Anti-Corruption Youth Gathering
The Role of the Parliament and Members of the Parliament
The Charter of Citizens’ Expectations

The parliament, as one of the key pillars of democracy and the national integrity system, and Members of the Parliament (MPs) play the most important role in institutionalization of democracy, promotion of democratic values and practice, and establishing good governance through ensuring transparency and accountability of the government. The Parliament is mandated to function as the forum for a) debate reflecting public interest and expectations; b) making or reforming laws to promote the interest and expectations of the people ensuring equal rights and opportunities of all citizens; and c) hold the government accountable to the people through the proper functioning of the various committees of the parliament.

The MPs, they should refrain from undue sycophancy on the one hand and unwarranted negative criticisms on the other. The MPs must abandon the politics of confrontation and the “winner takes all” attitude. Politics should be about cooperation on key issues of national interest and not a zero-sum game.

The people expect that the Speaker of the Parliament will play a genuinely neutral role. They want the MPs raise their voice independently, objectively and impartially, even if it may be against respective party position. In this regard MPs should take initiatives to review and amend the Article 70 of the Constitution so that except for non-confidence motions and voting in the budget sessions, MPs can raise their independent views even if it contradicts party position. People do not want to see the politics of boycotting the parliament.

The people want that the political parties will practice mutual respect and tolerance towards each others. They should exercise freedom of expression and logic, and create the opportunity of self-criticism in their own parties. Overall, political parties should become breeding grounds of democratic practice. The people want that every political party will elect at least 33% women in their organizational committees at various levels, and nominate the same ratio of women candidates in Parliamentary election.

The people also want that a Standing Committee be formed to implement equal rights of religious and ethnic minorities and the disabled persons. This committee will play an important role in reviewing of all proposed bills or reform proposals to ensure that these conform to the rights and aspirations of such disadvantaged groups.

The people also want that the Parliament, MPs, Government and political parties will be committed and take necessary measures to keep the institutions of the National Integrity System such as the Election Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission, the Public Service and Public Service Commission, the Judiciary, and the Police Department can function independently without partisan political interference. This is indispensable for establishing the rule of law and for creating conditions conducive to good governance and institutionalization of democracy.

The views and expectations contained in this document being those of the people of Bangladesh, TIB calls upon all stakeholders, especially the Parliament and MPs as well as other relevant institutions and individuals to give due consideration to implement its provisions.

Regular attendance in the Parliament, constructive discussion on public interest, enactment of law and its amendment, and effective role of Parliamentary Standing Committees are indispensable for representing people’s voice in the parliament and establishing people’s rights. The institutionalization of democracy depends on cooperative relationship between the ruling and opposition parties, confrontational relationship between them serves no one’s purpose, and be worst enemies of democracy.

People want a Code of Conduct for the MPs, that would set some benchmarks of ethical, moral and political behaviour in and outside the Parliament for which their electors will be proud of. They will never use abusive languages or terms against other MPs, they should refrain from undue sycophancy on the one hand and unwarranted negative criticisms on the other. The MPs must abandon the politics of confrontation and the “winner takes all” attitude. Politics should be about cooperation on key issues of national interest and not a zero-sum game.

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The youth have played a leading role in all democratic movements in Bangladesh. The contributions of the youth in the mass movements of 1952, 1969, 1971 and 1990 were unforgettable. We won the victory and an independent country in exchange for the fresh blood of a million youth. But Bangladesh lags behind today due to the greed for money, nepotism and corruption of some ambitious people. TIB is conducting various programmes to motivate the youth of this country in order to overcome this challenge. The ‘Wake up People’ campaign is one of the most prominent among these. The ACC and TIB started this in 2007 as a programme for engaging the citizens in the anti-corruption campaign. Alongside various activities for promoting citizens’ engagement by upholding the slogan ‘Wake up People, Resist Corruption’, the coverage of this programme has been widened by organizing anti-corruption youth gatherings at CCC areas in the initial stage. The ACC, TIB, CCC and local Corruption Prevention Committees are organizing these gatherings in a coordinated manner. Participated by the youths, this programme also includes anti-corruption art and debate competitions, cartoon exhibitions, information fairs, rallies, oath-taking ceremonies and anti-corruption concerts, and distribution of posters, leaflets and stickers. In continuation of this trend, anti-corruption rallies were held in Chapai Nawabganj, Satkhira and Rangpur on 21-23 July, 9-12 August and 26 August respectively.

The 3-daylong youth gathering started at Chapai Nawabganj on 21 July. The information fair and cartoon exhibition were organized at the local Harimohan Government High School ground which was inaugurated by the Deputy Commissioner Md. Sirajul Haque Khan. The Superintendent of Police SM Mahfuzul Haque Nuruzzaman BPM was present as Special Guest on the occasion. A cultural programme was held with the participation of local artistes of radio and television. Along with anti-corruption information fair and cartoon exhibition, a reception for GPA-5 received SSC examinees was organized on the second day of the programme on 22 July. A colourful cultural programme was also staged on the day with the participation of CCC Rajshahi YES Group members and local artistes. The anti-corruption concert was held at the Chapai Nawabganj district stadium on 23 July. The stadium was full to the brim with spectators within 4 p.m. in the afternoon. The Chief Guest of the programme and Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Lt. General Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury (retd.) urged the youth of the country to play an active and effective role in the anti-corruption movement. Along with TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, eminent citizens including local CCC Convener Advocate Abu Md. Saiful Islam Reza and Member-Secretary of district Corruption Prevention Committee Md. Masihul Karim Babu delivered their speeches. Ayub Bachhu and LRB, Shahed, Babar Ali, Mehub Raza, Angkan and the local Gambhira Group rendered songs in the programme.

A 4-daylong anti-corruption youth gathering at Satkhira was also started on 9 August. A cartoon exhibition was arranged on the occasion at the local Press Club. Satkhira Police Superintendent inaugurated the programme at 4
p.m. in the afternoon. Besides, a reception was accorded to the GPA-5 obtaining SSC examinees at the local Upazila Auditorium and prizes were distributed among the winners of anti-corruption art competition on the second day of the programme on 10 August. The anti-corruption concert was organized on the last day on 12 August at Satkhira district stadium. The assembled people in the concert pledged to remain free from all types of corruption in their personal and professional lives and play a more active and effective role in the anti-corruption movement. Different Touch, S. I. Tutul and local artistes rendered songs at the gathering attended by thousands of youth. They not only captivated the audience with their melodious music, but also urged them to become more vocal against corruption. Reflecting this call, the assembled spectators pledged to become more vocal against corruption side by side with making a commitment to hate corruption from the core of their heart. Commending the firm stand taken by the youths against corruption, the Chief Guest and TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, “Whenever any injustice occurred in this country, the youth played the most powerful and leading role in resisting that. TIB believes that it is the invincible youths who can build a well-governed Bangladesh by eradicating the garbage of corruption”. Eminent citizens of the town including CCC Co-Convener Advocate Abul Kalam Azad, member of the district Corruption Prevention Committee Professor Matiur Rahman, Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Kefayetullah and Superintendent of Police Mirza Abdullah-Hel-Baqui also spoke on the occasion.

The anti-corruption youth gathering was inaugurated at Rangpur on 26 August through a cycle-rally. The ACC Commissioner Md. Habibur Rahman inaugurated the rally at 11.30 a.m. Starting from the office of CCC-Rangpur, the rally went round main thoroughfares of the town and ended at the Press Club premises. Thousands of people thronged the district stadium in the afternoon for attending the anti-corruption concert. The assembled youths pledged to participate actively for curbing corruption. The slogan ‘Wake up People, Resist Corruption’ reverberated from the mouths of thousands of youths. Mehreen, the band ‘Ganwallah’ and S. I. Tutul rendered songs in the programme. The chief guest of the event ACC Commissioner Md. Habibur Rahman said, “The strength of the youth lies in rejecting anomalies and resisting irregularities. This indomitable strength of the youth will have to be brought to the fore in the collective efforts for curbing corruption. Their timely initiative can save the nation from the dark clutches of corruption”. Apart from TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, eminent citizens of the district including local CCC Convener Sadrul Alam Dulu and the Chairman of district Corruption Prevention Committee Dr. Nazmul Islam also spoke on the occasion.

It may be mentioned that anti-corruption youth gatherings are being organized at various places of the country under the ‘Wake up People’ campaign. The main objectives of the youth gatherings are to generate awareness among the ordinary citizens of the country, especially the youths, and to expedite and strengthen the ongoing anti-corruption movement by ensuring their spontaneous participation.
Citizen’s Charter and Bangladesh

Arif H. Khan

Citizen’s Charter is one of the commendable initiatives of the present caretaker government. According to the Bangladesh Constitution, “All powers in the Republic belong to the people” and, “Every person in the service of the Republic has a duty to strive all times to serve the people”. A sizeable portion of the public expenditure for providing services to the people is supplied by the people themselves through direct and indirect taxes. Consequently, the people have the right to expect a minimum standard for these services as tax-payers and owners of the Republic. The declaration that a service-providing organization makes through public consultation in relation to its services on the basis of people’s expectations and its own capability is called a ‘Citizen’s Charter’. That is, a Citizen’s Charter is a document prepared by a service-providing organization with the participation of the people, which explains the nature of services to be provided by the organization, what would be time-frame and applicable fees, what steps would be taken for raising the quality of services and where and how people would lodge complaints if they did not receive appropriate services etc. A charter document should contain the vision and mission of a service-providing organization, relevant laws and policies, standard of services, details of clients, measures taken for improving service-quality, grievance redressing mechanism, charter monitoring and evaluation system, contact address, expectations from the clients, dates of formulation and review of the charter etc.

The citizen’s charter has its origin in the United Kingdom, during the rule of Conservative Party government led by John Major in 1991. Its main goal was continuous improvement of public sector services provided to the countrymen, so that they could meet the demands and expectations of the recipients. This programme was re-launched by the Labour Party government led by Tony Blair in 1998 with the nomenclature ‘Services First’. At this juncture, nine main principles for the citizens’ charter were fixed: 1) set standards of service; 2) be open and provide full information; 3) consult and involve; 4) encourage access and the promotion of choice; 5) treat all fairly; 6) put things right when they go wrong; 7) use resources effectively; 8) innovate and improve; and 9) work with other provider. Because of the success of the citizens’ charter programme in the United Kingdom, it became rapidly popular all over the world.

Although no specific demands were made on behalf of the civil society of Bangladesh for preparation of citizen’s charter, the present government took proactive initiative for the purpose, which is a reflection of the government’s commitment regarding improvement of quality of services provided by it. But these charters have not been able to play any notable role till now in improving the quality of public services, as appropriate procedures have not been followed. The procedural lapses in the formulation of citizen’s charter in Bangladesh have been as follows: Firstly, the participation of the people or the service-recipients was not ensured in the preparation of charters. No efforts were made to understand what kind of services the stakeholders expect from the relevant service organization. Secondly, no specific definition was fixed for the citizen’s charter. As a result, there is lack of common understanding across the civil service as far as citizen’s charter is concerned. Thirdly, the citizen’s charter was not introduced on a pilot basis in any organization for the purpose of gaining experience, and the charters in other organizations were not framed in the light of problems encountered in the pilot scheme. Fourthly, the responsibility for coordination of citizen’s charter programme was not assigned to any specific organization. As a consequence, the charters were prepared without any guidance. Fifthly, no initiatives were noticed for involving the staff of different levels, especially cutting edge staff, of the service-providing organizations in implementation of the citizen’s charters and for raising their capacity. Sixthly, wide publicity and generation of mass awareness were required for the success of citizen’s charter. But no such initiative was noticed in Bangladesh. Seventhly, no mechanism has been devised till now for monitoring and evaluation of the charters. Eighthly, the local level citizen’s charters were prepared by committees at the central level, instead of through participation by the local people. As these were imposed from above, they did not reflect the requirements at the local level; on the other hand, no urge could be generated within the local administration for their implementation. Ninthly, only one generic charter has been prepared in case of many services, which made them mainly service-centric in nature. But separate institution specific citizen’s charters should be framed for these services.

Some recommendations are given below in order to make the citizen’s charter initiative successful:

1. To give the responsibility to a particular regulatory organization body to coordinate the initiative of citizen’s charter initiative;
2. To pay more attention to the citizen’s charter of the organizations under the ministries which are directly related for providing services to the people;
3. To form a taskforce in each of the concerned organizations involving various stakeholders in order to formulate citizen’s charter through the participation of the citizens and of the field-level workers in each level of the citizen’s charter programme;
4. To give the most priority to the organizations with large public interface (such as hospital, railway, passport office, land office etc.).
5. To take assistance of various NGOs and CBOs in order to mobilise people and massive publicity of the charters;
6. To improve already formulated charters through people’s participation;
7. To ensure the inclusion of essential elements in each citizen’s charter;
8. To formulate charters for local service delivery agencies at the local level;
9. To assign a official in each of the concerned organizations as a responsible person for citizen’s charter and to create necessary mechanisms (such as complain/opinion box, counter for assistance etc.);
10. To arrange training for concerned officials specially field-levels officials on the citizen’s charter;
11. To include the citizen’s charter in the training of various governmental training organizations;
12. To link performance evaluation of the employees of the concerned institutions with its citizen’s charter;
13. To take initiative for the massive publicity about the citizen’s charter through mass media and different communication materials;
14. To take steps for the periodic internal and external evaluation of each charter and to review the charter based on that;
15. To earmark special budget for the complement and implementation of the citizen’s charter.

(Summary of the key-note paper presented in a seminar jointly organized by Manusher Jonno Foundation and Transparency International Bangladesh at Brac Centre Inn on September 1, 2008.)

Writer- Programme Manager, Manusher Jonno Foundation and Member, TIB

Seminar on Citizen’s Charter: What, Why and How

Inspired by the present caretaker government, a number of government institutions have introduced citizen’s charter recently. This charter can play a far-reaching role to preserve the fundamental rights of the citizens. This optimism was expressed at a seminar held at the BRAC Centre Inn, Dhaka on 1 September. TIB and Manusher Jonno Foundation were the organizers of this seminar.

Adviser to the ministries of Education and Commerce Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman was present at the seminar as Chief Guest. The Special Guests were Establishment Secretary Md. Abdul Salam Khan and Prof. Dr. Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman of the Public Administration department of Dhaka University. Chairied by former Adviser to the caretaker government Advocate Sultana Kamal, the keynote paper at the seminar was presented by Arif Hossain Khan, the Programme Manager of Manusher Jonno Foundation. TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman acted as the moderator during the programme.

In his speech as Chief Guest, Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman said that citizen’s charter is a vital issue. Not only in government offices, it should also be introduced in private sector as well, because numerous transactions and relationships with the citizens take place in many private sector organizations, such as private banks and telecommunication companies. The responsible role of the citizens is also very important here. In his address as special guest, Abdul Salam Khan said that the citizen’s charter should be prepared by showing due respect to the citizens. It should also be institution-based. Professor Dr. Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman said that the citizen’s charter would have to be brought closer to the people. Eighty percent of our people live in the villages. Charters should be framed on their rights and then put on display in rural markets. The objectives of the citizen’s charter would be succeed in this way. The local governments should have to play their due role in this area. Besides, inclusion of this concept in text-books was also very urgent, so that the future generation could get a clear idea about the subject. Chairperson of the seminar Advocate Sultana Kamal said, ‘Transparency is a pre-requisite for democracy. These charters will be effective if both the government and the citizens act in a transparent manner. Wide publicity is needed for informing the people about the matter. Booklets on the subject can be published for dissemination’. Others who spoke at the seminar included politician Hasanul Haque Inu, Professor Dr. Dilara Chowdhury, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam, Tanbir-ul Islam Siddiqui et al.

The main objective of organising the seminar was to make an analytical review on citizen’s charter, highlight its main agenda and discuss the procedures followed in formulating citizen’s charter. At the same time, it was aimed at sensitizing the stakeholders about their role in making the charters effective and in monitoring its implementation. The keynote paper dwelt on the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of citizen’s charter, its origin, features, experience of citizen’s charter in different countries, and initiatives in Bangladesh etc. Side by side with detailed discussion, a number of recommendations were put forward for overcoming the weaknesses. In addition, a booklet titled ‘Citizen’s Charter: What, Why and How’ was published and distributed on the occasion of the seminar.
It has been seen in a research conducted by TIB titled “Transparency and accountability in conservation and management of forests: Problems and Remedies” that widespread corruption and irregularities exist in this sector. Thousands hectre of woodland are being devoured because of corruption. TIB has put forward various recommendations for adoption and implementation of conservation-oriented forestry policy in order to curb corruption. A round-table discussion was arranged at the National Press Club on 14 August on the occasion of releasing this research report.

Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser in charge of the Ministry of Environment and Forests Raja Debashish Roy was present at the meeting as chief guest, while secretary of the ministry Abul Hasan Mohammad Rezaul Kabir NDC was present as the special guest.

Chaired by the TIB Trustee and former Adviser of the caretaker government Advocate Sultana Kamal, the research report was presented by Manzoor-E-Khoda. Eminent personalities belonging to the civil society including TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Chief Conservator of Forests AKM Shamsuddin, Rizwana Hasan of BELA, Fariduddin Ahmed of Aranyak Foundation, Phillip Gain of SHED, former Director of the Forest Department Dr. Iqil Mandal, Professor Khondakar Mokaddem Hossain of Dhaka University, forest officials and experts took part in the discussion. TIB conducted this research to identify the existing anomalies and weaknesses in the Forest Department and put forward various recommendations for solving those problems.

In his address as Chief Guest, Raja Debashish Roy said that transparency and accountability would have to be established in the sector for the sake of conserving the bio-diversity and forestry of the country. He called upon all to shun away the mentality of occupying lands for the sake of conserving forests. The forest secretary said that a number of steps had been taken for developing the Forest Department and it was expected that these would yield good results.

It was seen from this research, which was conducted between December 2006 and March 2008 that various types of irregularities and corruption existed in the sector. These included smuggling of timber from reserved forests, collusion between saw-mills and furniture shops in the illegal use and trafficking of timber, excessive extraction of forestry resources, irregularities in auctioning of forestry resource, anomalies in project implementation, irregularities filing and handling of cases, corruption in appointments, postings and transfers, violations of forestry policy and law, failure to contain robberies in the Sundarbans, reluctance and non-cooperation in providing information etc.

The research showed that bribes worth Tk 125 thousands had to be paid at 14 places including the Forest Department and the Deputy Commissioner’s Office for smuggling out 1500 CFT of timber to Rangamati town from the reserved forest under the cover of permit. Besides, timber worth Tk 150 crore are smuggled out each year on an average from the Sundarbans through fishermen’s boats. In only a single incident at Rangamati Circle in 2005, the government incurred a revenue loss of Tk 27 crore due to illegal sale of 650 thousand CFT of smuggled timber to traders. The study depicted the failures in conservation of forests. At present, 270,570.98 acres of forest lands are under illegal occupation in the country.

According to the findings of the research, an additional Tk 6.25 crore are extracted from the woodcutters engaged in collecting ‘Golpata’ (round leaves) in the Sundarbans under different heads. And the Forest Department employees collect payments of around Tk 23 crore from the fisherman who are engaged in fishing in the Sundarbans. Besides, they extort honey worth Tk 8 lakhs as bribes per year. Maximum corruption takes place in the Forest Department centring on appointment, promotion and transfers of officials. The postings-trade is held responsible for other corruptions taking place in the Forest Department. Here, the main categories are transfers to attractive locations in exchange for money; suspension or withdrawal of routine transfers, posting from one attractive location to another; extortion by threatening transfer to a remote place and taking bribe for recommending ordinary transfers. Appointment to the post of Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) has been regularly auctioned during the past 20-25 years. The last removed CCF had to pay Tk 1 crore 10 lakhs for appointment to the post.

TIB has made a number of recommendations for nurturing the Forest Department as a dynamic, effective, transparent and accountable institution. These include: adoption and implementation of conservation-oriented forestry policy; reducing the dependence on forests by generating alternative livelihoods; taking up awareness generation programmes on forestry resources; promoting community forestry; undertaking tree plantation programme; re-incorporation of the post of ‘Inspector General of Forests’; creation of a separate post of CCF; appointments to the posts of IG of Forests and CCF on the basis of honesty, reputation and efficiency; increasing the manpower for camps and stations on the basis of necessity; verification of the wealth of all employees of the Forest Department and their family-members by the ACC and NBR; establishment of Forest Courts; formation of ‘Joint Task-force’; ensuring flow of information; raising the salary of employees; provision of risk-allowance; and stoppage of unnecessary recreational trips by various categories of officers working in the ministries and the secretariat.
Desired quality and services could not be ensured in the primary education sector because of prevailing irregularities and corruption. Fundamental changes in its administration need to be brought about for removing various problems existing in the sector. This opinion was expressed at a round-table discussion on ‘Problems in management of primary education and way of remedies’ held at the CIRDAP Auditorium on 27 July on the occasion of releasing an diagnostic study report prepared by TIB, which was done with the objective of investigating the causes, nature and magnitude of irregularities in the primary education sector and recommending measures for improvement.

Adviser in charge of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education Mrs. Rasheda K. Chowdhury was present at the programme as Chief Guest, while secretary of the ministry Mosharraf Hossain Buiyan was present as Special Guest. Others who attended the round-table discussion included former Adviser of the caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan, Director General of the Department of Primary Education Dr. Mohammad Nazrul Islam Khan and TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman. Chaired by Professor Muzaffer Ahmad, the research report on primary education was presented by Shahidul Islam, Research Officer of TIB.

The study showed that various anomalies and corruption exist in the discharge of administrative responsibilities by primary education officials, including irregularities in teachers’ training, corruption in establishment and registration of schools in the private sector, bribery in appointments and transfers of teachers and for bringing them under the purview of MPO (government grant), corruption in Upazila Education Office and in the retirement and payment of dues of teachers. It was further observed that the teachers resorted to irregularities in the discharge of their duties and illegal fees or subscriptions were collected from the students. Other irregularities and corruption also existed at the school level, including anomalies in distribution of stipends and in purchase of teaching equipment. The research observed that although the sector had received special attention of the government since independence, different problems plaguing the sector have hindered its progress. These problems include dearth of teachers, drop-out of pupils, excess students in comparison to class-room capacity, lack of subject-related skill of teachers, scarcity of financial resources for running schools, want of expected cooperation from the School Managing Committees, teachers-guardians’ associations and welfare associations, low salary and benefits for teachers, harassment of teachers at the Upazila Primary Education Office, dearth of opportunities for promotion of teachers/officials engaged in administration of primary education, differences in qualification criteria for males and females seeking appointment as Assistant Teacher, non-existence of the allowances for Headmaster for travelling to the Upazila Education Office, non-payment of transportation expense proportionate to distance for carrying books from the Upazila of residences by teachers; reorganization of SMCs through inclusion of retired teachers of the locality; increasing the budgetary for promotion; making the salary-structure time-befitting; reducing the discrepancy in salaries of government, registered and community school teachers; fixing the salary of Assistant Teachers on the basis of their educational qualification; selecting teachers for private schools through registration examinations of teachers; creating opportunity for appointment of officials having field experience in policy level posts; direct recruitment to the post of Assistant Upazila Education Officer and filling up of all higher posts through promotions; steps for filling up all vacant posts in the administration of primary education; raising the budgetary allocation for the sector, including contingency allocation for schools; introduction of 360 degree evaluation method for officers and employees; making arrangements for distribution of teaching tools and training allowances for teachers through Upazila Resource Centre; generating awareness among the guardians about government facilities; and making submission of quarterly report at the Upazila Education Office on the functioning of SMCs, teachers-guardians’ associations and welfare associations compulsory. Former Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University Professor Moniruzzaman Miah, Manzur Ahmed of BRAC University, Director of CAMPE Azizul Haque, Joint Programme Director of Second Primary Education Programme Chowdhury Fuad Ahmed and President of Bangladesh Primary Teachers’ Association Md. Abdul Awal Talukdar dwelt on various aspects of the research report at the round-table discussion and put forward their views on development of the education sector in Bangladesh. These included: giving more attention to structural aspects at the policy level; decentralisation of primary education; raising salary and allowances of teachers for improving educational quality; undertaking various motivational programmes, including time-befitting training and promotion; regular inspection of pupils’ residences by teachers; reorganization of SMCs through inclusion of retired teachers of the locality; ensuring the utilization of financial resources alongside enhancing budgetary allocation; raising the number of teachers; making the schools effective through involvement of field-level officials; constitution of a permanent Education Commission and ensuring transparency and accountability in all areas.

▲ Rasheda K. Chowdhury is delivering her speech
**Research News**

**Sufferings in Drawing Pension**

Many pensioners routinely suffer due to problems encountered after retiring from government service. Receipt of pension by government officials has now become difficult because of lack of accountability, administrative complexities, delays, corruption and irregularities. TIB disclosed this at a press conference held at the National Press Club, Dhaka, on 25 August. TIB carried out a fact-finding study on pension services in order to examine longstanding problems in the area and to submit recommendations on the subject. TIB put forward a number of recommendations to bring dynamism to the pension process and to improve this service as an effective, transparent and accountable one.

Those present on the occasion included Chairman of the TIB Trustee Board Professor Muzaffer Ahmad, Trustee M. Hafizuddin Khan, Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Professor Dr. Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman of the Public Administration Department of Dhaka University and former Ambassador Wali-ur Rahman. Research Fellow of TIB KNM Hosainul Haque presented the research report.

Conducted under the purview of TIB Fellowships, the research titled ‘Sufferings in drawing pension: Corruption in govt pension service’ demonstrated that widespread corruption and irregularities existed in the sector. A government officer or employee has to endure a lot of harassment for receiving pension because of lack of transparency and accountability in the processing of pensions, procedural delays, bribery and other irregularities. According to an estimate, 71 percent of the pensioners had to pay bribes of Tk 8,500 on an average for drawing pension-money.

For drawing pension, an applicant has to process a total of 8 to 11 documents, including leave admissibility certificate, petition for LPR, Provident Fund account, Service details/books, last-pay certificate, no-demand certificate, details of house-rent deduction, certificate regarding payment of electricity and gas bills, pension petition and pension payment order. A total of 13 to 16 documents have to be processed in case of family pension. The surveyed pensioners had to pay Tk 7,660 on an average as bribe for processing of pension papers. Side by side, it took 159 days for a pensioner to complete the processing of pension. The study also showed that each pensioner had to spend an additional Tk 3,720 on account of travelling, accommodation and food expenses.

According to the findings of the study, the amount of bribe increases by a large margin when the Leave Admissibility Certificate (LAC) has to be processed within a short time. For obtaining this certificate within one to seven days, the amount paid in bribe to 50% of class-one and class-two officers, and 45% of class-three employees, ranged from Tk 200 to Tk 1000. On the other hand, 40% of the class-three employees did not have to be paid bribes for processing LAC. It was found upon investigation that 40 percent of the retired BCS officers needed 15 to 30 days for processing of LPR order. On the other hand, 30% of the retired class-two officers and 85% of retired class-one non-cadre officers needed 8 to 14 days or even more despite paying bribes ranging from Tk 200 to Tk 1000.

The research identified excessive paper-work, work-delays, lack of transparency and accountability, old accounting procedures and low salary as the principal causes of corruption. TIB has put forward a number of recommendations after analysing facts and undertaking consultations with relevant experts to curb prevailing corruption and bring in dynamism in the pension processing service in order to make it transparent and accountable. Prominent among these were: keeping more than one copy of the service record of government officers and employees by following a uniform procedure, using easily comprehensible pension form, reducing the number of processing levels, ensuring transparency and accountability in administrative work, forming task force for sanctioning pension, preparing a list of required records, restructuring of basic salary and other benefits, special training for pension recipients etc.

**TIB News**

**YES in Dhaka**

The YES programme is one of the most prospective areas in TIB’s social movement against corruption. YES is striving to groom young leaders who would play leading roles in combating corruption in the future. TIB is working to build an illumined future by inculcating honesty, democratic values, support for good governance and anti-corruption spirit in education and professional lives of youths at the local and national levels. Alongside local level initiatives, various programmes like anti-corruption concerts, cartoon-essay-art-debate competitions etc. are being conducted under the YES programme in Dhaka at the national level. Plans have been drawn up in the light of experiences at different levels to organize the YES programme in Dhaka by involving various educational institutions. No organizational programme of YES has been executed in Dhaka until now. TIB took the decision to form YES Groups in Dhaka in the face of sustained demands by the youth community. Any college or university located in metropolitan Dhaka will be able to form YES Groups in their own institutions. Recently, two YES Groups have been constituted at the Institute of Social Welfare and Research of Dhaka University and the Northern University Bangladesh. Formation of more such groups is under way in a number of educational institutions.
Reactions to National Household Survey

The Report on the National Household Survey conducted by TIB was released on 18 June. Although it was released after one and a half years of the anti-corruption drive by the present government since 1/1, it showed that the magnitude of corruption was undiminished, although some positive changes have been initiated in a few areas. As a result, just as the report generated much interest among all classes of people, similarly the corruption was undiminished, although some positive changes have been initiated in a few areas.

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The Chairman of the Commission Lt. General Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury (retd.) has said that the TIB report has depicted the real situation regarding the nature and typology of corruption. He further said that the government employees were directly involved with bribery and corruption. They are still sitting in the same positions as before with the attitude of a 'government's man'. We have to come out of this situation. At his regular press briefing, the ACC Director General Colonel Hanif Iqbal also said that the report reflected the situation on the ground. He said that the Commission would try to bring the identified and more corruption-prone sectors under the purview of its anti-corruption drive.

The government should make enquiries after collecting detailed information about the household survey of TIB. Why do people have to pay bribes? It is the responsibility of the government to investigate this. Curbing corruption is the topmost priority of the present government. Consequently, it should be a matter of great concern for the government if specific information is divulged about the pervasiveness of corruption. The government should take steps after taking these into account. Better results may be obtained in this way.

The household survey of TIB has depicted the actual picture of corruption. The anti-corruption measures of the caretaker government did not have much impact on the networks or systems of corruption, as those had on some individuals. This has been one of the main reasons for the pervasiveness of corruption in the service sector. The government has been and is still undertaking many initiatives for reducing corruption. Prevention of corruption has made much headway. But deficiencies still exist in addressing the main causes of corruption.

According to Asaduzzaman, a resident of Bhatiari of Chittagong, corruption had now decreased to some extent compared to what was depicted in the report. Previously, bribery or obtaining undue benefits used to take place openly without any hesitation. Now people are hesitant or these transactions are taking place in secrecy. The number of people harmed by corruption has decreased proportionately, but the amount of losses incurred by those harmed has increased. So, it can be said that the pervasiveness of corruption has decreased but its depth has increased. Because of the current state of corruption in the country, changing the situation would require time.

It may be mentioned that TIB conducted this survey in 5000 households (3000 in villages and 2000 in towns) of country’s 62 districts during June and July 2007 with the objective of measuring the nature, magnitude and consequences of corruption and formulate effective recommendations for its...
remedy. The survey showed that the magnitude of corruption has slightly declined in some sectors during 2007 compared to 2006. But it increased in a number of sectors. Around 66.7% households of the country had fallen prey to corruption while receiving services in various sectors. The people had to pay bribes of Tk 5,443 crore per year on an average for obtaining services in different sectors. The law-enforcement agencies were found to the most corrupt sector. The local government and land administration sectors came next. These sectors were ahead in terms of receiving bribes. The research also depicted the status of corruption in other service-providing sectors like judiciary, health, education, power, banking, NGOs and taxation. No noticeable differences were observed between the magnitude of corruption in rural and urban areas, which only showed the depth of the roots of corruption.

The following table shows the amount of bribery transactions in different sectors and the proportion of households becoming victims of corruption in one year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Sector</th>
<th>Amount of bribes paid at national level (Taka in crore)</th>
<th>Average amount of bribes paid for services (%)</th>
<th>Victims of Corruption while receiving services (% household)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law-Enforcement</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>3,940</td>
<td>96.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Administration</td>
<td>1,606</td>
<td>4,409</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judiciary</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>4,825</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>1,296</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>473.7</td>
<td>1,993</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>7,795</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxation</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>2,293</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>7,578</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

South Asian Workshop on Access to Natural Resources

A workshop was held on 29-30 June 2008 at YWCA auditorium, Dhaka, which was attended by the delegates from 30 social, developmental, human rights and networking organizations of four Asian countries, viz. Nepal, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. ALRD was the organizer of this workshop on “Establishing the right and control over land, water and forestry resources of women, indigenous, poor and marginalised people in South Asia”. Adviser to the caretaker government Rasheda K. Chowdhury was present as Chief Guest at the 2-daylong workshop. Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser Raja Debashish Roy was present as Special Guest. The welcome address was delivered by the Executive Director of ALRD Shamsul Huda.

It emerged from the discussions in the workshop that the whole development of South Asia faced a critical situation. The problems in this region are similar in nature. These crises have gradually deprived the poor and marginalised people from their rights on land, water and forestry resources. They are being regularly evicted from lands, dwellings and the control over water. Their poverty, food insecurity and unemployment are constantly rising. The women, indigenous, and dalit (scheduled caste) communities, and other minorities and marginalised people are the cruellest victims of these discriminations and sufferings.

Delegates from the four countries presented their papers in four sessions of the workshop. Group presentations were made in the last session divided into some groups. The topics of these presentations were land and agriculture, water, forestry, gender, indigenous and marginalised people. The participants representing TIB presented their views as members of the group on gender. They said that initiatives should be taken for massive publicity of women’s rights as human rights. Advocacy should be undertaken with political parties before the national election for establishing the rights
The Right to Information Ordinance was finally approved by the government on 20 September. In this backdrop, the Right to Information Forum observed the International Right to Know Day by organizing a seminar at the BRAC Centre Inn on 25 September. The speakers at the seminar said that right to information is a constitutional right of the people. Awareness in all stages should be raised to ensure this right.

Chaired by the Convener of the Forum Shaheen Anam, former Adviser to the caretaker government Mahbubul Alam was Chief Guest at the seminar titled “Right to Information: Why Now”. The keynote paper was presented by Barrister Tanjibul Alam. Moderated by the TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Chairman of the University Grants Commission Professor Nazrul Islam also spoke on the occasion as Special Guest.

Speaking at the seminar as Chief Guest, former Adviser to the caretaker government Mahbubul Alam said, “An unelected government has been finalised the Right to Information Ordinance. If there is any deficiency in it, then that can be brought to the notice of the government.” He also said that emphasis would have to be put on its implementation after the approval of the ordinance. Awareness would also have to be raised at the local level.

While presenting the keynote paper, Barrister Tanjibul Alam said that access to information is a constitutional right of the people. This right has been recognised in the municipal and city corporation ordinances. But despite the existence of laws, they are often not obeyed. He said, “everybody has the right to know the judicial processes in the Supreme Court. But if the Supreme Court itself does not let people know about its work, then how can the right to information be ensured?”

The Chairman of University Grants Commission Professor Dr. Nazrul Islam said, “everybody has the right to information. But the common people have lesser opportunity to know. Once, there was an information centre in Dhaka University. But now it has been closed down. Besides, although annual reports of the university are published, ordinary teachers never get those.” Professor Islam also said that information centres were a must for letting the people know about all towns in the country.

While speaking on the keynote paper, Professor Dr. Asif Nazrul said that the existing law provides the right to information. But it has not yet been implemented. He said that right to information was very limited. Criticising the paper presented at the seminar, he said that it contained many discrepancies. The concluding address was delivered by the Member-Secretary of SUJAN Dr. Badiul Alam Majumdar. Delegates from the member-organizations of the Right to Information Forum also participated in the deliberation. A theme song on Right to Information was rendered in the programme.

It may be mentioned that the Right to Information Forum is formed this year with the initiative of like-minded organizations for working with the government in order to formulate and to implement an effective Right to Information Law to establish good governance in the country. This Forum lauded the initiative of the present government in formulating a Right to Information Ordinance. Beside, it expressed the hope that it would continue to work in future with the objective of effective implementation of the ordinance.

The ‘Members Day – July 2008’ was held at the conference room of TIB’s Gulshan office on 5 July. Chaired by the TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, a one-minute silence was observed in memory of one of the active members Humayun Kabir Khandaker at the very beginning of the open discussion. In his address, the Executive Director said that the members were acting as a supportive force and inspiring TIB by constantly standing beside the organization in its social movement against corruption. He urged the members to participate in this movement more intensely.

Later, the TIB members spontaneously participated in open discussions on various research and advocacy programmes, involvement of the people and other related subjects and expressed their opinion on various issues. They put emphasis on taking up various motivational programmes and educational institution-based activities against corruption. Beside, they emphasised on enhancing the accountability and responsibility of watchdog agencies engaged in curbing corruption alongside establishment of internal control strategies. Besides, the members were informed about the next phase of the ‘Making Waves’ project titled ‘Driving Change’ to be implemented from 2009.

On the other hand, the ‘Members Day – September 2008’ held on 18 September was marked by spontaneous participation of the members. At the start of the meeting, a one-minute silence was observed in memory of TIB member Prof. Dr. Moqbul Hussain, who passed away recently. The members were informed in the meeting about the on-going programmes of TIB and probable programmes to be taken up in the future. The members held constructive discussions on various aspects of building up a countrywide anti-corruption movement, including TIB’s own programmes.
International Right to Information Day-2008
Observed by CCCs

The International Right to Information Day was observed on 28 September 2008 through holding of rallies, discussion meetings, setting up Advice and Information Desk and display of citizens’ charter at service-delivery organizations in 34 regions of the country under the auspices of Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCCs). Apart from CCC and YES Groups, people belonging to different social classes and professions including students, teachers, and journalists took part in them.

Nalitabari, Mymensingh, Madhupur, Muktagacha:
The CCC Nalitabari brought out a colourful rally, hung citizens’ charter in police station and arranged discussion meeting on the occasion. The rally was brought out through the combined initiative of Assistant Land Commissioner, CCC, YES Group, YES Friends, Swajan and members of the local NGOs’ coordination committee. A citizens’ charter titled ‘Bangladesh Police’ was unveiled at Nalitabari police station after the rally. It was inaugurated by the CCC Convener Mahfuzur Rahman and Assistant Land Commissioner Mehedi Hasan. Giving his instant reaction, Police Inspector Bidyut Ray said, ‘We thank the CCC and TIB for this initiative. We are endeavouring to render services in accordance with the citizens’ charter. It will be easier for us to achieve success in providing these services if we get the cooperation of the local people’. Later, the rally was concluded at the premises of local Shaheed Mukti Juddha Mancha after travelling round the town. The discussion meeting was held in the afternoon.

The CCC Mymensingh organized a discussion meeting at the Udichi Shilpi Goshthi office on the occasion of ‘International Right to Information Day’. The General Secretary of Mymensingh Press Club Advocate Md. Mozammel Haque addressed the gathering as the main discussant. At Madhupur, information campaign and opinion-sharing meeting were held through setting up of a satellite Advice and Information Desk. The Upazila Executive Officer AKM Benjamin Niazi participated in the opinion-sharing meeting. The CCC Muktagachha observed the day by bringing out a colourful rally. A view-exchange meeting was organized at Madhupur to highlight the significance of the day.

Chapai Nawabganj, Natore, Kushlia, Rajshahi:
The CCC Chapai Nawabganj observed the Right to Information Day through various programmes. These included rally, human chain, discussion meeting and setting up of Advice and Information Desk in front of Lawyers’ Association Building and the Chief Judicial Magistrate’s Office. The District and Sessions Judge Rishikesh Saha was present in the discussion meeting as Chief Guest. Others present were Additional District and Sessions Judge Arun Kumar Goswami, Chief Judicial Magistrate Basudeb Roy, Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Ratneswar Bhattacharya, president and secretary of District Lawyers’ Association Advocate Md. Shahjahan Biswas and Advocate Anwar Hossain Dollar, District Information Officer Md. Wahiduzzaman et al. In Natore, a rally, human chain and discussion meeting were organized. Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Manoj Kanti Baral was present at the discussion meeting as Chief Guest.

A discussion meeting was organized at Kushlia with the participation of CCC and NGO representatives. Among the invited guests, social worker Tajihiar Begum and district correspondent of Daily Ittefaq Md. Mostafizur Rahman Monju spoke on the occasion. The CCC Rajshahi set up satellite Advice and Information Desks in the Court and the City Corporation Building for observing the day. Besides, a campaign was conducted by targeting people who came to the City Corporation for receiving services. City Mayor AHM Khairezzaman Liton was present during the campaign.

Jamalpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur:
A discussion meeting was organized at the Public library auditorium in Jamalpur to highlight the importance of right to information. The Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) of Jamalpur Md. Hasanul Islam was present as Chief Guest. Veteran journalist and CCC member A. A. K. Mahmudul Hasan was the main discussant at the meeting. The CCC Kurigram brought out a colourful rally and organized public gathering and discussion meeting on the day. The speakers at the discussion meeting opined that right to information was essential for a transparent and accountable democratic government and state structure. Various professionals including the president of Press Club Rabindranath Roy spoke on the occasion. The CCC Lalmonirhat arranged a discussion meeting at its office-premises on the day. The keynote paper was presented by the CCC member S. M. Shafigul Islam. The CCC Rangpur organized a discussion meeting and quiz competition.

Gazipur, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur, Munshiganj:
A discussion meeting was held under the auspices of CCC Gazipur at the famous Bangataj Auditorium. Director of the Department of Mass Communication Md. Azizur Rahman was present at the discussion as chief guest. The Mayor of Gazipur Municipality AKM Mozammel Haque and Additional Superintendent of Police Md. Jihadul Kabir were present as special guests. CCC member Mukul Kumar Mallik presented the keynote paper on the theme of the day. The CCC Brahmanbaria arranged a roundtable discussion on the day. Municipal Mayor Hafizur Rahman
was present as Chief Guest while Principal Md. Mokhlesur Rahman was present as Special Guest. The day was observed in Chandpur through rally and discussion meeting held under the aegis of the CCC. A rally brought out by CCC-Munshiganj started from the Shilpakala Academy and culminated at Manikpur CCC office after passing through the Jubilee road. A discussion meeting was held after the rally.

Sylhet, Sunamganj, Sreemangal, Kishoreganj:
A discussion meeting was organized in Sylhet on the occasion of the day. CCC member Aziz Ahmed Salim presented a paper titled “There is no alternative to right to information for establishing good governance” at the meeting. Rallies and discussion meetings were held at Sunamganj. CCC Sreemangal observed the day through a colourful rally. An open discussion highlighting the significance of the day was organized at the auditorium of Kishoreganj Public Library. On the same day, a publicity campaign was conducted by the YES Group of CCC for distributing leaflets to two hundred households of Latifabad union for generating awareness about right to information.

Barisal, Jhalakati, Pirojpur, Jhenaidah:
The CCC Barisal organized a rally and discussion meeting on the day. The newly-elected Mayor Shawkat Hossain Hiron was present as chief guest at the discussion. Another discussion meeting took place at Jhalakati. Chairman of the district Corruption Prevention Committee and eminent freedom fighter Mohammad Ali Khan was present as chief guest at the meeting. CCC Pirojpur observed the day through rally and discussion meeting. The Police Super of Pirojpur Md. Nazrul Hossain was present at the discussion as chief guest. CCC Jhenaidah arranged a rally and discussion meeting. The rally went round the main thoroughfares of Jhenaidah with the slogan “We want right to information”. Later, a discussion meeting on the theme “Right to Information – Why Now” took place at the CCC office.

Savar, Faridpur, Madaripur, Rajbari:
The day was observed in Savar by organizing a roundtable discussion. Senior lawyer of the Supreme Court Ahmed Ali and Principal Atahar Uddin spoke at the meeting held at Savar VIP auditorium. The CCC Faridpur organized a discussion at its own premises. The discussants termed the approval of the right to information ordinance by the present government as a good beginning and noted that the countrymen did not have the right to information previously. Now, that right has been granted legally. People can protect themselves from corruption and harassment if they can know the correct information. A rally was brought out at Madaripur and the CCC published and distributed a leaflet on the occasion of the day. A rally and discussion meeting also took place at Rajbari.

Chakaria, Patiya, Chittagong, Comilla:
The CCC Chakaria observed the day through rally and discussion meeting. The colourful rally was brought out on the occasion from the ground of Municipal Community Centre at Mogbazar. It was inaugurated by the Upazila Education Officer Md. Mostafa Hossain. A discussion meeting was organized after the rally at the CCC office. The CCC-Patiya observed the day by setting up satellite Advice and Information Desk and a discussion meeting. The Upazila Executive Officer Md. Shahidul Arif took part in the discussion. The CCC Comilla observed the day through a rally.

Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat:
The CCC Khulna arranged a seminar on the day. The main discussant at the seminar was the press club President Wadudur Rahman. Deputy Principal Information Officer of the regional information office Md. Iqbal Hossain was present as the chief guest. Another seminar was organized at Satkhira. The Upazila Executive Officer Md. Akhtaruzzaman Talukdar and the District Information Officer Md. Nurul Huda highlighted the significance of the day at the seminar. A discussion meeting on the role of conscious citizens was arranged at Bagerhat on the occasion of the day.
Notable Initiatives by CCCs at Local Level

Sand extraction from Mohananda stopped:
Chapai Nawabganj is a small town on the bank of the river Mohananda. Its association with the river has not diminished a bit even in modern urban life. The river has been protecting the people living on its bank by supplying fishes, water during dry season, cold air, water for irrigating agricultural land, transportation of commodities, and many other benefits. The maps of some areas have undergone changes due to erosion of the Mohananda. But it has continued to protect the town with great affection. Recently, the Nayagola area under No. 1 ward of Chapai Nawabganj municipality was, however, threatened due to the action of an influential local individual.

A copy of the petition submitted to the Deputy Commissioner on behalf of the local people was given to the CCC Convener on 18 August 2008. It could be gathered from the petition that an influential person was trying to extract sand from the floor of Mohananda to fill-up his 10 acres of low-lying land with the objective of setting up an automatic rice-mill. There were three irrigation projects in the area where efforts were being made to extract sands. Besides, the river-bank in the area was very steep and fragile. The local inhabitants would face massive loss and risks if the sands were extracted from here. Already problems like landslide and development of cracks were being observed at Hujrapur, old C&B Ghat and the adjoining areas of Mohananda bridge due to sand extraction. The local people had therefore been resisting efforts to extract sands at different times.

After receiving the copy of the petition signed by around 200 men on behalf of the local people, the CCC Convener requested the Deputy Commissioner on 20 August to take necessary actions to stop the illegal extraction of sand. Through a letter issued on 8 September, the Deputy Commissioner directed the UNO of Sadar upazila and the OC of Sadar police station to take steps for stopping the extraction of sand in the area mentioned in the petition. It has been learnt on enquiry that the illegal extraction of sand has now been stopped.

Round-Table Discussion at Savar:
The representatives of Bonua community living in different areas of Savar depicted about their inhuman living condition at a round-table titled ‘Development of indigenous community and the social movement against corruption’ held at the auditorium of Savar Upazila Complex on 1 July under the aegis of CCC-Savar. They urged the conscious citizens to set up a school in their area for their children’s education. They complained that the local schools did not want to admit their children. They informed that there were only one tube-well and one latrine for over 4 hundred people, which was forcing them to lead a sub-human life.

Those who took part in the discussion included Upazila Executive Officer Md. Rabbi Mia, CCC Convener Jainal Abdeeen Khan, CCC member and valiant freedom fighter Khandakar Mohd. Hamid Ranju and Member-Secretary of the Savar Upazila Corruption Prevention Committee Salauddin Khan Nayeem. The Upazila Executive Officer gave assurance of solving the problems of Bonua community. He also urged them to take more initiatives for improving their living condition.

Complaint Box at Jhenaidah Municipality:
A complaint box has been set up at Jhenaidah Municipality on 16 July for receiving complaints about municipal services. CCC-Jhenaidah and TIB have been working to improve the quality of services rendered by Jhenaidah municipality. The complaint box was installed by the CCC and the YES group at the municipality compound. The citizens can now lodge complaint against any aspect of municipal service. Those present at the discussion meeting on the occasion included the Mayor of Jhenaidah Municipality Md. Abdul Malek, Commissioner Saiful Islam Modhu, CCC member Md. Asaduzzaman Khan, Kazi Akhtarul Islam, Monowara Khatun, Dr. Sudhir Kumar Samadder and Khondker Abu Sayeed.

Human Chain to Raise the Quality of Railway Services:
Train is a comfortable mode of transport for the people of Jamalpur and Sherpur. The income of railway authorities is also 3 to 4-fold higher compared to the target. But despite that, tickets for 246 seats of inter-city Jamuna and Agnibina were cancelled last July. The authorities said that the bogies were removed for repair. Besides, there were other problems like weak engines, defective lines, worn-out bogies, non-cooperative attitude of the attendances. The regular passengers were facing serious transport crisis. The people were demanding solution to the bogie problem as well as an additional train service.

To fulfil these demands of the inhabitants of Jamalpur, CCC-Jamalpur, YES Group and YES Friends Group organized a human-chain between 2.30 and 3.30 pm at Jamalpur railway station on 28 August by holding aloft banners and placards with the objective of improving the quality of railway services. The human chain was formed on the platform of Jamalpur railway junction. A huge number of people belonging to various classes and professions including from educational institutions, NGOs, journalists, local associations and representatives of the civil society joined hands and urged the government to take immediate steps for improving railway services. Eminent personalities including the Convener of CCC-Jamalpur Professor Mir Ansar Ali, CCC member Advocate

A Complaint box set up at Jhenaidah

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Md. Nazrul Islam Dulu and Sukumar Chowdhury were present in the human chain.

Installation of Service Chart and Complaint Box:
A programme titled “Face the Public and announcement of open budget” was organized under the auspices of CCC-Mymensingh Sadar at Boira Union Council Building on 30 July 2008 afternoon. A service chart and a complaint and advice box for the union council was set up on behalf of the CCC during the programme. Chaired by the CCC member and Convener of the Sub-Committee on Union Council Advocate Emdadul Hoque Millat, UP Chairman Md. Abdul Malek Sarkar announced the Union Council budget for 2008-09 in front of over 300 people. The Chairman also responded to various queries from the audience. A satellite Advice and Information Desk on the services provided by the Union Council was also set up by the YES Group of CCC-Mymensingh Sadar in order to generate awareness about the roles and responsibilities of the union council and the rights of the citizens.

UP Chairman face the people in Brahmanbaria:
A Face the Public programme was organized at Machhikhatua Union Council under Brahmanbaria Sadar Upazila through the initiative of CCC-Brahmanbaria. The Union Council Chairman Md. Mosharraf Hossain Munshi gave reply to various queries from the citizens and highlighted the council’s activities carried out during the previous five years. In his address, the CCC Convener Advocate Mohammad Abu Taher said that transparency and accountability of the local governments would increase if the candidates were similarly brought face to face with the people. CCC member Abdur Noor acted as the moderator during the programme.

Opinion-sharing Meeting with Hospital Authorities:
A Opinion-sharing meeting with the authorities of Alikadam upazila health complex was held on 2 July under the aegis of the Alikadam branch of CCC-Chakaria-inspired organization ‘Swajan’ (Citizen for Good Governance). The hospital authorities made a pledge to improve their service quality. Besides, they gave assurance of all kinds of cooperation in running a satellite Advice and Information Desk at the Alikadam upazila health complex.

Discussion on proposed National Health Policy 2008:
A discussion meeting on the proposed National Health Policy 2008 of Bangladesh Government was organized on 23 August at TIB and CCC-Rajshahi at a city restaurant. The meeting was started with the playing of national anthem and it was chaired by the CCC Convener Advocate Ghalam Arieff Tippo. In his address of welcome, CCC member Akbarul Hasan Millat said that the TIB-inspired CCCs have been working for a long time to build up a social movement against corruption. Health was one of the sectors on which they were working. The present programme was being held to solicit views on the proposed National Health Policy 2008, as a continuation of that endeavour. CCC member Dr. Rostam Uddin Ahmed reviewed the draft health policy proposed by the government and sought the opinion of all invited guests on the subject. Those who expressed their views included Deputy Civil Surgeon Dr. Md. Zahurul Islam, Dr. Noor-i-Akhtar Jabeeda Begum, Paritosh Adhikari, Dr. Nasim Akhtar Arina, Dr. Jaidip Bhaduri, Salima Sarwar, ANM Wahid, language warrior Mosharraf Hossain Akhunji, Dr. Shafiqul Alam, Hakim Mohammad Shahadat Hossain Munna, et al. CCC-Rajshahi City later forwarded the opinions to the relevant authorities of Bangladesh Government.

Face the Public and Drama Organized at Jessore:
A Face the Public programme was organized on 10 August 2008 under the auspices of CCC-Jessore. The members of Fatehpur Union Council gave answers to various queries from the people at the programme. The acting Chairman of Fatehpur UP chaired the programme while the joint-convener of the CCC Dr. Mustafizur Rahman was the main speaker. Later, the YES members staged a drama.

Budget Announcement before the People in Rangpur:
The budget for 2008-09 was announced before the people by the Union Council Chairman Md. Makbul Hossain at the conference room of Rajendrapur UP of Rangpur sadar upazila on 29 July. The members of the UP and general citizens coming from various wards asked various questions and stated their opinion on different aspects of the budget. In his concluding speech, the UP chairman said that the approved budget would be displayed in front of the UP building.

Workshop on Gender Sensitivity at Gazipur:
A daylong training workshop on ‘Social movement against corruption and gender sensitivity’ as well as discussion on identifying the sectors where women are victimised due to corruption was held on 12 August under the aegis of CCC-Gazipur. The Convener of CCC-Gazipur Professor Md. Ayesh Uddin chaired the programme held at the CCC office. Over one hundred women, including college teachers and working women, participated in the gender-based training.

Face the Public Program at Jhalakati:
A ‘Face the Public’ programme was organized on 2 August at the auditorium of No. 1 Bhairabpasha Union Council of Jhalakati district through the initiative of CCC-Jhalakati. The UP Chairman responded to various questions from the citizens and took suggestions on what should be done in the future. Upazila Executive Officer of Nalchhiti Sekandar Hayat Rizvi, CCC Convener Prof. Md. Rustam Ali and the Vice-President of Jhalakati Press Club Chittaranjan Dutta were present on the occasion.

Municipal Mayor Attended Face the Public program:
A Face the Public programme was held in Munshiganj on 8 August to discuss municipal services received by the people. The Mayor of Munshiganj Municipality Advocate Mubur Rahaman gave reply to various questions posed by the citizens at this programme held at the district Shilpakala Academy auditorium. Chaired by the convener of the CCC Sub-Committee on local government Advocate Gias Uddin Ahmed, the CCC Convener Professor Anil Kumar Chakraborti also spoke on the occasion.
Anti-Corruption Oath-Taking by Students at Jamalpur:
Around 400 students took anti-corruption oath at the premises of Hazrat Shahjalal (R) High School on 24 July under the aegis of CCC-Jamalpur. The ceremony was presided over by the Headmaster of the school Md. Asaduzzaman. He addressed the gathering, which was organized to motivate the students to nurture an anti-corruption mentality.

Reception for GPA-5 Achievers at Mymensingh:
CCC-Mymensingh and TIB accorded a reception to the GPA-5 achievers at secondary level at the auditorium of district Shilpakala Academy, Mymensingh on 22 August 2008 morning.

Reception for GPA-5 Achievers at Pirojpur:
A reception was organized for the SSC examinees who earned GPA-5 in 2008 at Mahmud Selim Auditorium of local Apex Building on 5 August under the auspices of CCC Pirojpur. Presided over by the CCC convener, it was addressed by the successful students, their guardians, teachers and CCC members.

Campaign at Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital:
The YES members of CCC Brahmanbaria led by the CCC member Engineer Md. Rafiqui Islam conducted a campaign on 2 July to raise the service quality of Brahmanbaria District Hospital. The YES members inspected different wards of the hospital, identified various problems after talking to the parents, on-duty nurses, cleaners and cooks and then held discussions with the hospital authorities to solve those problems.

Anti-Corruption Debate Competition at Jessore:
An inter-college debate competition took place under the aegis of CCC-Jessore with active involvement of the YES Group. A total of 8 colleges of Jessore district participated in the contest, which progressed in three stages. The final stage was held on 31 July afternoon at the local district council auditorium. The Cantonment College and Jessore Education Board Model College contested in the final. The latter emerged victorious and its team leader Md. Rakibul Islam was adjudged the best speaker. The Chief Guest Professor Ranjit Kumar Ghosh and the Chairman Dr. Mustafijur Rahman awarded prizes among the winners. It was followed by a colourful cultural programme after the prize-giving ceremony.

Reception for GPA-5 Achievers at Chandpur:
The CCC Chandpur accorded reception to GPA-5 Achievers in the SSC examination of 2008. The CCC Convener Professor Monohar Ali, member Alhaj Dr. M. A. Gahfur, Quamruzzaman Choudhury, Professor Md. Moshafer Hossain, and the Headmaster of Safarmali High School Md. Abul Kashem addressed the gathering titled “The most successful among the future generation seek a corruption-free motherland”.

Various YES Programmes at Rajshahi:
The YES Group of CCC-Rajshahi organized a 3 daylong anti-corruption cartoon exhibition at Rajshahi College on 28 to 30 July side by side with another exhibition at Rajshahi University. The cartoon exhibition was inaugurated at Rajshahi College on 28 July by the Principal of the college Dr. Abu Reza Md. Abdul Majid. Former Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University Professor Saidur Rahman Khan inaugurated the exhibition at the central library premises of the university on 30 July morning. In his address, Professor Saidur Rahman said that it would undoubtedly be possible to build a corruption-free Bangladesh if the present generation of youth upheld an anti-corruption spirit. Besides, anti-corruption oath-taking ceremony and quiz competition took place on 12, 13, 16 and 18 August with the participation of college students under the aegis of the YES Group. Around 3500 students from Shah Makhdum College, City College, Mohila College and Barendra College participated in the quiz contest.

Anti-Corruption Oath at Chandpur:
Holding aloft the slogan ‘Wanted a corruption-free country through intellectual growth’, the CCC-Kishoreganj accorded a reception to the GPA-5 achievers of 2008 SSC and Dakhil examinations on 28 July at the Mukto Mancha of Press Club with the objective of grooming them as good citizens. Chaired by the convener of the CCC sub-committee on education Professor Abdul Ghani, District Education Officer Md. Harun-ar-Rashid was present on the occasion as special guest. A total of 182 successful students (SSC-157 and Dakhil-25) of Kishoreganj sadar upazila were honoured through the programme.

Notable YES Programmes in CCC Areas

▲ Show of Jamalpur Theatre Group

▲ Students are taking Anti-Corruption Oath at Chandpur
YES News

YES Debate Competition at Pirojpur:
A debate competition was held on 8 July under the auspices of CCC-Pirojpur. CCC member Ziaul Ahsan acted as moderator during the contest. The CCC Convener Professor Sheikh Sayedur Rahman, Co-Convener Hosne Ara Begum Maya and CCC member Moshenatun Nessa (Masum) were present as judges. The topic of the debate competition was 'The budget for 2008-9 financial year is pro-poor'. YES member Mintu Lal Mondol, Hriday Ranjan Halder and Mousumi Mondal occupied first, second and third positions respectively in the contest. Prizes were distributed by the convener of CCC Pirojpur Professor Sheikh Sayedur Rahman.

Anti-Corruption Debate Competition at Kishoreganj:
A debate competition was organized at Kishoreganj by CCC-Kishoreganj and YES Group with the goal of raising anti-corruption awareness among students and enhancing the involvement of youth in the social movement against corruption. Its slogan was “Let the realm of morality be enriched through debates”. The final part of the contest took place on 30 August after completion of different stages.

Anti-Corruption Debate Competition at Sunamganj:
The final of the 2nd inter school and college anti-corruption debate competition-2008 was held at the Shaheed Abul Hassain Auditorium on 2 August morning. TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman was present as chief guest on the occasion. Addressing the students, he said that curbing corruption was necessary for solving the multifarious problems faced by the country. It has now been established that corruption was a punishable offence. Nobody is above law – Everyone should accept this truth. It becomes easier to tackle corruption if political goodwill exists. He further said that the people were the owners of the state; they should therefore come forward to play an active role in curbing corruption. The Upazila Executive Officers of Sunamganj Sadar and Sunamganj South Md. Ershadul Haque and Dewan Muhammad Humayun Kabir acted as moderators in the debate competition.

Installation of Information Board at Jessore:
An information board on various services, list of medicines and a new complaint box were installed by the YES Group of CCC-Jessore at the 250-bed Jessore General Hospital on 5 August. The Superintendent of the hospital Dr. Hasan Al-Mamun was present on the occasion and helped in setting up the information board. CCC convener Dr. Mustafijur Rahman supervised the entire proceeding by remaining present.

Youth Gathering at Nikli Upazila of Kishoreganj:
An exceptional youth gathering and cultural event took place under the supervision of CCC Kishoreganj and the initiative of the YES Group at Nikli GC Pilot High School ground on 25 August with a call for a more active and vocal role by the youth against corruption. The Upazila Executive Officer of Nikli upazila Kazi Md. Saiful Islam was present on the occasion as Chief Guest. He said that there should be more contacts between the government officials and the people for the success of the anti-corruption endeavours. He urged the CCC and TIB to create more opportunities so that alongside ensuring transparency and accountability, the government officials are brought face to face with the people for clarification about various services, as well as possibilities and limitations in order to satisfy the citizens. Over one thousand citizens of the locality belonging to different classes and professions, including students, took anti-corruption oath at this exceptional gathering. The audience also enjoyed the presentations by local band ‘Green Ever’ and the members of Kishoreganj YES Group. The anti-corruption drama ‘Gorjey Utho Arekbar’ (Roar Once Again) was also staged on the occasion.

Cultural Festival and Cartoon Exhibition at Kushtia:
A 2 daylong anti-corruption cartoon exhibition and cultural festival was organized by CCC Kushtia recently. It was inaugurated at the ‘Bijoy Ullash’ compound of Kushtia municipality on 29 August and concluded amid fanfare on 30 August night. The anti-corruption cartoon exhibition was inaugurated in the morning of 29 August by Principal Kader Hossain Chowdhury of Kushtia Government College. The Superintendent of Police Mosleh Uddin Ahmad was present as Chief Guest and Deputy Director of Mass Communication Department Md. Banijur Rahman as Special Guest at the opening ceremony of anti-corruption cultural festival in the afternoon. The welcome address was delivered by the Convener of CCC sub-committee Md. Khalilur Rahman Mazu while the CCC Convener Prof. Sudin Kumar Lahiri presided. Ten local organizations of Kushtia participated in the 2-day festivities. CCC members Dr. Sarwar Murshed and Ashok Saha acted as moderator.
3 daylong Street Drama Festival at Savar:
A 3 daylong street drama festival under the aegis of YES Group, Savar and Jahangirnagar Natya Prangan concluded on 8 August with the slogan ‘The Invincible Youth shall Resist Corruption’. Anti-corruption drama was staged at different times at Upazila Complex compound, Savar Hospital square, premises of Fantasy Kingdom, Hemayetpur bus-stand, Savar thana-stand and National Martyrs’ Memorial area at Nabinagar. Those who spoke at the gatherings included the Director of Jahangirnagar University Teacher-Student Centre Professor ATM Atiqur Rahman, Professor Shamsul Alam Selim of the department of Government and Politics, Upazila Executive Officer of Savar Md. Rabbi Mia, Convener of CCC-Savar Jai’nal Abedeen Khan and CCC members.

Anti-Corruption Debate Competition at Kushtia:
A school-based anti-corruption debate competition was held on 15 July at the district council auditorium of Kushtia under the auspices of CCC and YES Group. A total of 12 debaters from four secondary schools participated in the contest into two groups. Chaired by the CCC Convener Sudin Kumar Lahiri, teachers’ representatives Assistant Teacher Nilima Biswas of Kushtia Government Girls’ High School, Assistant Teacher Mohammad Rafiu Rahman of Kushtia High School and College, Senior Teacher Khodeja Begum of Police Line School and College, and Senior Teacher Tapan Kumar Sen of Mohini Mohan Bidyapith also spoke on the occasion. They thanked the TIB, CCC and YES Group for organizing such debate competitions and expressed their resolve to extend all-out cooperation in such ventures in the future. Over 200 students from the four schools were present on the occasion.

Youth Gathering at Chapai Nawabganj:
A 3-daylong anti-corruption programme for the youth commenced at the Harimohan Government High School ground on 21 July with the holding of an information fair and cartoon exhibition. The Deputy Commissioner of Chapai Nawabganj district Md. Sirajul Haque Khan inaugurated it at 3:30 p.m. in the afternoon. The Police Super SM Mahfuzul Haque Nuruzzaman BPM was present as special guest. The prominent public sector service-providers as well as a number of private organizations of Chapai Nawabganj district put up stalls in the information fair. Alongside holding information fair and cartoon exhibition on the second day on 22 July, reception was accorded to the GPA-5 achievers from the Sadar Upazila in the SSC examination of 2008. Eminent educationist Professor Abdus Salam was present on the occasion as chief guest. Colourful cultural programmes were organized on both the days with the participation of local radio and television artists and the YES Group of CCC Rajshahi. The spectators went round different stalls as well as cartoon exhibition galleries. They opined that this kind of programme could enrich the common citizens and motivate them to become more vocal against corruption, harassment and irregularities.

The ACC Chairman Lt. General (retd.) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury and the TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman came to visit the information fair on 23 July afternoon at 4:00 p.m. They inspected all the stalls and put down their signatures in the opinion book. The spectators participated in the anti-corruption youth rally held at Chapai Nawabganj district stadium after looking at the information fair. The chief guest and ACC Chairman urged the country’s youth to play a more active and effective role in the movement against corruption. Welcoming the march of youth against corruption, Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said that the strength of youth was the main inspiration in the anti-corruption movement that TIB has been waging throughout the country. TIB believed that the invincible youth could establish a well-governed Bangladesh by uprooting the garbage of corruption. The Deputy Commissioner Sirajul Haque Khan, Police Super SM Mahfuzul Haque Nuruzzaman BPM, Convener of CCC-Chapai Nawabganj Advocate Abu Md. Saiful Islam Reza and the Member-Secretary of district Corruption Prevention Committee Md. Mashiul Karim Babu also spoke on the occasion.

Thousands of people belonging to various classes and professions including around 30 thousand youth took part in the concluding day programme of the anti-corruption information fair and youth gathering. The stadium was full to the brim within 4 p.m. in the afternoon. Band star Ayub Bachchu and his group LRB, Shahed, Mehub Raja, Angkan and the local Gambhiria Group rendered songs in the programme. Ayub Bachchu urged the audience to become vocal against corruption. Echoing his words, the spectators pledged to hate corruption in their personal lives. In between songs, the audience took oath to become more active against corruption. The members of the YES Group of Chapai Nawabganj made a choreographic presentation on the theme song ‘Wake up People’.

Later, letters of thanks were handed over to all the stalls and 5 organizations were awarded crests for excellence presentation of information. These were: Youth Red Crescent and District Primary Education Office, joint 3rd; Barendra Multipurpose Development Authority and Chapai Nawabganj Municipality, joint 2nd; Local Government Engineering Department, 1st. Besides, crests were also awarded to Harimohan Government High School, Chapai Nawabganj Municipality, the police administration and the district administration for all-out cooperation during the 3-daylong programme.

▲ Information fair at Chapai Nawabganj
A total of 9 workshops and a seminar were organized under the leadership of gender sub-committees of CCCs and the members of YES Groups during the period June to August 2008. Although there is a slight difference between the words ‘workshop’ and ‘seminar’, there were similarities with regard to the main objectives, topic of discussion, nature and position of participants, etc. These were because they shared the same dream and motivation of building a ‘corruption-free cherished homeland’ through a gender-sensitive social movement against corruption.

The primary objectives of these workshops, participated by representatives of various classes and professions including teachers, students and their guardians, journalists, lawyers, development activists, cultural activists, representatives of local governments, business personnel and labourers, were to examine the concept of gender and corruption nurtured by the participants, explain and analyse the relationship of gender with corruption, identify the sectors where women face corruption, discuss the causes and impact of hindrances to human rights and empowerment of women caused by corruption in education, health and local government sectors and to search for complementary roles of TIB, the CCCs, YES groups, local like-minded organizations, NGOs and the government.

While discussing ‘Gender sensitivity, women’s empowerment and corruption’, the speakers dwelt on participation of the marginalised people, including the poor, the women and the children in provision of education, healthcare and local government services, which are linked to the major issues in the countrywide social movement against corruption being organized by the CCCs and TIB. Although the participants mentioned about its grammatical meaning while defining gender, many of them also alluded to the linking of ‘gender’ with the social identity of men and women. The natural men and women become social men and women due to social causes. As a result, differences emerge in their qualifications, behaviour, roles, rights, responsibilities and even expectations. These subjects received importance during discussions in the workshop.

Education is a basic need of all human. Mothers are the first kindergarten for children and primary education is the base of their institutional learning. The participants presented their opinion on the role of the ‘mother’ or how women can play a role in raising the quality of primary education. These were:

- Women should be preferred while recruiting teachers. The official quota for women should be filled up and they should be encouraged at the family level to take up teaching as a honorable profession.
- The number of women in School Managing Committees should be raised. Regular presence of woman members in committee meetings, their scope for giving opinion and participation in decision-making process should be ensured.

Awareness should be generated among families regarding education of girl-child. Child labour and child-marriage should be stopped to reduce drop-out rate and people should be informed about prevailing laws.

- The frequency of ‘Mothers’ Gatherings’ should be increased. Hundred percent attendances of them, scope for frank discussions, placement of demands and submission of creative opinions should be ensured there.
- Arrangements should be made for ensuring supply of new text-books to all students, simplification of the stipend rules for girl students and presentation of gifts for mothers to motivate students.

Healthy mother means healthy child and healthy child implies healthy future generation. Therefore, both men and women should come forward to build a healthy, beautiful and robust nation by enhancing the quality of healthcare services. Keeping this objective in mind, the views and opinions which emanated from various workshops on making the government healthcare services more gender-sensitive were as follows:

- Effective initiatives should be taken by the authorities to raise the number of woman doctors in local health service-centres and ensure their full-time attendance.
- Awareness should be generated among families about physical and mental changes of boys and girls occurring due to their reproductive health and at their adolescence.
- Public and private sector initiatives for providing healthcare to physically, mentally and visually challenged people should be geared up. Demands should be made to the authorities to fix a particular day in a week or a fortnight for their treatment.
- Arrangements should be made for reaching information on maternal and child health to all and for holding courtyard meetings, open discussions etc. at the grassroots level in order to remove negligence, superstitions and traditional misconceptions about women’s health. Participations of man mbers from the family will have to be ensured.
- Programmes like ‘Mothers’ Gathering’, ‘Face the public’ should be arranged for enhancing transparency and accountability of healthcare services authorities.
- Attendance by all categories of service-recipient females in these gatherings and programmes will have to be ensured.
- Political empowerment of women is an important aspect in meeting the basic needs of women and realizing their human rights. Participation of women in the local government structure and their direct election to reserved seats has been notable developments in this area. Discussions were also held in the workshops on informing the people about the services specifically targeted for the poor, women, children and the physically challenged, total empowerment of elected woman members and their role in public welfare. Some of those views were as follows:
TIB organized the first-ever Inter-YES Anti-Corruption Debate Competition 2008 with the objective of making the logical voice of YES members more powerful in resisting corruption. A total of 103 YES members from 36 CCC YES groups from all over the country participated in this 2-daylong workshop-based competition held at Proshika Human Resource Development Centre in Koitta of Manikganj district. Of them, 38 were girls and 65 boys. Eminent litterateur and Professor of English department of Dhaka University Dr. Syed Manzoorul Islam inaugurated this competition with the slogan “The Invincible youth shall resist corruption”. Dr. Syed Manzoorul Islam, Associate Professor of Economics Department of Jahangirnagar University Sharminda Nilomi Dalia and Senior Reporter of Channel 1 and former debater Shamim Al-Amin were present in the workshop as trainers. The trainers gave various advices to the debaters on pronunciations and norms, strategy to win in debate, how to perform Extempore Debate and parliamentary Rules of Procedures.

After the first day of training, Parliamentary-Style Debate was held on the second day by selecting 20 debaters through competitions into two groups. Professor of Institute of Social Welfare and Research of Dhaka University and moderator of the Dhaka University Debating Society Dr. ASM Atiqur Rahman acted as Speaker during the parliamentary debate. Senior Lecturer of Northern University Bangladesh Mohammad Morad Hossain Khan, Assistant Professor of Stamford University Bangladesh Tahsina Yasmin, Programme Manager of Manusher Jonno Foundation Arif Hossain Khan, official of City Bank Ltd. Md. Newaz Khalid Ahmed Toru and Assistant Editor of Daily Samakal Ayas Das Gupta were present as judges. YES member of CCC Rajshahi Md. Ashaduzzaman Ranga emerged as champion in the competition, YES member of CCC Patiya Tanmay Chowdhury was adjudged first runner-up and YES member of CCC Rajshahi Zobayed Al-Mamun Hasan was chosen as second runner-up. Former Adviser of the caretaker government and Treasurer of TIB Trustee Board M Hafizuddin Khan was present as Chief Guest in the concluding session which was also attended by the TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman. Certificates and crests were distributed among the winners in the last part of the programme. Besides, a colourful cultural programme was participated by the YES members.

The participants in these workshops urged the CCCs, YES groups and TIB to work more closely for the materialization of a happy, prosperous and corruption-free motherland in the future. Firm resolve was expressed to organize a gender-sensitive social movement against corruption through preparation of leaflets on ‘gender and corruption’, setting up of Advice and Information Desk at schools-colleges, people’s theatre, TVC, roundtable discussions, seminars, workshops, submission of memorandum to local administration, etc.

Lovely Yeasmin Jeba, Senior Gender Officer, TIB
Proper information and its availability is a precondition of good governance. Considering the necessity of the right to information, TIB has been raising awareness through disseminating information. Organizing satellite Advice and Information Desk (AI-Desk) activities at Dhaka Medical College Hospital since June 2008 is the first supportive measure for raising knowledge on the available services and support increasing authority supervision for quality services. This activities has been organising regularly by TIB staff and YES members.

According to the TIB conducted diagnostic study report on Dhaka Medical College Hospital in 2006, it revealed that people falls victims of corruption due to lack of awareness and lack of required information of services by the service delivery institutions. Following its recommendations and the CCC conducted experiences of organizing satellite AI-Desk activities, TIB applied the same at the national level here at DMCH. In fact AI-Desks are making people aware the necessity of the particular hospital service related information and motivating the authority for setting up of this as a sustainable measure.

With the cooperation of DMCH authority, TIB has been organized three ‘satellite AI-Desk’ activities at the outdoor premise during June-August 2008, where the total number of 4,038 service recipients received various service related information and advices. These includes, showing the way of ticket and medicine distribution counter, different outdoor services department, pathology and X-ray room, and providing direct assistance in admitting poor patients and even registering their opinion/comments in the AI-Desk’s register book. Added that, there are 4,200 leaflets on the significant hospital services that prepared with authority supports and were distributed at the hospital premise.

The concerned authority’s support and participation were ensured in operating this satellite AI-Desk activity. Besides the co-operation for the leaflet preparation, the authority and the concerned other officials expressed their solidarity with TIB while visited the desk. On the other hand, the service recipients demanded for getting the service related information and keeping continue of this AI-Desk activity.

Assistance for getting free admission
The 12 years old son of Firoza Begum from Comilla was suggested for getting admission by an outdoor medicine doctor. Firoza did not know how to get admission here. She learned the information from AI-Desk that was run by TIB but failed to find the poorly marked ‘admission room’ with an ordinary printed paper. That’s why she utterly came back to the desk. Then TIB volunteer helped filling up the admission form and collected approval from the RP (Residential Physician) as suggested by the concerned staff considering her (user) inability of Tk 11 admission fees. Firoza could rely on the desk’s support and came again for having X-ray information on the second day of the desk.

TIB’s Recommendations

Short Term
• A permanent Advice and Information Desk of DMCH is required to be set up.
• The location map of the hospital is required to be displayed marking with ticket counter, medicine counter and the pathology rooms.
• An Information Board should be displayed at all departments mentioning govt. fees for services.
• A Complaint Box at the hospital is required to be set up.
• A regularly updated list of free medicines and working days of duty doctors is required to be displayed.
• Collected additional 50 paisa is required to be deposited with a Office Memo to the well-fare fund that used to collect from the outdoor ticket counter.
• Effective administration and authority’s regular monitoring are required for the medical representatives and the quality services of the hospital.

Medium Term
• The outdoor ticket fee is required to be in full figure (5 Tk or 6 Tk) instead of 5.30 Tk.
• Intensive monitoring is required to the medicine purchase receipt and procurement procedures.
• Effective monitoring system is required reducing brokers entry.
Transparency International (TI) has released its annual Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 2008 on 23 September. The results show that Bangladesh has scored 2.1 points in a scale of 0-10, and has continued to be ranked low - 10th from below, which is 147th among 180 countries included in the index this year. In the same position with the same score are 3 other countries – Kenya, Russia and Syria.

It may be recalled that Bangladesh was earlier placed at the very bottom of the list for the five successive year from 2001-2005. In 2006 Bangladesh was ranked in no 3, and last year 7th. With the score of 2.1, almost the same as that of last few years’ 2.0, Bangladesh’s apparent upward movement in ranking from 7th to 10th does not necessarily indicate any notable better performance over last year, except that other countries may have performed worse.

Like last year Somalia has remained at the bottom of the list implying that corruption in that country is perceived to be highest, followed by Myanmar and Iraq in the 2nd position while Haiti is in the 3rd position. Afghanistan is in the 4th position.

At the other end, Denmark, New Zealand and Sweden have been ranked at the top, each scoring 9.3, meaning that in these countries corruption is perceived to be lowest, closely followed by Singapore with 9.2, the only Asian country that has consistently been in the league of top 10.

Countries that have this year shown notable improvement are Albania, Cyprus, Georgia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, South Korea, Tonga and Turkey. On the other hand, significant declines have been seen in the scores of Bulgaria, Burundi, Maldives, Norway and the United Kingdom.

The CPI has once again highlighted the crucial link of failed institutions and oversight mechanisms with corruption irrespective of the level of development of the country concerned. The example of UK is particularly remarkable. Having scored 8.6 and 8.4 in 2006 and 2007 respectively, UK has dropped this year to 7.7, marking a serious deterioration, hardly ever seen in the 14-year history of CPI. This has been attributed to the UK Government’s intervention into the Serious Fraud Office’s investigations into the BAE Systems’ alleged bribing of the Saudi officials.

Although Bangladesh has moved 3 steps up from last year’s 7th to the 10th position, its score has remained nearly same, with an insignificant increase of only 0.1. It can be said as reasons that following the research methodology of CIP this year’s index was prepared based on the analysis of 2007 and 2008’s data. Data that were collected until the end of the July 2008 was included in this year’s index. So that, people’s expectations for positive changes which have been grown up by a high level of commitment of present interim govt. to fight against corruption were reflected in this index.

While subsequent developments including the growing concern over the outcome and credibility of the anti-corruption drive, especially apparent failure to maintain the integrity of the legal process were already looming large, the institutional reform measures introduced by the present government may have contributed to the increase in score, insignificant though. Initiatives such as separation of the Judiciary, reform of the Election Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission and Public Service Commission and ratification of the UN Convention against Corruption may have contributed to the perception that institutional potential of Bangladesh to combat corruption has enhanced, though the real impact of such reforms would be available in longer time frame depending on the extent to which these are sustained in the future.

Moreover, as the index draws on corruption related data from expert and business surveys, it is quite likely that a perceived sense of insecurity and uncertainty that has prevailed in business and investment during the period may have also prevented the possibility of a better score.

Parliamentary-Style Anti-Corruption Debate Competition Held

A two-daylong Parliamentary-Style Anti-Corruption Debate Competition was held on 5 and 6 August with the slogan – "The invincible youth shall resist corruption." TIB organized the programme jointly with Dhaka University Debating Society, Stamford University Debate Forum, BRAC University, Northern University Bangladesh and East-West University. A total of 350 debaters from all over the country took part in the competition.

Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission Lt. General (retd.) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury was the Chief Guest in the inauguration programme held at the auditorium of East-West University on the first day of the competition. The welcome address was delivered by the TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman. Others who spoke on the occasion were Pro Vice-Chancellor of BRAC University Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor of Stamford University Bangladesh Dr. M. Majeedur Rahman, Vice-Chancellor of East-West University Dr. Mohammed Sharif and eminent litterateur, academic and Chief Moderator of Dhaka University Debating Society Dr. Syed Manzoorul Islam. In his address, the ACC Chairman said that it would take time before the country was freed from the vicious clutch of corruption. Not only ACC, the general people, especially the youth would have to come forward. In his address of welcome, Dr. Iftekharuzzaman termed corruption as a universal malady and called upon the common people as well as youth to come forward consciously for curbing corruption in a developing country like Bangladesh. Dr. Syed Manzoorul Islam thanked the TIB for running an anti-corruption in the country. He said that the youth had repeatedly shown the path followed in history and they were once again waking up as their backs were on the wall. The youthful force would certainly emerge victorious. After the speeches, around 350 students present in the auditorium took oath of “We shall never indulge in corruption” by joining Assistant Professor Tasnina Yasmin of Stamford University Bangladesh.

On completion of the inaugural session, Extempore Debate Competition took place.

The second day of the parliamentary-style debate competition took place at the TSC Auditorium of Dhaka University. Professor of the Institute of Social Welfare and Research of Dhaka University and DUDS Moderator Dr. ASM Aliquor Rahman acted as Speaker during the first of the two sessions of the contest. Dr. Asif Nazrul of the Law Department of Dhaka University acted as Speaker in the final session. The Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University Professor Dr. SMA Faiz was present as Chief Guest. Presidium member of Bangladesh Awami League and parliamentary expert Suranjit Sen Gupta and some teachers of associated institutions also spoke on the occasion.

Plaban Gangopadhyay, a debater of Dhaka University, was adjudged the champion in the competition. Bangla-Vision, Radio- Foorti, The Daily Star and Metronet BD Ltd. were the media partners of this debate competition.

Transparency in Electoral Process

The forthcoming National Election is very important for the institutionalization of democracy. The people are expected for an accountable democratic govt.

There is no alternative of an elected - democratic govt. for continuing the anti-corruption drive and reform initiatives. Thanks to TIB for publishing editorial on this matter in its newsletter volume 12, no. 2. Hope that a corruption-free election environment will be created. It is also be expected that all political parties, civil society, mass media, and different public and private organizations will be played a significant role besides the govt. and Election Commission in creating voter awareness and keeping away the corruptions from the electoral process.

Omar Khaled Saadi, East West University, Dhaka

Be successful the AI - Desk initiative

I am glad to learn that TIB has taken initiative to set-up Advice and Information Desk (AI-Desk) for ensuring people’s participation in the establishment of good governance in all govt. and private organizations and institutions. It is a remarkable effort of CCCs to set-up of Advice and Information Centre and satellite AI-Desk for bringing positive and tangible changes in service delivery institutions. Hope that this initiative will be successful.

Sadia, Scarborough, Toronto, Canada