National Convention

Leaving No One Behind

Discrimination, Exclusion and Rights of the Marginal and Excluded People

20-21 June 2019

Venue: LGED Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207

Dear Sir/Madam,

Bangladesh has made commendable achievements in addressing the challenges of poverty. However, poverty is a multi-dimensional reality. One feature of this reality is reflected in the current condition of the marginal and excluded communities who are yet to reach desired levels in reducing poverty. Bringing the challenge of exclusion and marginalization into national focus is thus a key priority in today’s Bangladesh. With this goal in mind, we, four organizations—Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD), Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB) and Gram Bikash Kendra (GBK), with support from the European Union and ICCO Cooperation—have undertaken a multi-year initiative since February 2016 to make the marginal and excluded communities in Bangladesh visible and address the challenges they face.

In this connection, we are organizing a national convention and cultural festival on 20-21 June 2019 (Thursday-Friday) at LGED Auditorium, LGED Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207 to share findings of studies and analysis so far, think together about how to deal with exclusion challenges in Bangladesh and to celebrate cultural riches that the excluded groups offer. The theme of the convention is discrimination, exclusion and rights of the marginal and excluded people.

Eminent economist, Professor Rehman Sobhan, will be present as the chief guest. Guests of honour and distinguished speakers at the convention are Prof. Wahiduddin Mahmud, Prof. Rounaq Jahan, Dr. Shamsul Alam, Prof. Sakhawat Ali Khan, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh, Tessa Schmelzer, Dr. Harishankar Jaladas, Rambhajan Kairi and Rabindranath Soren. The representatives of tea communities, trade unions, ethnic communities and other excluded groups, civil society, community-based organizations, state actors, human rights organizations, cultural groups and the media will attend the convention and cultural festival.

You are cordially invited to the convention.

Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman
Executive Chairman, PPRC

Joyanta Adhikari
Executive Director, CCDB

Philip Gain
Director, SEHD

Moazzem Hossain
Chief Executive, GBK

Organized by

Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD),
Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB) and Gram Bikash Kendra (GBK)

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Program

20 June 2019 (Thursday)

08:30 Registration and reception of the guests and participants
10:00 Tea

Inaugural Session

10:30 Welcome address: Joyanta Adhikari, executive director, Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB)
10:40 Keynote: Discrimination, exclusion and rights of the marginal and excluded people: understanding the objective realities—Philip Gain, director, Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD)
11:00 Distinguished speakers and guests of honour
- Prof. Wahiduddin Mahmud, eminent economist
- Dr. Shamsul Alam, member (senior secretary), General Economics Division (GED), Bangladesh Planning Commission, Bangladesh
- Prof. Rounaq Jahan, distinguished fellow, CPD and visiting scholar, Columbia University
- Prof. Sakhawat Ali Khan, chairman, Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD)
- Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh
- Tessa Schmelzer, country representative, ICCO Cooperation
- Rambhajan Kairi, general secretary, Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union (BCSU) and vice-chairman, Kamalganj Upazila
- Dr. Harishankar Jaladas, writer
- Rabindranath Soren, president, Jatyio Adivasi Parishad (JAP)
- Moazzem Hossain, chief executive, Gram Bikash Kendra (GBK), vote of thanks
12:40 Chief guest: Prof. Rehman Sobhan, eminent economist and chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
12:55 Chair: Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman, Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC)
(The book “Modhupur: The Vanishing Forest and Her People in Agony” will be launched at the inaugural session)
01:15 Lunch
02:15 Parallel Session: One
Topic: Identity, culture and languages of ethnic and marginal communities of Bangladesh
Chair: Dr. Ainoon Naher, professor, Department of Anthropology, Jahangirnagar University
Facilitator: Philip Gain, director, SEHD
Designated speakers: Prof. Mahmudul H. Sumon, Department of Anthropology, Jahangirnagar University; Cornelius Tudu, country director, SIL; Md. Alamgir Hossen, deputy director, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS); and Parimal Singh Baraik, president, Moulibazar Cha Jangoshthi Adivasi Front (MCJAF)
Open discussion

Parallel Session: Two
Topic: Achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) for the marginal and excluded communities
Chair: Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman, PPRC
Designated speakers: Tapan Datta, president, Bangladesh Trade Union Centre, Chattogram; Dr. Abu Sayed Mohammad Hasan, programme specialist-SRH, UNFPA; Md. Shamsuzzaman, programme analyst, SRHR, UNFPA; Rambhajan Kairi, Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union (BCSU) and Rushina Soren, vice-chairman, Ghoraghat upazila, Dinajpur
Open discussion

Parallel Session: Three
Topic: Understanding international instruments and national laws protecting the marginal and excluded communities
Chair: Dr. Mohammad Abdul Wazed, former director general, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)
Facilitator: Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua, lawyer, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Designated speakers: Dr. Tanismuddin Khan, associate professor, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka; Sharowat Shamin, lecturer, Department of Law, University of Dhaka and Dr. Uttam Kumar Das, advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh and program officer, ILO Bangladesh
Open discussion

Tea

Screening and launching of documentary film, Aronner Artonad (Sylvan Tears)
Chair: Ajoy A. Mree, president, Adivasi Cultural Development Forum
Special guest: Professor Shahidul Alam, Department of Media and Communication, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)
21 June 2019 (Friday)

9:00  Parallel Session: Four

Topic: Innovative approaches in understanding and analysing the problem tree of the marginal and excluded communities

Chair: Dr. Harishankar Jaladas, writer
Facilitator: Sarah Marandy, senior programme manager, Social and Economic Development, GBK
Designated speakers: Milon Das, executive director, Parittran; Bijoy Bunerjee, labour leader and chairman, Raighat Union Parishad; Soud Khan, Bede Sardar; Nirmal Chandra Das, general secretary, Bangladesh Horijon Yokkho Parishad and Aleya Akhter Lily, general secretary, Sex Workers’ Network (SWN)

Parallel Session: Five

Topic: Understanding micro-realities of forest and commons: case of Modhupur sal forest villages

Chair: Apurbo Mrong, regional director, Caritas, Mymensingh
Facilitator: Eugin Nokrek, president, Jayenshahi Adivasi Samaj Kallyan Shangstha (JASKS)
Presentation: Contents of the book, Modhupur: The Vanishing Forest and Her People in Agony by Philip Gain

Designated speakers: Zoynal Abedin, senior journalist and retired college teacher; Shulekha Mrong, secretary, Achik Michik Society; Mihir Mree; Ajoy A. Mree, president, Adivasi Cultural Development Forum; Jastina Nokrek, vice-chairman, Modhupur Upazila Parishad; and Hasan Ali, Gachhabri

Open Discussion

11:00  Tea

11:30  Parallel Session: Six

Topic: Strategies for protection of the marginal and excluded communities

Chair: Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman, PPRC
Facilitator: Moazzem Hossain, chief executive, GBK

A draft paper on strategies from past discussions is presented—Philip Gain

Open discussion

Parallel Session: Seven

Topic: Land rights of the marginal and excluded communities

Chair: Khushi Kabir, coordinator, Nijera Kori
Facilitator: David Hilton, associate director, CCDB
Designated speakers: Shamsul Huda, executive director, ALRD; Krishnalal, president, Bangladesh Horijon Yokkho Parishad; Nripen Pal, joint general secretary, Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union (BCSU); Ramjan Ahmed, Bede leader and Philemon Baske, chairperson, Shahebganj Bagda Farm Bhumi Uddhar Sangram Committee

Open discussion

1:00  Lunch

2:30  Plenary: Summing up reports from parallel sessions and adoption of Dhaka declaration

Facilitator: Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman

4:00  Meet the Press

4: 30  Tea

5:00  Cultural Evening

Introductory remarks: Dr. Masudul Haque, Dinajpur Government College

Guest speaker: Dr. Harishankar Jaladas, writer

Topic: Resistance of the marginal people through research and writing

Cultural performance: Monipuri, Hijra, Oraon, Paharia and Mahle

Contact

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