognised easily. They have to prove their efficiency repeatedly because they are women. A woman is harassed in various ways, it makes their life miserable. Women are comparatively far away from corruption. Whatever is heard are small incidents. It is the males who are predominantly involved with corruption. There is also an effort to victimize women through corruption.

Baby Moudud
Editor-in-charge, Weekly Bichitra

“In the Absence of a Visit!”
Dr. Shamsul Haque, the resident Medical Officer of Sreepur... can be put in place. Now is the time for building such a base.

Tasmima Hossain
Editor, Fortnightly ‘Anannya’

“Not as male or female, we should shun corruption as human beings”
Women should also be strict on the question of curbing corruption. This firmness should emanate from the home. I do not see from where my husband brings money, I wear a lot of ornament, my son indulges in various whims, how and what my father brings miss our eyes. I may not be able to do anything in this situation as my financial base is weak. But I can at least protest. Not as male or female, we should shun corruption as human beings.

Alena Khan, Executive Director, BSEHR

“Civil Society has also become corrupt”
Like teachers and lawyers, an important segment of the civil society has also become corrupted. In rape cases, the physicians never declare that it is rape. In their report, they write - ‘may have been raped’. Consequently, the judicial process becomes difficult. Women are used as commodity for some business gain. There is need for accountability in these matters as well.

Maleka Begum
Leader of women’s rights movement

“Our country has not yet become fully rotten”
Corruption is widespread, so is its impact. Its virus has spread all over the globe. It is gradually assuming an acute shape. Just as consumer goods appear, so are hazardous goods. It is endangering everything - our faith, religion, culture. People irrespective of gender are suffering as a result. All-out efforts have to be made if we are to be emancipated from this. I believe, our country has not yet become fully rotten.

Halima Khatun, Language Veteran

“In the Absence of a Visit!”
Dr. Shamsul Haque, the resident Medical Officer of Sreepur Upazila Health and Family Welfare Centre tore down the prescription he wrote on his own pad during office hours after failing to get a visiting fee from the patient’s guardian. This incident took place at Sreepur Health Complex on 8 February. The patient’s guardian submitted a written complaint to the Upazila Health and Family Welfare Officer on the subject.

Source: Daily Bhorer Kagoj, 13 February 2006

“Women are used as a weapon of corruption as beings”
The means available to males for resorting to corruption are generally absent in case of females. The main advantage of women is that they lack experience in corruption. Her experience in women’s empowerment offers her opportunity to resist corruption. It is not that the women are merely victims of corruption. Women are also used as a weapon of corruption. If we can move forward with the victims at the grassroots level and if we can inculcate anti-corruption values among our children at family level, only then would we be able to resist corruption.

Shamima Parveen
National Expert – Gender, UNDP

“Consciousness creates resistance”
Women cannot easily indulge in corruption. She has conscience, consciousness. It is this consciousness which induces resistance. The women who have come forward to resist are in turn resisted by a section. It is a vicious cycle. We have to think how the civil society can be brought forward through its strengthening and how a framework of accountability can be put in place. Now is the time for building such a base.

Tasmima Hossain
Editor, Fortnightly ‘Anannya’
Corruption and Women: Experiences and Transformations in Professional Lives

Selina Hossain

Prologue:

The poster released by Transparency International Bangladesh on 9 December 2004 on the occasion of International Anti-corruption Day carried the slogan ‘Come, Let’s Fight Against Corruption - Together’. Men and women of various ages who were depicted in the poster forming a human chain clearly displayed a posture of resistance. The meaning of the poster was therefore clear. Men and women will have to be united for resisting corruption. Corruption darkens our national life and damages the dignity and self-respect of men and women. A mountain of discriminations crop up in the social structure, the illiterates, jobless and helpless women suffer most in a relative sense. Through corruption comes black money, moral degeneration of man, wantonness and repression by the authority. As a consequence, the sphere of family and social lives becomes smaller for women. As corruption taints good concepts, corruption by men belittles women on the question of social prestige.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf became the first woman President of Liberia in the African continent in November 2005. Behind the expectation of the Liberians for an economically prosperous and corruption-free country under a woman President was undoubtedly the thinking that a woman would run the government by raising above corruption. Our countrymen expect that the government has to be formed about subject in the presence of the United Nations. But despite so much happenings, women have to be prised our women go to foreign universities with the label of a corrupt. Consequently, the women feel threatened in their marginalised position because of corruption in various sectors. The fundamental rights of women are jeopardised on a large-scale. The government of the country gets involved in corruption in the absence of self-criticism. It becomes a collaborator government for catering to the interests of a handful. They cannot become real friends of the people. The elected government becomes an autocratic government by destroying the democratic spirit in the very beginning. For running the official, it is possible to flourish the investigations are made when allegations of corruption are raised against a sector. In that case, corruption cannot proliferate.

Empowerment:

Empowerment of women is a much talked about subject in the present-day world. Starting from the United Nations, countries under all governments are trying to look at the subject in a distinct way. The experts are viewing empowerment as an elementary index, through which women would be able to overcome their subordinate status. It is possible to flourish the healthy, conscious and intellectual lives of women through empowerment. But these positive evaluations would never lead to fulfilment of women’s lives if corruption becomes entwined with them. Corruption is a disease of power. And because of empowerment of corruption, many women are also not above corruption in their professional lives. There is no example in Bangladesh where the few women who rose to the top levels of administration did not get involved with patronised corruption. Many news items are published in the newspapers on leakage of question papers of BCS examinations or misappropriation of budgetary allocations for the Non-formal Education Directorate. But despite so much happenings, the question of accountability does not come to the fore, neither is anyone made accountable. The person during whose tenure such corruption takes place also does not set an example by resigning from her or his post. As a consequence, two kinds of social conflict emerge. Firstly, the traditional view that women cannot engage in corruption, is proved to be untrue and negative notions are formed about women. Secondly, harmful activities like corruption becomes the established norm due to lack of accountability in the absence of resistance. In this way, women become involved in corruption.

Self-criticism:

It is unfortunate that although Bangladesh topped the corruption list in surveys conducted by Transparency International a number of sectors, the country’s government did not examine the subject thoroughly. It strikes at our traditional value as the country’s head of government is a woman. It is natural for us to expect action from women if crimes of corruption are identified. But Bangladesh has not tried to find out through self-criticism where the fault lay? Why the image of the country was being tarnished by an international organisation? In a greater sense, why the people of the country as a whole have to bear the liability of corruption resorted to by a handful few, something with which the general people have no involvement, especially womenfolk? In this backdrop, our women go to international meetings-seminars, study at foreign universities with the label of a corrupt country. They feel embarrassed when asked about the negative image of their country. Corruption easily forms an institutional shape in the absence of punishments against the corrupt. Consequently, the women feel threatened in their marginalised position because of corruption in various sectors. The fundamental rights of women are jeopardised on a large-scale. The government of the country gets involved in corruption in the absence of self-criticism. It becomes a collaborator government for catering to the interests of a handful. They cannot become real friends of the people. The elected government becomes an autocratic government by destroying the democratic spirit in the very beginning. For running the official, it is possible to flourish the investigations are made when allegations of corruption are raised against a sector. In that case, corruption cannot proliferate.

Inspiration of International Women’s Day:

The slogan of the International Women’s Day as declared by the United Nations this year was “Women in decision-making: Meeting challenges, creating changes”. This decision-making theme clarifies the professional lives of women. This year, UNESCO made a call to assign the responsibility of writing editorials to women journalists on the occasion of International Women’s Day. Behind such inspirational calls by major global organisations was the gender-sensitive idea of strengthening the professional lives of women. In this way, women have to be provided the opportunity to advance forward. The governments of all countries have to make effective decisions for women’s advancement. Side by side, a supportive environment has to be created for implementing such decisions. Only then would the women get the opportunity to work in a corruption-free environment. In this way, they would remain above the lure of getting involved in corruption.

Epilogue:

The principal way for getting rid of corruption is to become united; build up resistance if required. That poster therefore represents our united strength. This strength cannot be achieved without the inevitable resistance of men and women. Curbing corruption is an essential task as the professional lives of women get entangled with the greater social milieu. Nowadays, the inspirations derived from International Women’s Day do not remain confined to women’s rights alone. It is a symbolic day now for building a social structure on the basis of equality of men and women. Corruption is a huge hindrance in this area. Fighting corruption for survival is a hard reality for today’s Bangladesh.

(Waves: TIB Newsletter 4)
Malawi Minister Sentenced to 5 years’ Jail on Charges of Corruption

A Malawi court has sentenced former Malawi education minister Yousuf Mawawa to five years' rigorous imprisonment on charges of corruption. Mawawa is the first top level official to be implicated in President Bingu wa Mutharika's high-profile war against corruption. Yousuf Mawawa has been charged with stealing US dollar 1360 from the state exchequer.

Source: Reuters, 15 February 2006

International Women’s Day At CCCs

Rajshahi, Natore, Chapai Nawabganj:
The CCC-Rajshahi organised a session of extempore speech and open discussion on the occasion of International Women’s Day on 8 March 2006. The topic was ‘Women in Decision Making’. The speakers put emphasis on awareness at individual, family and social levels for safeguarding women’s rights. The Day was observed by CCC-Natore Volunteers Group through daylong programmes. The Volunteers Group and CCC members participated in a rally organised by Women Affairs Department at 10 in the morning. In accordance with a previously set time-table, the Volunteers Group conducted a campaign at Rani Bhabani Women Government College after the rally. Around three hundred female students took part in it. CCC-Chapai Nawabganj arranged a discussion meeting at its office on the occasion of International Women’s Day at 5 in the afternoon.

Muktagacha, Nalitabar, Kishoreganj:
International Women’s Day was observed by CCC-Muktagacha and its Volunteers Group by organising rally, extempore speech and discussion session. People belonging to various classes and professions including teachers, journalists and CCC members participated in the discussion on the topic ‘Women’s participation needed for overall development of the country’. An extempore speech competition on the ‘Importance of International Women’s Day’ was organised after the discussion. A colourful rally was arranged on 8 March by CCC-Nalitabar and it’s Volunteers Group on the occasion of the day. The speakers at the discussion called upon all to come forward on the question of equal rights for men and women. The CCC-Kishoreganj and its Volunteers Group held a discussion meeting at its office. People from different strata participated in this program.

Sylhet, Sreemangal, Sunamganj:
The CCC-Sylhet organised a discussion meeting at its office premises on 11 March on the occasion of International Women’s Day. People belonging to various classes and professions including educationists, CCC members and TIB representatives presented their views on the occasion. The CCC-Sreemangal arranged a colourful rally on the occasion of International Women’s Day. The convenor of the CCC Professor Saiyed Mujeebur Rahman highlighted the significance of the day after the rally. During the rally organised by CCC-Sunamganj on the occasion of International Women’s Day, people from various segments of society were urged to take steps for checking the influence of corruption on women and their rights.

Jessore, Jhenaidah:
A discussion meeting was organised by CCC-Jessore on 9 March on the occasion of International Women’s Day. Held at its office, people belonging to various classes and professions including CCC members and educationists participated in it. The speakers emphasised on equal rights and participation of women in all spheres. A discussion meeting was held on the occasion of International Women’s Day in collaboration with CCC-Jhenaidah, Jhenaidah district branch of Bangladesh Mohila Parishad and Jhenaidah Nari Samaj Kelgan Samity. Held at the CCC auditorium, eminent personalities of society addressed the gathering.

Khulna:
The CCC-Khulna organised an experience-sharing meeting on ‘Problems created by corruption in the lives of women’. The meeting was held at the Umeshchandra Public Library auditorium on 8 March on the occasion of International Women’s Day.

Barisal:
A seminar titled ‘Women and their awareness in curbing corruption’ was held at Barisal BDS auditorium on 24 March. The keynote paper at the seminar was presented by Professor Shah Sajeda. Women leader Pushpa Guha and Professor Maksuda Begum were the discussants.

Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram:
International Women’s Day was observed at Rangpur through various programmes with the slogan ‘Corruption increases discrimination against women: Come let’s fight – corruption’. The programme included painting competition, rally and discussion meeting. The CCC accorded a reception to distinguished women of Rangpur on the occasion. The CCC-Kurigram observed the International Women’s Day by arranging rally and discussion meeting. Besides, leaflets on the day were distributed among the general masses on the occasion. The CCC-Lalmonirhat organised a rally in the town on the occasion of International Women’s Day. In addition, the CCC arranged a discussion meeting on the occasion and distributed leaflets on the theme of the day.
**Report Card Survey: Rajshahi Division**

**Government Hospital**

Rampant corruption and irregularities are taking place in the government hospitals of Rajshahi division. A report card survey conducted recently by CCCs showed that there were many problems including scarcity of supplied medicines, illegal transaction of money and unsatisfactory standard of healthcare, inattentiveness of physicians, poor quality of supplied food and dirty bathrooms. Besides, the general public had to spend additional amounts of money in 13 instances while receiving various clinical services including consultations, allocation of seats, tests and operations.

The survey was carried out between 1 April and 15 June 2005 for unearthing the intensity and magnitude of irregularities and corruption in government hospitals and to measure the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the general public. Information pertaining to a total of 2098 families belonging to various professions who received clinical services from government hospitals and health centres located in Rajshahi, Natore, Chapai Nawabganj, Rangpur, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat areas were included in the survey.

It was seen from the report card research that 35% of the patients who came to seek treatment at the outdoor department did not get any medicine, 54% got medicine partially, 5% of those who came to the outdoor department of government hospitals during the previous one year had to pay Taka 36 to the doctor on an average. Among those who received indoor treatment by taking admission in government hospitals, 12.4% had to pay Taka 753 each time to the doctor on an average. They had to make illegal payment of Taka 1100 for going to hospital 1.46 times during the year, which is completely illegal. Among those who were operated in government hospitals, 18% had to pay bribes worth Taka 859 on an average.

The survey also showed that 2% of the hospital patients had to pay tips worth Taka 54 on an average for food, 14% of the patients had to pay bribes worth Taka 50 on an average for getting seats in hospitals, 16% of those who took the assistance of hospital staffs for tasks other than bandage, injection and saline had to pay Taka 95 on an average as tips. Those who took treatment at government hospitals were not satisfied with the facilities.

A number of recommendations were made for improving hospital services on the basis of this survey. These included displaying the list of available medicines and food, spelling out the duty periods of doctors and nurses, hanging the list of legal fees on the notice board, stopping all kinds of illegal transactions, cleaning bathrooms, patient wards and corridors of hospitals twice a day, enhancing supervision of doctors and nurses, etc.

**City Corporation**

Most of the citizens of Rajshahi City Corporation have expressed their dissatisfaction at the services rendered by the Corporation. TIB and CCC-Rajshahi disclosed this while releasing the ‘Report Card Survey 2005’ research report on the services provided by Rajshahi City Corporation at a press conference on 23 March. The report was presented by the convener of the committee Advocate Golam Arif Tipu at the CCC office premises. The objectives of the report card survey included ascertaining the proportion of assigned tasks executed by the city corporation, identifying the problems faced by the citizens and determining means of bringing about more dynamism in the corporation's work. According to this research, 97% respondents said that there was excessive mosquito menace in their area. 96% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the performance of city-corporation with regard to spraying of insecticide.

According to 91% of respondents, the city authorities never took any measure for controlling the quality of food in restaurants and bazaars. 61% respondents opined that their localities lacked sufficient numbers of drains. 45% respondents claimed that the commissioners were not neutral in arbitrations. Among those who had to obtain trade licence, motor vehicle licence and indenting licence from the city corporation, 12% had to pay bribes at the rate of Taka 52 on an average. On the other hand, 42% citizens were dissatisfied with the performance of city mayor.

36% of the citizens were dissatisfied with the role played by Rajshahi City Corporation in improving communication network. On the other hand, 54% were dissatisfied with the authority's role in maintaining cleanliness of roads. The survey showed that 43% of the citizens were unhappy with the level of cleanliness in hats and bazaars and 73% were dissatisfied with the job of garbage removal by the corporation.

The recommendations made by TIB and CCC in the report for bringing about dynamism in the workings of Rajshahi City Corporation included not considering narrow 'party politics' while allocating budgets for different wards and releasing for public scrutiny various development programmes of the corporation, especially budget.

**Union Councils**

A majority of citizens have expressed their displeasure at the services rendered by various Union Councils (UPs) of Rajshahi division. This was revealed through a survey conducted by TIB and the CCCs. The survey was carried out in the UPs of sadar thanas under Natore, Chapai Nawabganj, Rangpur, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat districts. The survey report was released at the respective localities from January to March this year.

The survey showed that the level of citizen satisfaction at the UP’s role in developing roads was 5%. Thirty percent of the respondents claimed that the roads were not at all fit for traffic. 34% said that the chairmen/members were not neutral in their arbitrations. They resorted to irregularities in 86% of the cases, the citizens said. Only 9% of the respondents replied in the affirmative about any initiative by UP in setting up sanitary latrines. The research shows 27% of registrations at child-birth was done by the UPs voluntarily, the highest percentage of 36% being in Lalmonirhat, 19% of the citizens confessed giving Taka 17 on an average for the citizenship certificate.

The research showed that among those registered for relief, 38% were registered through normal process, 5% through paying bribes and 4% through influential relatives. It was gathered that Taka 875 were extracted from those who were included in the recipient list through bribery. Among the non-school-going children, the UP gave reminders to only 6% regarding school-attendance. 57% of the respondents in the survey reported that the roads were moderately clean while 40% claimed that they were dirty. On the other hand, 76% respondents said that the hats-bazaars were roughly clean and 16% claimed that they were dirty. 63% of the toll-givers said that the tolls collected by UP were in excess of the prescribed rate. The TIB and CCC put forward some recommendations for enhancing public satisfaction with the services rendered by the UPs. These included ignoring political considerations by the central government and the relevant ministry for ensuring balanced allocation of budgets and arranging training on transparency for the UP chairmen and members at the local and central levels.

**Municipal Authority**

A report card survey was conducted under the direct supervision of the Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCCs) of Rajshahi, Chapai Nawabganj, Natore, Rangpur, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat for ascertaining the level of satisfaction derived by citizens from municipal services. The citizens of these localities mostly revealed dissatisfaction with the municipal services.

Accorded to 48% of the respondents who participated in the survey, there were inadequate number of roads,
bridges and footpaths in the municipal areas. 57% of citizens were dissatisfied with the role played by the municipal authority in developing communication network. 58% of the respondents claimed that there was insufficient light for moving around during night time. On the other hand, 47% dubbed the roads and footpaths in their localities as dirty. 96% said that their areas lacked private toilets.

The findings of the survey showed that 96% of the respondents were dissatisfied at the role played by the municipal authorities in destroying mosquitoes. 48% conceded that steps were taken for ensuring supply of pure drinking water. Among those who took citizenship certificate from the municipalities, 43% had to pay bribes worth Taka 17 on an average.

58% claimed that the chairmen or members were not neutral during arbitrations. 32% households disclosed that they had to bribe the municipality for obtaining approval of designs for building construction. 51% expressed their dissatisfaction at the performance of city corporation mayors or municipal chairmen.

TIB and the CCCs put forward some recommendations for bringing about more dynamism in the activities of city corporations and municipalities. These included measures for informing the general public about the budgets of municipalities and city corporations, holding meetings by the elected representatives with the local inhabitants for knowing their grievances, taking steps on the basis of complaints and recommendations submitted in complaint boxes set up at various places, ensuring that receipts are given in all transactions, undertaking awareness programmes for keeping the roads and bazaars clean and a more active role by the municipality in collecting taxes from the public.

WORKSHOPS

**Primary and Secondary Education**

Two workshops were held with the objective of framing recommendations for solving existing problems in primary and mass education on the basis of information gathered from report card surveys on the subject conducted under the aegis of TIB. The first one was held on 24 March at the auditorium of Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industries and the second at the conference room of RDRS, Rangpur on 31 March. Members of the CCC Rajshahi, Chapai Nawabganj, Natore, Rangpur, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat districts and concerned officials and teachers involved with secondary and primary education were present at these workshops.

**Report Card Survey**

Two separate workshops were held under the aegis of TIB on introduction to report cards, methodology, questionnaire and fixing subject matter of surveys. The first one was held in Sylhet on 4 February with the participation of CCC members of Sylhet, Sunamganj and Sreemangal. The second one was held on 24 February at Pirojpur with the participation of CCC members of Barisal, Pirojpur and Jhalakati. 16 CCC members participated in the Sylhet workshop including the convenor of CCC-Sylhet Advocate Emad Ullah Shahidul Islam, convenor of CCC-Sunamganj Nurul Rab Chowdhury and CCC-Sreemangal convenor Prof. Sayeed Mujeebur Rahman. 24 CCC members participated in the Pirojpur workshop including the convenor of CCC-Pirojpur Professor Sheikh Sayedur Rahman, convenor of Barisal CCC Advocate Muhammad Ismail Hossain Negaban and Jhalakati CCC convenor Professor Md. Rustam Ali.

**Opinion-Sharing Meeting on Land Ports**

Two separate opinion-sharing meetings were held on 7 January at Benapole Parjatan Hotel and on 13 February at Teknaf Ne Tong Parjatan Hotel with the objectives of making the draft TIB report on “Benapole and Teknaf Land Ports: A Diagnostic Study” more informative. 40 participants including representatives of Benapole C & F Agents Association, Benapole Transport Owners’ Association, Benapole C & F Employees Union, leaders of the executive committee of Benapole Port Labour Union attended the opinion-sharing meeting held at Benapole. On the other hand, 54 persons including local business leaders, C & F Agents Association, leaders of Transport Owners’ Association, local journalists and labour leaders of the port attended the opinion-sharing meeting held at Teknaf. At both the meetings, Senior Programme Officer (Policy and Research) of TIB Md. Sydur Rahman Molla presented the research report. The participants concurred with the research findings and supported the recommendations put forward in the report.

**TV Talk Show**

The topic of the TV Talk Show ‘GrameenPhone Teleshomoy’ on 6 January was ‘Curbing corruption at the local level: Role of the civil society’. Those present as discussants were the convenor of CCC-Kurigram Advocate A.T.M Enamul Haque Chowdhury Chand, member of CCC-Jamalpur Advocate Shamin Ara and the TIB Executive Director. While dwelling on corruption at local level and the role of civil society, they said, local corruption is the main problem at local levels. Here, irregularities in local government institutions later take the shape of national level corruption. Speaking on the role the civil society can play to curb local level corruption, they said the civil society can play the role of a catalyst. Here, the roles played by the government organizations and especially the political parties become most important.

The main topic of the ‘GrameenPhone Teleshomoy’ TV Talk Show broadcast on 31 March was ‘Women can play in curbing corruption’. While dwelling on the role of women in curbing corruption through their empowerment, the speakers said that women were harmed, both directly and indirectly, because of corruption. But it was the women on the fringes who were harmed most. How women became victims of corruption within family, society and jobs and how they support or encourage corruption at family level also came up in the discussion. The discussants called upon all to help create awareness among women and to pledge not to tolerate corruption. The Executive Director of Banchte Shekha Angela Gomes, litterateur Selina Hossain and TIB Executive Director participated in the discussion. Conducted by media personality Muhammad Jahangir, these two shows were telecast live on Channel-i.
Signing of Anti-corruption Convention demanded at Annual Meeting of Members

The members of TIB made a strong plea to the government to sign the UN Convention Against Corruption immediately. Held at the Hotel Abakash auditorium of Mohakhali, the “Annual Meeting of Members 2005”, TIB also made a special call to make the Anti-Corruption Commission effective without any further delay.

The members expressed their deep anxiety regarding widespread corruption in Bangladesh and emphasised on making the TIB programmes richer and multidirectional in order to strengthen the social movement against corruption. They expressed the view that the passage of over one year after the pledge made by the Law Minister in favour of signing the UN Convention went against the political commitment of the government to curb corruption. Side by side, they termed the failure of the Anti-Corruption Commission to frame specific strategies or programmes as frustrating. The speakers said, citizens belonging to various classes and professions, especially students and youths, will have to be involved in the social movement against corruption initiated by TIB for making it more effective.

Expressing their solidarity with the goals, objectives, values and code of conduct of TIB, the members made a pledge to jointly work with concerned people in hating and curbing corruption and in strengthening the social movement against it. The members of TIB Trustee Board and officials were present in the meeting. The meeting reviewed the activities of TIB during 2005 and held detailed discussions on future strategies including action plan for the year 2006.

It may be mentioned that TIB has been offering membership to various professionals and general citizens including students and youths who are interested in strengthening anti-corruption movement in Bangladesh. They get the opportunity to be involved in various activities of TIB after becoming member. The members receive quarterly newsletter of TIB. Besides, they can purchase various TIB publications at a discount. They provide valuable advice by attending quarterly Members’ Day in addition to the Annual Meeting of Members.

21 February Observed

The 21st of February embodies the spirit of resurgence of the Bangladeshi people against the corruption of ruling classes. Today’s Bangladesh emerged by treading that very path. But the spirit of Ekushey is fading because of the state of corruption in the country today. That is why TIB holds the view that corruption is against the spirit of Ekushey. The people of the country must wage a social movement against corruption in order to build a well-governed and corruption-free Bangladesh by embracing the spirit of Ekushey. TIB has been observing the day since last year by showing due respect to the language martyrs. On 21 February this year, TIB officials and their families placed floral wreaths at the martyrs’ memorial by taking part in a long and orderly rally. TIB also printed attractive greeting cards and published advertisements in newspapers. A 2-day long sticker campaign was waged at the Ekushey Book Fair on Bangla Academy premises. Besides, TIB’s anti-corruption TV advertisements were broadcast on various TV channels.

Visit by the Students of Bhashani University

The students of Criminology and Police Science department of Tangail’s Moulana Bhashani University of Science and Technology visited TIB office on 9 March. Their main objective for the visit was to know about various anti-corruption programmes of TIB. The students were briefed about various TIB activities, research strategy, data analysis and statistical applications.

The Executive Director, Research Director and other officials were present on behalf of TIB. On the other hand, the varsity team comprised of 4 teachers and 48 students.

Opinion-Sharing with Investigative Journalists

The investigative journalists who had won TIB awards for investigative journalism met at a preparatory meeting on 5 March with the goal of constituting a forum of investigative journalists. The journalists who were present agreed to form a forum and start its activities. A Convening Committee was formed with one convener, 2 joint conveners and 1 member-secretary with the objective of running the forum’s activities smoothly. The Executive Director of TIB and other concern officials were present in the meeting.
Various activities are being undertaken by TIB and the Committees of Concerned Citizens at various places of the country for generating awareness against corruption. These are presented below briefly:

An opinion-sharing meeting was held with the journalists of local and national periodicals at the office of CCC-Brahmanbaria for explaining the mission, vision and programmes of TIB and CCCs.

CCC-Chakaria has written anti-corruption slogans on some walls. This wall-writing campaign was undertaken at the request of local citizens by targeting the walls of upazila land office, police station, office of the UNO, LGED and the court of magistracy.

The office of CCC-Chandpur and the Advice and Information Centre were inaugurated on 28 February by the CCC convener Professor Manohar Ali. Before the inauguration, a discussion meeting was held on the topic ‘Anti-Corruption Movement in Bangladesh: The Role of TIB and CCCs.’ The keynote paper was presented by Dr. Iftekharuzzaman.

CCC-Chittagong has initiated a programme of forming Citizens for Transparency (Shwajian) with the involvement of people who are striving to lead honest lives against the current trend of a society submerged in corruption. The CCC-Comilla organised an anti-corruption seminar on 31 January. The keynote paper was presented here by the TIB Executive Director. An orientation course was held at the Shapla Auditorium of Bangladesh Rural Development Academy (BARD) on 11 February for the CCC members on “TIB’s movement and the role of CCCs.”

A daylong orientation session on “CCC and TIB” was held on 28 February at BDS hall-room of Barisal for the CCC members of Barisal, Jhalakati and Pingipur to provide a clear idea about the mission, vision and programmes of TIB. An opinion-sharing meeting was held on 20 February under the aegis of CCC-Jamalpur with the members of School Managing Committee of Hajipur Government Primary School. A morning procession, discussion meeting and cultural programme was organised by the volunteers group on 21 February on the occasion of International Mother Language Day. Besides, the volunteers group of Jamalpur distributed warm clothes among 200 cold-hit persons of Jamalpur railway station on 26 January.

An opinion-sharing meeting was held on 23 February on the occasion of opening of Jalalakati CCC office. After the meeting, prizes were distributed among the winners of essay competition arranged on the occasion of Language Martyrs’ and International Mother’s Language Day.

An opinion sharing meeting was held on 16 February on the occasion of inauguration of CCC-Sreemangal. The programmes of CCC-Sunamganj were launched on 24 February. A citizens meeting was held on the occasion at local Shahid Jagat Jyoti Library. The Upazila Executive Officer inaugurated the office of CCC-Patya on 3 March. A discussion meeting was held at the CCC office after the inauguration.

Besides, opinion-sharing meetings were held under the aegis of 6 CCCs of Dhaka division, namely Mymensingh, Muktagacha, Naitabar, Kishoreganj, Jamalpur and Madhupur during January-February 2006. The speakers called for spreading TIB activities to far flung corners of the country.

On Charges of Accepting Bribe

The OC of Jhalakati sadar police station Sohrab Ali and SI Muniruzzaman were suspended on 14 March on charges of accepting bribes and harassing people. The accused brought some people forcefully from the first floor of Hotel Deedar located at the centre of the town and extracted Taka 14 thousand as bribes after bringing charges of planning a bomb attack. While investigating the case after it was brought to his notice, the Additional DIG of Barisal found it to be true.

Source: The Daily Naya Diganta, 16 March 2006

US Congressman Jailed

A former Republican Congressman of USA has been sentenced to 8 years 4 months imprisonment for indulging in corruption and bribery. The verdict delivered on 3 March against this former Congressman and Vietnam war veteran Randy Duke Cunningham (64) charging him with accepting bribes worth 24 lakh dollar, evading tax and attempting to influence a defence pact. A case was filed against him on the basis of these charges last November. The court ordered Cunningham to pay taxes amounting to 18 lakh dollar in addition to 100 months imprisonment. It is the maximum punishment in a verdict against any Congressman.

Source: The Daily Amar Desh, 8 March 2006
Global Corruption Report 2006

Theft, bribery and extortion rob millions of proper healthcare


For the millions of poor held hostage by unethical providers, stamping out corruption in health care is a matter of life and death. “Corruption in health care costs more than money. When an infant dies during an operation because an adrenaline injection to restart her heart was actually just water — how do you put a price on that?” said Huguette Labelle, Chair of Transparency International. “The price of corruption in health care is paid in human suffering.”

“Corruption eats away at the public’s trust in the medical community. People have a right to expect that the drugs they depend on are real. They have a right to think that doctors place a patient’s interests above profits. And most of all, they have a right to believe that the health care industry is there to cure, not to kill,” said David Nussbaum, Chief Executive of Transparency International.

Millennium Development Goals under threat

Corruption is undermining progress towards the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals, in particular the three related directly to health: reduced child mortality; improved maternal health; and the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. With the target date for achieving the goals just nine years away, the global community is already off target to meet them – and corruption is one of the primary causes.

Haemorrhaging health systems

The report shines a powerful light on the global US $3 trillion health services industry, exposing a maze of complex and opaque systems that are a fertile field for corruption. While the majority of people employed in the sector perform their functions with diligence and integrity, there is evidence of bribery and fraud across the breadth of medical services, from petty theft and extortion to massive distortions of health policy and funding fed by payoffs to officials.

Corruption permeates the provision of health care, whether public or private, simple or sophisticated. Public health budgets become subverted by unethical officials for private use. Hospitals function as self-service stores for illicit enrichment, with unclear procurement of equipment and supplies and ghost employees on the payroll. Health workers demand fees for services that should be free.

State of corruption worldwide

The Global Corruption Report 2006 also presents reports on the state of corruption and governance in 45 countries around the world, including troubling evidence of financial irregularities in post-tsunami relief operations.

Referring to Bangladesh, the report notes that the long-awaited Anti-Corruption Commission was established in November 2004, but could not make any difference on the state of corruption in the country. “Continued administrative and financial control by the government, lack of strategic vision of the Commissioners, their failure to work as a team, and rehiring of staff from the former Bureau of Anti-Corruption inhibit the Commission’s impartiality and effective functioning”, said Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB. The report says that corruption in the health sector in Bangladesh results in the deprivation of ordinary people, especially the disadvantaged, of the benefits of basic health facilities and services.

Recommendations

The report recommends that cure for corruption in the health care industry must start with transparency. Donor and recipient governments should grant easy access to information on key aspects of health-related projects, budgets and policies. Budget information should be available on the internet and subject to independent audits. Adopt and enforce codes of conduct for health workers and private sector companies and provide ongoing anti-corruption training. Incorporate conflict-of-interest rules in drug regulation and physician licensing procedures. Public health policies and projects should be independently monitored, both at the national and international level, and their reports should be open to public scrutiny. Procurement processes should be competitive, open and transparent. Rigorous prosecution will send the message that corruption in health care will not be tolerated.

It may be mentioned that Global Corruption Report is basically a compilation of articles by specialists on the state of corruption in the world. Last year’s report focused on reducing corruption in the construction industry and the need for establishing transparency in government purchases and procurement. The 2004 report dwelt on the rules of funding for political parties in different countries of the world and the culture of vote-buying. The subject-matter of the 2003 report was ensuring access to information. It may be mentioned that this report does not have any link to the Corruption Perception Index of various countries published by TI each year.

TI’s Meeting with Sir Bob Geldof

Transparency International held a meeting with the leader of global war against poverty Sir Bob Geldof in Berlin on 13 February. The meeting discussed formulation of strategies for ensuring accountability in the implementation of pledges made by the G-8 nations for providing development assistance to the developing countries during the G8 Gleneagles Summit.
Palagaan Group

The Palagaan Group of Nalitabari staged their regular show of Palagaan at Panchgaon Bazaar on 5 March. Another two shows were performed at Ambagan and Baromari on 6 and 12 March respectively.

Kurigram People’s Theatre Group

The newly formed people’s theatre group of CCC-Kurigram staged its first production ‘Ekti Kabar Khorar Itikotha’ (Annals of grave-digging) at a programme organised by Sammilita Sanskritik Jote at the premises of Kurigram Shahid Minar on the occasion of International Mother’s Language Day on 21 February. Besides, two consecutive shows were staged on 7 January at Jogadaha union bazaar of sadar upazila and another two shows on 20 January at Shulkur bazaar of Panchgachi union.

Premiere show of ‘Jago Manush’

Based on a saga of deprived people, the premiere show of the play ‘Jago Manush’ (Wake up Human) was staged at Sreenangal municipality ground on 26 March. Between 1500 to 2000 people including students, teachers, businessmen, job-holders, elected representatives, journalists and labourers gathered at the venue to watch the show. Sreenangal is a tea plantation town of Bangladesh. Life in this town revolves around the tea gardens. The workers are weak because of ignorance, lack of education and awareness. ‘Jago Manush’ is based on the story of these helpless people who are victims of corruption.

Work on formation of new people’s theatre groups progressing

Work on formation of new people’s theatre groups are in progress under the supervision of TIB inspired Committees of Concerned Citizens Primary work on the formation of groups at Pirojpur, Jhenaidah, Comilla, Rajshahi and Kishoreganj has already been completed. The people’s theatre group under the CCC-Sreenangal has already been launched. It is expected that the groups at Pirojpur, Jhenaidah and Kishoreganj would be finalised by May. It may be mentioned that alongside formation of new groups, new members are being inducted into existing groups.

Nalitabari People’s Theatre Group

‘Durnitir Shimany’ (On the Borders of Corruption) – a production of Nalitabari people’s theatre group, was staged on 5 and 6 February at Jhenajati and Cheraili Bazaar ground of Nalitabari. Besides, another show was arranged by the group on the ground adjacent to Nalitabari rubber dam on 9 March.

Lalmorhat People’s Theatre Group

Premiere show of ‘Sharbanasha Teesta’ (Catastrophic Teesta) – the first production of newly formed Lalmorhat people’s theatre group was staged on the CCC premises on 28 February.

Gambhira Group

The Chapai Nawabganj Gambhira Group, run under the supervision of CCC-Chapai Nawabganj staged shows on 13 January and 21 February at Shibalta Mor and Shahid Minar premises of the town respectively. Besides, another two shows were held on the occasion of Independence-Day on 26 March on the compound adjacent to the district stadium and at Bhuban Mohan Park under the invitation of CCC-Rajshahi.

Rangpur People’s Theatre Group

The Rangpur people’s theatre group staged its regular show of ‘Andhar’ (Darkness) on 31 January at Zatfarganj Government Primary School ground. Another two shows by the group were staged on 28 February and 28 March at Paglapir, Buirhat and Shyampur Bazaar ground respectively.

Annual Drama Festival 2006 of Jahangirnagar Theatre

At a discussion meeting organised by Jahangirnagar Theatre on the Mukto Mancha of Jahangirnagar University, artist Hashem Khan called upon the country’s youths to join the anti-corruption movement. Those who participated in the discussion included Professor Dr. Salm Ali Deen, theatre personality Mamunur Rashid, drama director Kayes Chowdhury and TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman.

Opening the discussion, Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, TIB has always been trying to involve the country’s youth community in the social movement against corruption. With this goal, TIB has initiated a Youth Engagement Programme through which encouragement is being provided to various cultural initiatives. He also said, TIB believes that the country can be freed from corruption only through massive participation of the youths in the social movement against corruption. The Jahangirnagar Theatre staged the play ‘Jantu’ (Animal) after the discussion session in the concluding part of the programme.

Sharon’s Son Sentenced to Jail

Omri Sharon, the son of Israel’s Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has been sentenced to 9 months imprisonment in a corruption case. He was awarded this punishment after he was found guilty in the case which alleged that election funds were raised illegally for the election campaign of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Omri Sharon was charged with, among other things, forging documents last November. After that, Omri resigned from the Knesset anticipating that he would have to undergo imprisonment. Source: BBC, 15 February 2006

Corruption Reduces in Asia

This has been found in a survey conducted by the Hong Kong based organisation called Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC). According to the findings of this survey, corruption has decreased in all Asian countries with the exception of Thailand and Singapore. Although Singapore has been ranked as the least corrupt country in the survey, the next two countries in the ranking are Japan and Hong Kong. Though corruption has decreased, Indonesia has been found to be the most corrupt country among the countries surveyed. Source: Financial Express, 27 February 2006
**Corruption-free Bangladesh**
The lives of the general people are now afflicted by corruption. TIB is waging a social movement for curbing it. A Bangladesh, free from bribery and corruption, is the demand of all citizens of this country. I urge the country's politicians to forget all past conflicts and work with the goal of establishing a corruption-free Bangladesh; so that we can raise our heads in the comity of nations.

Md. Ali Hossain, Moulvibazar, Sylhet

**Bribe-givers should also be apprehended**
Like Hong Kong, the Anti-Corruption Commission will also have to arrest bribe-givers on the spot in Bangladesh. There should also be arrangements for putting handcuffs on them at the place of occurrence. This is because, Hong Kong was successful in applying this technique. I welcome any such initiative of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Enamul Haque, Fakirpara, Dinajpur

**Want to receive newsletter**
I really liked the 3rd issue (year-9) of your newsletter after getting it from one of your staff. I am interested to read the newsletter Waves on a regular basis. I request you to send me the newsletter by post.

Mohammad Ruhul Quddus, Upazila reporter, Daily Inquilab, Keshabpur, Jessore

**Want to form CCC**
TIB has built a countrywide network with conscious citizens all over the country with the objective of waging a social movement against corruption, known as CCC. What should we do if we want to set up such a CCC in our area? Does the TIB have any plan to constitute a CCC at Noakhali sadar?

Aktaruzzaman Bhuiyan, Sonapur, Noakhali

We sincerely thank you for your interest in TIB and CCCs. Presently 30 CCCs are engaged in waging a social movement against corruption. We have plans to set up another 6 CCCs in phases during the current year subject to demand and feasibility studies throughout the country. We shall keep under consideration the demand for formation of CCC at Noakhali sadar. We hope that alongside TIB, conscious citizens of other areas of the country would also come forward and play a leading role in transforming their respective localities into well-governed islands of integrity. TIB is ready to provide any advice on the subject.

-Authority

**To Readers**
Readers are requested to send write-up on corruption, democracy and good governance. The write-up should preferably be within 1000 words. TIB attaches importance to objective articles for publication in the newsletter.

**Address for sending write-up:**
TIB Newsletter, Transparency International Bangladesh, House-1 (5th floor), Road 23, Gulshan 1, Dhaka-1212.

**PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS**
**April-June 2006**
- Inter-University Debate Competition – April
- Opinion-sharing meeting with CCC Conveners – April
- Publication of Research Report on Land Ports – April
- Inauguration of CCC offices at Kushtia, Jhenaidah and Bagerhat – May
- Members’ Day – May
- People’s Theatre Workshop – May
- Publication of Parliament Watch, Corruption Database Research Reports – June
- Investigative Journalism Award Ceremony – June

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