

The European Union's Development Cooperation Instrument for Bangladesh

Establishing Vulnerable Peoples' Rights and Access to social safety net programmes (EVPRA) Project

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EVPRA Project End Evaluation



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EVPRA Project End Evaluation

Establishing Vulnerable Peoples' Rights and Access to Social Safety Net Programmes (EVPRA) Project

Conducted by

Data Management Aid

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List of Acronym

BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CVA	Citizen Voice and Action
DMA	Data Management Aid
DFID	Department for International Development
EU	European Union
EVPRA	Establishing Vulnerable Peoples' Rights and Access
FFW	Food for Work
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
HH	Household
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
KII	Key Informant Interview
LA	Local Authorities
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSSS	National Social Security Strategy
OAA	Old Age Allowance
PIO	Programme Implementation Officer
PMIU	Project Management Implementation Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PSEP	Primary Education Stipend Project
PUMDO	Peoples Union of the Marginalised Development Organisation
SSNP	Social Safety Net programme
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UP	Union Parishad
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development Programme
VGF	Vulnerable Group Feeding
WV	World Vision

GLOSSARY AND DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Ethnic Minority: A group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination¹. Further it can be defined as a group within a community which has different national or cultural traditions from the main population.

Religious Minority: In Bangladesh, nearly 90% population are Muslim, (the rest of religious faiths are considered as minority) while 8.5% are Hindu and rest are from other faiths².

Vulnerable Group: Vulnerable groups generally refers to those who do not have equal access and affordability in different public and private services and/or excluded in any services those they are supposed to obtain as citizen of the country.

Beneficiary: Beneficiary is referred to those who are availing at least one support of the SSNPs

Governance: Major elements of governance includes; transparency, accountability, predictability, and participation of all stakeholders.

Access: This refers to accessing in the services of SSNPs including entrance of the eligible persons to any of the 9 schemes of SSNP through applying in a legal way for availing any of SSNP schemes.

Satisfaction level: It's a degree of happiness, expression of mental feelings on the outcome of getting rewards he received, or when he has done something he desired to have.

Upazila/Sub-district: Upazila is the lowest administrative tier in Bangladesh and below the level of district. There are 492 Upazilas in Bangladesh

Union: Unions are the smallest rural administrative and local government units in [Bangladesh](#). Each Union is made up of nine Wards. Usually one village is designated as a ward. There are 4,554 unions in Bangladesh. A Union Council (union parishads) consists of a chairman and twelve members including three members exclusively reserved for women. Union Parishads are formed under the *Local Government (Union Parishads) Act, 2009*.

¹Bangladesh has more than 45 Ethnic communities who have been living in the plain land other than Hill track ethnic communities, having less education, absence of employment an income diversity triggered to extreme poverty, poor access to public and private services,

² Population Census, 2011, BBS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

World Vision Bangladesh (WVB), implemented the project titled “*Establishing Vulnerable People’s Rights and Access to Social Safety Net Programmes (EVPRA)*”, in two northern districts of Bangladesh viz., Dinajpur and Joypurhat under funding assistance of the European Union (EU). The project implemented in partnerships with two local NGOs: Pollisree, in Dinajpur (3 Upazilas: Dinajpur Sadar, Birampur and Fulbari) and PUMDO (People’s Union of the Marginalised Development Organisation) in Joypurhat (2 Upazilas: Joypurhat Sadar and Panchbibi).

Both quantitative and qualitative approach of data collection was applied for this study and two stage sampling method was used for selection of 992 sampled HHs, while 12 FGDs (8 in Dinajpur and 4 in Joypurhat districts) with community people and 59 KIIs with concerned duty bearers (project personnel, CSO representatives and relevant GoB officers and local government representatives) of National to Union level were conducted.

Achievement of Log-frame Indicators

Indicators	Achievements
Indicator: R1.1.1 Percentage of targeted CSOs implementing new organisational leadership mechanisms (e.g. new board standard, periodic/annual elections, inclusion of women, operational structures and systems etc.) for effective CSO governance.	All targeted 100 CSOs are implementing new organisational leadership mechanisms where mid-term value was 84% and during baseline no CSOs were formed. All the CSOs are practising democratic process to select their leaders. Among 659 executive committee members, 464 are females in 96 CSOs.
Indicator: R1.1.2 Percentage of CSOs with either women, or other vulnerable people in a leadership position by the end of year 2 of the project	About 96% CSOs managed by either women or representatives from ethnic minorities in leadership positions, such as President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.
Indicator: R1.2.1 Increased access to knowledge and information about human rights and SSNP entitlements by the most vulnerable, including ethnic minority groups & women, by the end of the project.	Out of 992 respondents, 94.1% said that they know about their fundamental human rights and could explain SSNP entitlements. Overall 98% respondents reported receiving information about SSNP entitlements from official sources or local CSOs. Sources of information included: word of mouth/neighbour (98%), UP chairmen/members /government officers (70) %, local NGOs/CSOs/CBOs (66%), poster/community notice board (15%), Party cadre of different political parties (13%) and such others.
Indicator: R1.3.1 Increased effective engagement between GO and NGOs on issues which promote vulnerable peoples' access to SSNPs, specifically including ethnic minority groups and women.	In general, engagement with Agriculture department, Social service department, Women affairs department, Upazila Nirbahi Officer’s (UNO) office etc., but specifically, they are more attached to Social Welfare, Women Affairs, Union Parishad and UNOs office.
Indicator: R2.1.1 Percentage increase in the number of CSO representatives included in local government committees, specifically including CSO representatives from ethnic minorities, women and other most vulnerable groups	It was found that 19 % (internal assessment December 2019) CSOs respondent said that they are the member of local government committee. In numbers, 21 CSO representatives are now included in the SSNP selection committees as a direct result of the Action, albeit currently as observers. Members of 7 CSO are now involved in UP standing committees (Sanitation Water Supply & Sewerage Committee & Rural Infrastructure Development and Maintenance Committee etc.) and two members are included in SMC.
Indicator: R2.2.1 Increased proportion of people in the target communities with satisfactory access to SSNP information by the end of the project	The respondents being satisfied with access to local government SSNP information has increased to 84% from baseline 57% and mid-term 81%. Respondents receiving information about SSNP raised to 83% during end line from 15% during Baseline and 54% in midterm.

Indicator: R3.1.1 Increased % of people (disaggregated by gender, ethnic minority and other vulnerable groups) in the target communities with access to SSNPs by the end of the project.	Percentage of people (disaggregated by gender, ethnic minority and other vulnerable groups) in the target communities with access to SSNPs by the end of the project rose to 74% compared to 5.32% in baseline and 50.58% in mid-term. The target for increase was 20%. 74% included 4,402 male & 7,775 female, and 135 ethnic & 604 non-ethnic)
Indicator: R.3.2.1 Number of contributions to national level policy consultations with the government to facilitate policy changes by the end of the project	Number of contributions to national level policy consultations with the government to facilitate policy changes exceeded its target (18) and rose to 19 by the end of the project. During mid-terms it was 11
Indicator R.3.2.2 Number of publications items and research pieces presented and disseminated at national level, to government and civil society, to advance access to SSNPs by the most vulnerable	Number of research/publication documents met its target (10) at the end of the project which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 10 Research Publications under Activity Code A5 4.1 (1 Baseline Survey, 1 Mid-term Evaluation, 1 End line Evaluation and 7 CSO Survey (Internal Survey). ✓ 10 other publications included 1 SSNP curriculum (A1.2.1), 4 Newsletters capturing good practice and success stories (A1.3.3), 1 SSNP standards document (A3.1.2) and 4 Policy briefs (A3.2.1).

Relevance:

Strategic approach of the EVPRA project was relevant to the National Social Security Strategy. EVPRA supported the government's national priorities for poverty reduction through SSNP service delivery. The partnership approach was fully in line with the EU Annual Action Programme for 2014/2015, under the Thematic Programme "Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities". The project also complemented the EU-funded Bangladesh Resilient Livelihoods Programme (2018-2022) and was relevant to the United Nations Agenda 2030, contributing primarily to the progressive achievement of SDG. (*SDG 1: "End poverty in all forms everywhere". SDG 2: "End hunger, achieve food security and nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture"; SDG 5: "Gender Equality" and SDG 10: "Reduce inequalities"*).

Inclusion of local NGOs (Pollisree and PUMDO) as implementing partners was a relevant approach because it provided an advantage for smooth project operation due to their long presence and experiences of development activities in the project area. The project targeted vulnerable people, with focus on ethnic minorities who had limited access to local government supports and services. Geographically selection of project areas was relevant because of being densely populated by ethnic people. Activating community based CSOs formed by ethnic community representatives, mainly women in leading position, to work closely with SSNP service providers was a relevant action to foster effective governance and citizens' awareness and mobilisation for accessing SSNP. In the target districts, the project through partnership with CSOs worked closely with the Union Parishads (UPs), which is one of the primary executors of the SSNP services.

Efficiency

For efficiency of actions and approach, activities were performed as per plan such as target beneficiaries were selected, CSOs formed/activated, capacity development training imparted to CSOs, network with key stakeholders established etc. EVPRA formed PSC, to oversee and monitor project performances through quarterly progress review meetings. Members of PSC included Regional Field Director, WVB, Executive Directors of Pollisree and PUMDO. WVUK's Grants Portfolio Manager and Compliance Officer provided virtual and remote support. Monitoring and reporting mechanism tracked performance and progress. Financial control established and reviewed on regular basis by the PSC. The field team

were given proper and timely guidance for implementation of activities and achievement of outputs. Time efficiency was managed through development of a detail implementation plan by the project team to ensure timely implementation of project activities and service delivery with cost efficient manner.

WVB ensured management efficiency through partnering with two local NGOs (Pollisree and PUMDO) having long experience in the project area and easy access to the community, LGs, and local administration. All three partners were equipped with adequate human resource, logistic and professional capacities to ensure efficient implementation. EVPRA Project Officials maintained liaison with the government counterparts efficiently in relation to project implementation. WVB's CVA approach and "Interface Meetings" held at the Union Parishad with the participation of community people and duty bearers created opportunity for public hearing and ensure social accountability. CVA approach efficiently paved the way for the beneficiaries in claiming their SSNP entitlements.

Effectiveness

The EVPRA proved to be an effective project. Even though there was no scope of CSOs representation in the LG SSNP committees, as these are formed as per GoB prescribed format, the EVPRA project has made possible for representation of 21 CSO members in the SSNP selection committees as "**observers**", 7 CSO members in UP Standing Committees and 2 CSO members in SMC.

Out of the 992 respondents, 74.5% received SSN support of some type under the 9 SSNP. The target was 20% increase. It is to be noted here that nobody is entitled to receive more than one type of SSNP allowance except educational stipend.

The project has effectively capacitated the CSOs who could play an effective role in participatory selection process at the bottom line (UP) of the SSNP selection process. These included 100 CSOs of which 45% CSOs were female only and 96% CSOs had women in leadership position. All the CSOs demonstrated new organisational leadership mechanisms and practised democratic process to select their leaders. 94% CSOs had increased understanding and knowledge about human rights and 98% had access to SSNP information and entitlements. Significant progress on social accountability and transparency made through awareness of public complaint/grievance redress mechanism which could be attributed to the establishment of complaint boxes (100 nos. at the CSOs, 41 nos. at Union Parishads and 5 nos. in municipalities).

Impact

EVPRA focus on raising awareness and capacity building of ethnic minorities had a positive impact in creating self-confidence among the ethnic communities which was not visualised before starting of project activities. The project activities improved the capacity of lobbying, and advocating for SSNPs, and thereby increasing access to SSNP. It allowed the landless households to meet both food and nutritional demands, and search for additional livelihoods; poor lactating mothers abled to ensure essential food for themselves and their children through their allowance and poor students continued education due to stipend. *"We Adivasis were backward and left out. We did not have the scope to ask for our rights. But EVPRA project has made access for us at the Union Parishad. We can now go to the Union Parishad Chairman to claim our rights for government allowance (SSNP)."* Said an FGD male participant from an ethnic community. Another FGD female participant said, *"My daughter gets government stipend. This helps me to manage school expenses. Otherwise she would have to stop going to school."*

The project had a positive impact on the partners (Pollisree and PUMDO) in developing their understanding of CVA approach which helped in achieving better results and ensure maximum benefits from resources.

The projects visibility was ensured by a journalistic outlet, which covers the project interventions. The EU logo was visible on all printed sources throughout the project sites and all publications and research reports.

The EVPRA project positively impacted in some aspects on the social life of the people. Early and child marriages, domestic violence and school dropouts were reduced in the targeted community in last 4 years. In end-line survey 52.7% said “no” and 27% said “rarely” early marriage happens. Secondary source found that prevalence of child marriage in Joypurhat 83.5% and Dinajpur 78% (BBS 2015a)³ and national average is 62.8% (Gender Statistics 2018)⁴. The end-line survey found 6% faced economic violence and 51.3% women faced physical violence by their husband compared to national data of 11.4% and 49.6% respectively (BBS, VAW Survey 2015)⁵. School dropout has reduced for girls compared to boys i.e. 37% (15) girls and 63% (26) boys’ dropout was found in end line. National average of school dropout rate (Grade V in 2017) is 3.6% for boys and girls 1.6% and in secondary school (2017) is 36.0% for boys and girls 38.4% (Gender Statistics 2018)⁶. This can be attributed to the economic empowerment of the of 7,775 vulnerable women due to their access to social safety nets which is expected to have a lasting impact on their lives and the lives of their family members.

Sustainability:

The sustainability of the EVPRA project lies on its partnership approach of organizing and activating the CSOs at community level and promoting engagement between CSOs and LGs to assist ethnic and non-ethnic vulnerable peoples’ access to the 9 targeted social safety nets. The projects contribution to building the organisational skills of the CSOs, and significantly strengthening the unprecedented number of female leaders in taking the lead role in majority of the CSOs is expected to sustain. This gender equality trend is expected to continue even after the project ends. The community people are aware of the various SSNPs procedure/eligibility, and this knowledge will sustain through the CSOs.

It is expected that CSOs will continue applying CVA technique to raise their voice against any irregularities related to SSNP service delivery. The projects initiative of expanding the complaint mechanisms (setting of complaint boxes at the Union Parishad and Municipality), has complemented the governments Grievance Redress System and is expected to remain available. However, the on-going availability and disbursement of State budgets continues to pose a major challenge to sustainability, not only for EVPRA but also for other development project intervention in SSNP field.

Conclusion and Recommendation

³ Context of Child Marriage and its Implications in Bangladesh, Department of Population Sciences University of Dhaka, 2017 – page 18 <http://dpsdu.edu.bd/images/ChildMarriageReport.pdf>

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). (2015a). Bangladesh Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2012-2013, Progotir Pathy

⁴Gender Statistics 2018 – page xxiii

⁵Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Bangladesh VAW Survey 2015

⁶Gender Statistics 2018 – 97 & 98

The changes in policy is not much achieved due to SSNP allocation and control at the central level distribution by the Upazila administration and primary beneficiary selection by the Union Parishad. However, EVPRA project through CVA approach has created scope for transparency & accountability and to establish the rights of the beneficiaries at the Union Parishad level. Nevertheless, lot of changes are yet necessary to make the project outputs sustainable and beneficial to the target population. Following are key recommendations:

- Separate SSNP allocations may be considered for the plain land ethnic people through introducing quota system.
- Resources need to be identified to provide technical support for relevant skills development among the communities/beneficiaries to cope with digitalised SSNP.
- All-enveloping audit, frequent visits and dialogues with concerned officials at UZP and UP levels need to be initiated to mitigate alleged apparent safety net leakages.
- Transparency and accountability need to be maintained to ensure eligible SSN beneficiary selection through provision of inclusion of community (grassroots) representatives in SSN selection committee.
- Provisions to be made by the government for time to time review and adjustment of SSNP budget allocations (e.g. Old Age Allowance; Allowance for the Widowed, Deserted and Destitute Women).
- Report by Mobile Banking Agent to the Upazila and District Education Office must be made mandatory so that Upazila and District Education Office can monitor the distribution by the mobile banking agent.
- Young poor people (Specially: Widowed, partially disabled) should not be considered for safety net allowance. Instead SSNP should have provision of providing job skill training to make them self- dependent.
- Old Age Disable and Widow allowances should be given at the time of religious festivals such as (Eid/Puja/Christmas).

Lessons Learned

The EVPRA project is a perfect example of community participation for community based CSOs to be institutionally organised and established as a collective force for claiming rights and entitlements of the vulnerable people particularly the ethnic minorities.

The project's CVA approach and interface meeting has been effective in reducing the gap between the community vulnerable people and the duty bearers. It created scope for community people to claim their rights through dialogue with the SSNP related duty bearers.

The project also helped in empowerment of the females who demonstrated confidence and leadership skills for protecting their rights and privileges who were otherwise discriminated.

A four-year duration may not have been enough for policy changes. But more intensive advocacy at policy makers level could have helped in sensitizing policy makers for consideration of SSNP policy changes to ensure representation of CSOs/community people in SSNP beneficiary selection committee as members not only as observers.

The four-year project was first of its kind to assist community vulnerable people particularly the ethnic minorities to access SSNP. WVB or other development agencies may replicate this project in other districts of Bangladesh where there is a need for improvement of SSNP services.

Indicator -wise Progress from Baseline to Endline Evaluation

Indicators	Baseline Status	Target	Mid-term	Endline Status
R1.1.1 Percentage of targeted CSOs implementing new organisational leadership mechanisms (e.g. new board standard, periodic/annual elections, inclusion of women, operational structures and systems etc) for effective CSO governance.	0%	80%	84%	100%
Indicator: R1.1.2 Percentage of CSOs with either women, or other vulnerable people in a leadership position by the end of year of the project	41.6%	40%	95%	96%
Indicator: R1.2.1 Increased access to knowledge and information about human rights and SSNP entitlements by the most vulnerable, including ethnic minority groups and women, by the end of the project.				
R.1.2. a. Know about fundamental human rights and could explain them	15%	60%	52.25%	94.1%
R.1.2.b Receiving information about SSNP entitlements	9.40%	60%	43.35%	98.0%
Indicator: R1.3.1 Increased effective engagement between GO and NGOs on issues which promote vulnerable peoples' access to SSNPs, specifically including ethnic minority groups and women.	0%	At least 1 engagement	Hard to say	All the CSOs engaged effectively with Public and private Services
Indicator: R2.1.1 Percentage increase in the number of CSO representatives included in local government committees, specifically including CSO representatives from ethnic minorities, women and other most vulnerable groups.	0%	30%	12%	19%
Indicator: R2.2.1 Increased proportion of people in the target communities with satisfactory access to SSNP information by the end of the project				
R2.2.1 a. Being satisfied with access to local government SSNP information	57.3%	20% increase	81.88%	84.32%
R2.2.1. b. Respondents are receiving information about SSNPs	15%		54.35%	83.30%
Indicator: R3.1.1 Increased % of people (disaggregated by gender, ethnic minority and other vulnerable groups) in the target communities with access to SSNPs by the end of the project	5.32%	20% increase	50.58%	74.4%
Indicator: R.3.2.1 Number of contributions to national level policy consultations with government to facilitate policy changes by the end of the project	0	18	11	19
Indicator R.3.2.2 Number of publications items and research pieces presented and disseminated at national level, to government and civil society, to advance access to SSNPs by the most vulnerable	0	10	6	10
Indicator: SO.1.1. Increased percentage of targeted local CSOs that are exhibiting improved organisational and management capacity by the end of the project				
SO.1.1 a. Local CSOs are exhibiting improved organisational and management capacity	0%	60%	50%	100%
SO.1.1. b. Women's organisations	0%	20% increase	40%	45.0%

Indicator: SO.2.1 Percentage of vulnerable people (specifically including ethnic minority groups and women) with increased knowledge of target SSNPs specifically eligibility criteria and/or grievance and redress mechanism by the end of project				
SO.2.1. a Critical Respondents are aware of SSNP beneficiary selection eligibility criteria	74.2%	10% increase	78.3%	96.4%
SO.2.1. b. Respondents are aware of grievance redress mechanisms	12.3%	60%	55.3%.	80.3
Indicator: SO.2.2 Number of new mechanisms (e.g. inclusion of CSO representatives, including ethnic minority groups and women, in local government committees, establish complaint response mechanism on SSNPs, transparency and accountability boards etc) introduced by local government to enable vulnerable communities to raise their voice on the delivery of SSNPs by the end of the project (a) CSO member inclusion in SSNP selection committee (b) Compliant/ suggestion process (c) Publish SSNP beneficiary list	Nil	Nil	(a) Not assessed (b) UP have compliant response committee (c) UP post SSNP beneficiary list	(a) 18 CSO representatives are now included in the SSNP selection committees (b) 146 complaint/suggestion boxes were placed in CSOs and Union Parishads (c) 24 union parishad hanging beneficiary list out of 46
Indicator: S3.1. Increased % of people (disaggregated by gender, ethnic minority and other vulnerable groups) in the target communities with access to SSNPs by the end of the project	5.32%	20% increase	50.58%	74.5%
Indicator: O1.1 Percentage of the target population with increased satisfaction and other elements regarding the delivery of SSNPs by the end of the project				
O1.1. a Transparency of SSNP delivery	61.63%	20% increase	72.15%	77.5%
O1.1. b. Ease of access to entitlements	70%		83.43%	90.0%
O1.1. c. Fairness of SSNP delivery	74%		72.89%	88.0%
O1.1. d. Adequacy of SSNP cash allowances	87.60%		86.28%	92.0%
Indicator O.1.2 Number of policy, system, structure, practice or programmatic changes to improve access to SSNPs by the most vulnerable people, specifically including ethnic minority groups and women, contributed to by EVPRA by the end of the project. (a) Increase budgetary allocation (Prepared by us) (b) Reduce leakages to be collected or checked with qualitative survey) (c) Increase coverage and support duration (Prepared by us)	Low budgetary allocation, leakages exists, low coverage and duration	At least 3 changes	(a) Govt. increased budget for SSNP (b) Amended to reduce leakage (c) Involve municipality level in PESP	(a) Govt. increased budget for SSNP (Table-) (b) Amended to reduce leakage (c) Involve municipality level in PESP and also increase number of recipients

CHAPTER-1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction and Background

World Vision U.K (WVUK), with fund from European Union (EU), has implemented a project, titled “Establishing Vulnerable People’s Rights and Access to Social Safety Net Programmes (EVPRA)”, through partnership with World Vision Bangladesh (WVB) and two local NGOs (Pollisree and PUMDO). EVPRA project aimed at empowering local ethnic Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), local authorities (LAs) and communities to promote most vulnerable communities access to government’s Social Safety Net Programmes (SSNPs) through enhancing transparency and accountability in the provision of SSNPs in the target districts: Dinajpur and Joypurhat. The project span of 4 years started from January of 2016 to December 2019.

EVPRA has particularly focused on increasing access to the following 9 SSNPS through its planned actions:

1. Old Age Allowance - Ministry of Social Welfare
2. Allowances for the financially insolvent disabled - Ministry of Social Welfare
3. Allowance for the widowed, deserted and destitute women - Ministry of Social Welfare
4. Maternity allowance program for poor lactating mothers - Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
5. Vulnerable group development (VGD)- Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
6. Vulnerable group feeding (VGF)– Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
7. Food for works (FFW)- Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
8. Secondary Education Stipend Project (SESP)- Ministry of Education
9. Primary Education Stipend Project (PESP)- Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

In Bangladesh, more than 45 Non-ethnic communities have been living in the plainland other than Chittagong Hill Tracts and Garo Community of greater Mymensingh district. Of them, the majority are living in Dinajpur, Joypurhat, Rajshahi, Naogaon and Rangpur district. The population of the project areas can be broadly divided into ethnic and non-ethnic population. The ethnic population is composed of various ethnic groups such as Santals (39.9%), followed by Oraon (21.2%, living mostly in Joypurhat district), Pahan and Borman (both 7.3%) and others (13.5%) that include Mahali (4.1%), Sing (3.1%), Karmokar (2.6%). Over the years the ethnic minorities experienced a strong sense of social, political and economic exclusion, lack of recognition, fear and insecurity, loss of cultural identity, social oppression and were subjected to stark socio-economic deprivation. Mass relocation of non-Non-ethnic people in the ethnic vicinity has also caused land-grabbing, leading to livelihood displacement among the Non-ethnic people⁷.

Total population of the EVPRA targeted Upazilas are 1,356,052, of which 40,678 (3%) are ethnic minority. The Project targeted 278,668 extremely poor people in these working areas and 39,953 (14.11% of total targeted populations) ethnic people (Source: *Population and Housing Census 2011*).

⁷UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), People’s Republic of Government of Bangladesh, 2005, p-152

The Baseline Survey and Mid-term Study of EVPRA project, has been conducted by external consultants. World Vision Bangladesh has contracted Data Management Aid (DMA) to undertake the End Project Evaluation. This report is based on the findings of the project end evaluation conducted by DMA in the two project districts with the support of EVPRA project team.

1.2 Objective of End Evaluation

The project end evaluation primarily intended to give feedback on achievements of project objectives, effectiveness of the project implementation and lessons learnt for future programming. The main focus of the Evaluation was, (a) Assess the progress made towards achieving project goals and impacts based on the project design and strategy (Relevance, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability and Efficiency) in order to better inform future WV programming and identify potential gaps and area-specific opportunities/focus for programme planning and improvement. (b) to come out with recommendations to guide future programming, and (c) to render accountability to donors.

Key Objectives of the Project End Evaluation

- ◆ To measure the result of the Project towards the overall objectives and three Specific Objectives' statements and indicators and expected result indicators mentioned in the Logical Framework (log frame). To compare the Project End Evaluation findings with Midterm Evaluation and Baseline Survey, and other studies such as CSOs Capacity
- ◆ Assess the performance of the project against key Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) evaluation parameters i.e. Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability
- ◆ To identify lessons learned and good practices and sustainability framework for each of the overall and specific objectives and results of the Project
- ◆ To provide clear and actionable recommendations/way forwards for the implementing organisation, donor, external audiences that will support sustainable benefits to the target communities as well as to design similar projects in other part of the country.
- ◆ Determine the results of EVPRA at impact level, specifically the project's impact on child marriage, school dropouts, food security, economic empowerment, or any other factors that improved standards of living as a result of increased access to SSNPs.
- ◆ Challenges encountered and accomplishments achieved by the complaint and redress mechanism.

1.3 The Action- Establishing Vulnerable People's Rights and Access to Social Safety Net Programmes"-EVPRA.

Social Safety Net Programmes (SSNP) consist of policies and programs that are designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to manage economic and social risks such as unemployment, exclusion, sickness, disability, old age and others. Initially, it was focused only on protection goals, but now it is increasingly combining promotional goals too. Over the years, Bangladesh has introduced a plethora of safety net programmes. However, such growth has often been adhoc and lacking a systematic indication. The need for a comprehensive and strategic framework to consolidate social safety-nets has emerged with increasing pre-occupation within the wider community.

The overall objective of the Action is to empower local, ethnic civil society organisations (CSOs), local authorities (LAs) and communities to promote access to SSNPs for the most vulnerable

communities by enhancing transparency and accountability in the provision of SSNPs. The Action followed local level social accountability approach of WV's, Citizen Voice and Action (CVA), through empowering CSOs, their membership and communities to increase their influence on access to SSNPs and related policies, and strengthen the capacity of duty bearers to respond positively for participation of citizen in service delivery decision-making and monitoring processes.

To achieve the objective mentioned above, WV followed a three-pronged approach by addressing the issues of three specific objectives. The 1st one (SO1) was *planned to strengthen organisational capacity to achieve sustainability of local Ethnic CSOs*. The 2nd specific objective (SO2) was to *promote the transparency and accountability of existing government SSNPs*, which seems to be the prime component of the action and also an ambitious one since the existing governance mechanism of Social Safety Net Programme is being implemented through top-down approach. Decisions are usually made by the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Finance and the lower-level administration implement as per instruction of higher authority. Only pace is remained for intervening to establish transparency in the selection of appropriate beneficiary and reduce malpractice of local elected representatives. The 3rd(SO3) was to *increase the number of vulnerable people demanding basic human rights and access to SSNPs from the government*.

Evaluation team was informed by the management that the events organised at national level, (Dhaka, the capital city) was highly productive as Ministers and high officials of different Ministries, members of Civil Society and Ethnic/vulnerable beneficiaries participated and discussed the issues. The project became successful with the inclusion of CSOs leaders in the SSNP selection committee as observers at Upazila level. As the Government policy has no provisions to include common people to represent in the SSNP committee, these observations will help to understand the process of selection and beneficiaries will be empowered for raising voices if any discrepancies are noticed.

Result Matrix of EVPRA Project

The Result Matrix of the project can be viewed in one lens mentioned in the following diagram:

Objectives: Empower Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working for the rights and development of ethnic minority groups, Local Authorities (LAs) and communities, to promote the most vulnerable peoples' social development through access to Social Safety Net Programmes (SSNPs)						
SO1. To strengthen organisational capacity and sustainability of targeted local CSOs that are working for the rights and development of ethnic minority groups			SO2. To promote transparency and accountability of existing government SSNPs		SO3. Increase the total number of vulnerable people with access to SSNPs from the government	
R1.1 Functional CSOs that are working for the rights of ethnic minority groups exist with effective leadership in practice	R1.2 CSOs working for the rights of ethnic minority groups have increased their understanding of human rights and entitlements	R1.3 Effective networking and collaboration between relevant government and non-government organisations (GOs and NGOs) is established	R2.1 Inclusion of CSO representatives working for the rights of ethnic minority groups in local government committees	R2.2 Target communities satisfied with access to SSNPs information	R3.1 The vulnerable are demanding rights and entitlements set out in SSNP policies	R3.2 Evidence of barriers to vulnerable peoples' access to SSNPs are presented at the national level and solutions sought in collaboration with key stakeholders

Organisation and Role played in EVPRA implementation:

World Vision UK & World Vision Bangladesh were the main drivers of the EVPRA project wheel. WV UK played the leading role in the strategic management of the project, supporting overall management and providing CVA technical expertise training and further community-level support as required. World Vision introduced the CVA approach in Bangladesh from its international experience and successes. The conclusions and recommendations of earlier works were taken into consideration in the design of this Action⁸. As believed by WV, the CVA model needs to take a district-wide approach to accelerate system strengthening; enhance collaborative relationship between and among stakeholders to advocate with one voice in catchment areas; actively involve CSOs and mass media in local advocacy; build the capacity of CVA monitoring groups to facilitate the processes and enhance project effectiveness; etc. WV's experience with CVA and CBO formation has been taken into account in the design of this Action.

WV Bangladesh has represented WVUK in the country. It was fully compliant with the EC contract requirements and conversant on the Action. WVB was responsible for day-to-day in-country coordination, monitoring and implementation of action through special grants and M&E staff. They were involved in direct delivering programme activities including project inception activities and organised Steering Committee meetings. The project was implemented in partnerships with Pollisree in Dinajpur (Dinajpur Sadar, Birampur and Fulbari Upazilas) and PUMDO (People's Union of the Marginalised Development Organisation) in Joypurhat (Joypurhat Sadar and Panchbibi Upazilas) district. Pollisree and PUMDO was involved for implementation of the project activities at the field level under the technical support of WVB, Dinajpur.

1.4 The Legislative Framework Governing the 9 focused SSNPs

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world with a population of 162 million people, expected to increase to 220 million by 2050, threatening to outpace food production. The country has made substantial progress in reducing poverty from 44.2 percent in 1991 to 18.5 % in 2010, projected to decrease to 12.9 % in 2016, supported by steady economic growth of 6 % over the past decade. Bangladesh aspires to reach Middle Income Country status by 2021. Poverty in Bangladesh has dramatically reduced following inclusive growth strategy, and Government has been implementing 145 programs under the social safety net initiative through 23 ministries. About 14.2% of the total annual budget for the fiscal year 2019-20 (amounting to BDT52319 million) was allocated against SSNPs. Noteworthy to mention here that now, the government is providing old-age allowance, widow allowance, allowances for divorced women, disabled allowance, distressed women allowance, poor pregnant women's allowance, and remuneration for financially insolvent freedom fighter.

Over the period, the constitutional provisions, laws and regulations are framed from time to time to materialise and regulate their implementation with enactment to safeguard citizen rights. Some examples are the Food Policy of 1988, the National Food Policy of 2006, the Food Policy Plan of Action (2008 – 2015) and such others. Programmes like: VGF, VGD and FFW are tools to be used to implement laws. The other laws and bylaws supporting and directly helping their implementation include, among others, the National Women Development Policy (2011) that is directly supporting programmes like maternity allowance programme, allowance for divorced, deserted and destitute poor women and others. The Bangladesh Pratidhandi Welfare Act or Bangladesh Physically Impaired

⁸*Changing Lives through social accountability. Case Studies from WV's DFID PPA. Citizen Voice and Action, 2015.*

Persons Welfare Act (2001) and Persons with Disabilities’ Rights and Protection Act (2013) not only complies with the right to social equality but also directly supports the implementation of Allowance for the Physically (or otherwise) Impaired persons. The National Education Policy (2010) seeks to ensure 100% enrolment of children at the Primary and Secondary levels. The National Children Policy (2011) along with the Education Policy can be used as effective supportive laws for Primary Education Stipend Project and Secondary Education Stipend Programme of SSNP.

Underlying fact is that the implementation of SSNPs following top-down structure is still with the ministries involved in central planning and fund disbursement, while Upazilas and unions are in charge of implementation where political influences are dominantly hampering proper selection process.

1.5 Governance structure and implementation Framework for 9 SSNPs

Government is currently managing 145 different Social Safety Net Programmes, among which EVPRA project focused on 9 SSNPs. These are mentioned in Table-1:

Table 1: Focused SSNPs of the EVPRA project (Action)

Name of SSNP	Eligible for Allowance ⁹	Amount of Allowance (BDT)	Distribution Frequency	Implementing Agencies
Old age allowance (OAA)	Old aged person: Male >65 years Female >60 years	500/month	Quarterly	Social Welfare Department
Widowed and/or poor women deserted by husband	Poor, widow/desitute women, (deserted by husband with special physical ability/needs and sick)	500/month	Once in year	Social Welfare Department
Allowance programme for the financially hard-up people with physical impairment	The applicant must be a financially hard-up and physically impaired person; (All physically impaired persons aged more than six years may be considered for this programme)	650/month	Quarterly	Social Welfare Department
Allowance for poor lactating mother	Pregnant and lactating mothers aged above 20 years but less than 35 years having less than Tk. 2000 monthly income.	800/month	Quarterly	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
Allowance for development of hard-up women (VGD)	Woman-headed household and having no earning male member; Families having school-going adolescent girls to be preferred.	30 kgs of rice/wheat per month Two years)	Monthly	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
Food for works Programme (FWP)	Families remaining hard-up and poor even during normal times, distressed and hard-up person/family; Hardcore poor of different occupation during food crisis.	480 Kgs of rice or wheat per month or 200 /day	Once in a year	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
Vulnerable Group Feeding Programme (VGF)	Female (aged 20-50 years), female household head, landless or has land <15 decimal	10 – 30 kgs or as the allowance received.		Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief

⁹For selection of eligible recipients, some other criteria are being followed.

Primary School Education Stipend Project	Government Primary School and/or Primary School Attached to a Secondary School, Primary School run by a Child Welfare Trust, and Madrasa Recognised by the Government, all students attending classes VI to VIII in Primary School run by the government will be eligible for stipends.	Mother of students attending the education will receive the allocation. Stipend for pre-primary education – Tk. 50/00. From class I to class V:	Once in a year	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Secondary Education Stipend Project	Father or guardian of the student is owner of less than 50 decimals of land and gross income of the Father/guardian is less than BDT 30,000/year	Monthly: BDT 100 to 200 and additional BDT 500 (one stroke) for buying books		Ministry of Education

Summary Description of the SSNP Benefits

VGf and Food for Work/40 days program (EGPP): Managed under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. Selected beneficiaries are provided with 10-20 Kg. of Rice during two Eid Festivals. All 12 UP Members are required to make a list of beneficiaries (70% must be female). Selected beneficiaries are given “Token” to collect the Rice. Distribution is informed through miking.

Food for Work (FFW) /40 days program (EGPP)¹⁰: The Chairman of Project Implementation Committee (PIC) at Union level determines and selects number of day labourers as per each project requirement (*construction, reconstruction, renovation and other works having done in rural areas*) and the labour leader is given the contract to implement the work. The money is allocated directly to the PIC and the labourer is paid directly by the PIC. Each labourer gets money equivalent to 8 Kg. rice (@ govt. rate Tk. 36/Kg.) per day. For 40 days’ work, the EGPP Union Selection Committee selects the labour (33% must be female) as per project requirement. The list is approved by the District Committee through the Upazila Committee. For each fiscal year, the work is divided in 2 phases (40 days/ phase). Each labourer gets Tk. 200/day which is paid weekly. Tk. 25/day is deducted each day which is paid at a time after completion of work. The allocation comes to the bank. Beneficiaries are required to open an account in that bank to draw the money.

Old Age Allowance: Managed under the Ministry of Social Welfare. Priority is given to the old aged (male 65 years or over, and female 62 years or over), deprived and landless people. Eligible people apply with NID (to validate age) at the Union Parishad. Based on application, Union level committee makes the list which is approved by Upazila committee. Each beneficiary gets Tk. 500/month. Beneficiaries open an account in the designated bank and draw the money every 3 months.

Allowance for Financially Insolvent Disabled: Mentally and physically disabled poor are eligible for this allowance. Beneficiaries can apply as early as aged 7 years at the Upazila Social Welfare Office with doctor’s certificate and birth registration certificate to validate age and get registered. Each registered beneficiary gets an ID card with his/her picture. Each beneficiary gets Tk. 700/month. Beneficiaries open an account in the designated bank and draw the money every 3 months.

¹⁰Employment Generation Programme for the Poorest (EGPP) to Reduce Disaster and Gender Vulnerability

Widow, Deserted and Destitute women: Poor women aged over 35 years who have two children under the age of 16 are eligible. < 35 years is considered as being capable to work to earn a living. Application is made at the Union Parishad. In the case of widows, husband's death certificate needs to be submitted. Upon selection by the Union Committee and approval by the Upazila Committee, cards are given to the selected beneficiaries. Each beneficiary gets Tk. 500/month. Beneficiaries open an account in the designated bank and draw the money every 3 months.

Maternity Allowance for the Poor Lactating Mothers: Managed under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. Maternity allowance is for rural poor mothers and Lactating Mothers Allowance are for urban poor mothers during their first or second pregnancy. Applicants must be within 20-35 years, extremely poor (monthly income <Tk. 2000), without any agricultural land or fishing resources, and must submit a medical certificate from the Community Clinic and birth registration certificate for validation. Beneficiaries are enlisted on-line. For Lactating Mothers Allowance, beneficiaries directly apply to the Upazila Women Affairs Officer (UWAO) and the Upazila Committee does the final selection. Each beneficiary gets BDT 800/month.

Vulnerable Group Development (VGD): Beneficiaries are enlisted on-line. Female (aged 20-50 years), female household head, who is landless or has land <15 decimal, and without any other fixed source of income are eligible. Each Union has 10% quota for mothers having one child or only two children aged <2 years. Mothers with an adolescent daughter can also apply for VGD but must commit the daughter will not drop out of school, not marry until legal age, and not get involved in any risk related occupation. Mothers who have a disabled child who is not getting any disabled allowance can also be eligible for VGD. Beneficiaries get 30 Kg. of rice/month for 2 years.

Primary Education Stipend: Under the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, this stipend is being distributed. All students enrolled in primary education are eligible. In order to qualify, students must maintain 85% monthly attendance and attain a minimum of 33% marks in exams administered for each grade. Cash transfers are done mainly through mobile banking channel.

Secondary Education Stipend: Under Ministry of Education, for students (Class VI – X) attending a public secondary school. 50% of the total students (30% girls and 20% boys in every class) receive this stipend based on their eligibility. In order to qualify, student must maintain at least 75% attendance of the school year and attain a minimum of 45% marks on average in final examinations, and remain unmarried through completion of SSC and student must be below the poverty line, i.e. parent's ownership of <50 decimal land and yearly income <Taka 30,000,

CHAPTER-2: METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Methodology

A mix method- both the quantitative and qualitative- was used for the end evaluation. Quantitative survey was conducted in 992 households (HHs) through deploying a team of 30 skilled Enumerators. A structured questionnaire similar to baseline and mid-term study was used for this survey and Tablets were used for entering data during the interview.

Two stage sampling method was used for household selection, Stage one was to determine (from the district yearbook and consultation with field staff of the project and villagers) the total number of HHs per village. Second stage involved systematic sampling method to obtain at least 16 HHs per village, making a sample size of 992 HHs from 62 villages. Four-day long residential training was

organised for the quantitative data collection team at the Pollisree training centre in Dinajpur. The training conducted different participatory methods including role-playing sessions, mock interview, on-screen discussion and interview techniques followed by a day-long field practice. Figure 1 details the sampled HHs by project Upazila.

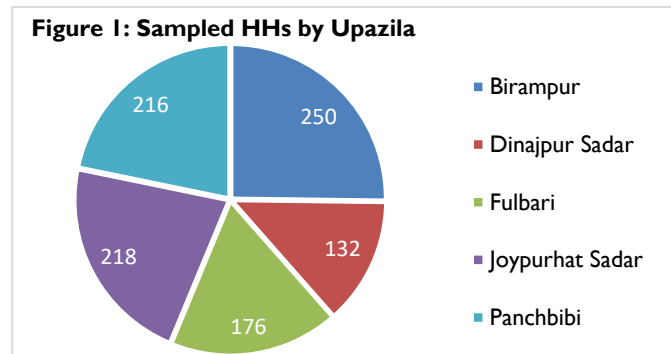
Qualitative data was collected by consultants through conducting Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with relevant stakeholders (e.g. community people, government officials, LG representatives, NGOs working in the project area, and Civil Society Representatives). A total of 12 FGDs (8 in Dinajpur and 4 in Joypurhat districts) were conducted with community people and 59 KIIs were conducted with concern office bearers of National level to Union level.

Qualitative Sample			
Methods	Total Units	Respondents/Participants	Distribution
Key Informant Interview (KII)	59	Implementing agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVPRA Officials, WVB (Dinajpur & Joypurhat) • PM, Pollisree (Dinajpur) & PM, PUMDO (Joypurhat) 	2 KII x 2 districts = 4
		NGOs	2 KII x 2 districts = 4
		EVPRA CSO representatives	4 KII x 2 districts = 8
		Departmental Officials (District Level) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Education Officer • Secondary Education Officer • Women Affairs Officer • Social Welfare Officer 	4 KII x 2 districts = 8
		Departmental Officials (Upazila Level) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Education Officer • Secondary Education Officer • Women Affairs Officer • Social Welfare Officer • Project Implementation Officer (PIO) 	5 KII x 5 Upazilas = 25
		Union Chairman/Members (Union Level)	1 KII x 10 unions = 10
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	12	Selected Ethnic and non-ethnic male & female project beneficiaries	8 FGD in Dinajpur 4 FGD in Joypurhat
Total Units	71		

In addition, relevant documents were reviewed which include.

- a. EVPRA Project Proposal and Project Log Frame
- b. Baseline Survey Report 2016 and Mid-term report 2018
- c. Bangladesh Population Census of 2011
- d. The State of Social Safety Nets 2015, World Bank
- e. National Social Security Strategy of Bangladesh, 2015
- f. Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey, 2014.

Data collection took place from 01-14 November 2019. Main respondents for the survey were all of the beneficiaries of the 9 SSNP and for the head of the non-beneficiaries' households. The study followed the baseline and mid-term survey methods ensuring strength of analysis and comparability with the baseline values with most appropriate statistical significance.



2.2 Quality Control

DMA dedicated its utmost efforts in maintaining the quality control issues of data management, since inception to end of the assignment including reviewing tools, deployment of qualified team of enumerators, adequate training, etc. For successful completion of the assignment, DMA engaged experienced team, collected good quality data using tablets to produce a clean data set, analysed thoroughly and produced findings based on the indicators mentioned in the ToR, and presented the findings efficiently in the report.

The Executive Director of DMA supervised and taken full responsibilities for ensuring all logistics and presence of all consultants in the assignment. He was primarily responsible for the selection of suitably qualified and skilled enumerators, training and quality control of the collection, capturing and verification of data while team leader was responsible for overall completion of tasks.

Using Tablets during data collection allowed to ensure data validation rules and data consistency checking during the data collection and interviewing the respondents. During the fieldwork, data was backed into a secured cloud server immediately after completion of an interview so there was no loss of data.

DMA senior management was engaged for tracking the timing of contract deliverables, and organised necessary management and staff support to keep the activities on track and maintain a high level of quality. The software that DMA was using for the Tablets had automatic options of capturing the GPS location of where the interview was conducted. Since the Tablets had GPS support, enumerators' locations were viewed in near real-time and enabled the survey management teams to efficiently manage the survey operation the right way. On-spot checking of data collection and sample checking was carried out to identify any incorrect and/or unwilling mistakes that was noticed. The representatives from WVB and PNGOs were involved for monitoring the field survey and that their efforts are highly acknowledged by DMA.

2.3 Challenges

The Evaluation team observed some challenges which were captured during the qualitative data collection. Major challenges are mentioned below:

Time period: Number of days for field work was not enough. Field plan required rescheduling as per availability of respondents/participants of KII and FGD. Therefore, completion of data collection within the time frame was a challenge for the team. To overcome this problem the team (3 research officers and 1 consultant) divided into two teams. In each team, one was engaged as a facilitator/moderator and the other was the note taker.

Availability of FGD/KII respondents: Key informants who were government officials were not always available. This was mitigated either through rescheduling and revisiting as per availability of the key informants or in some cases KII was conducted with another key informant from the same government office who had first-hand knowledge on the EVPRA project and SSNP service.

FGD participants (male) were not available during the day as they were at work. This was overcome by conducting the male FGD late evening after the men returned home from work.

KII and FGD tools: Qualitative data collection tools for FGD and KII were very lengthy. Therefore, holding respondent's attention particularly the key informants was a challenge. There was no scope for revising the tools, as midterm evaluation tools were used during the end line

CHAPTER- 3: DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

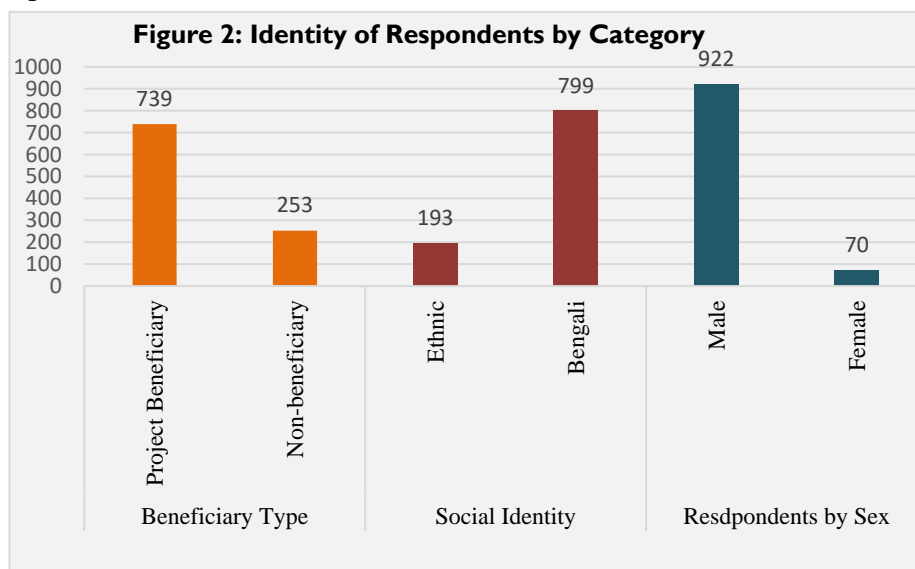
3.1 Socio-Economic Profiles of Surveyed Communities

EVPRA project has been implemented in Joypurhat Sadar and Panchbibi Upazilas under Joypurhat district in Rajshahi Division and Fulbari, Dinajpur Sadar, and Birampur Upazilas under Dinajpur district in Rangpur Division.

Identity of respondents:

Both ethnic and non-ethnic population living in the project Upazilas were covered. In the quantitative survey, about 193 (19.5%) respondents were from ethnic minorities and rest 80.5% were from non-ethnic communities.

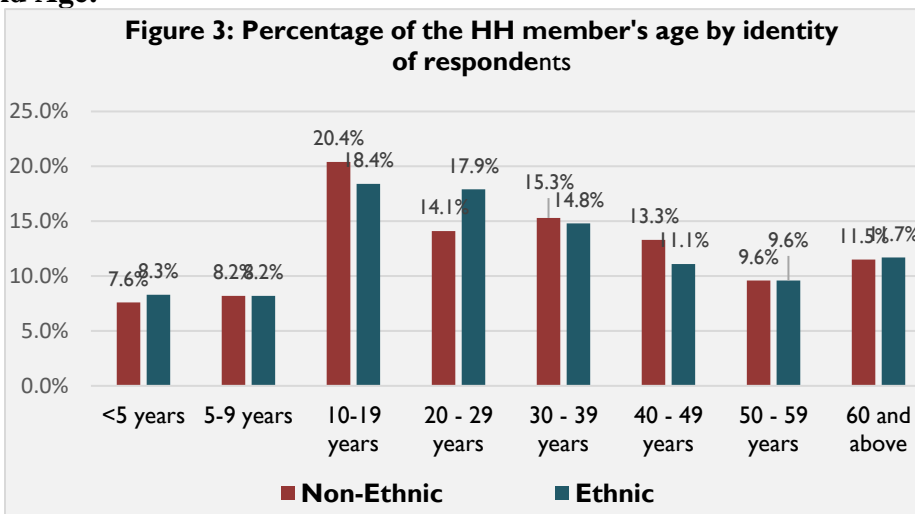
Of the total 992 HHs interviewed, 739 were SSNPS beneficiaries and 253 non-beneficiaries. Male respondents were 922 and female 70. Among the 992 surveyed HHs, 71.1% were Muslim, 18.4% were Hindu and 10.5% HHs were Christian. Figure 2 details different category of HHs interviewed during the quantitative survey.



Household Head by Sex and Age:

Majority 480 (48.4%) respondents were from the age group of 40 – 49 year, followed by 242 (24.4%) from 30-39 years old, 204 (20.6%) were above 60 years age, and 6.7% respondents were below 30 years.

Total number of family members counted as 4049 and the average family size is 4.08, which is slightly higher than national average 4.06¹¹, while average family size for Non-ethnic are 4.06 and Ethnic HHs are 4.16. See Figure 3.

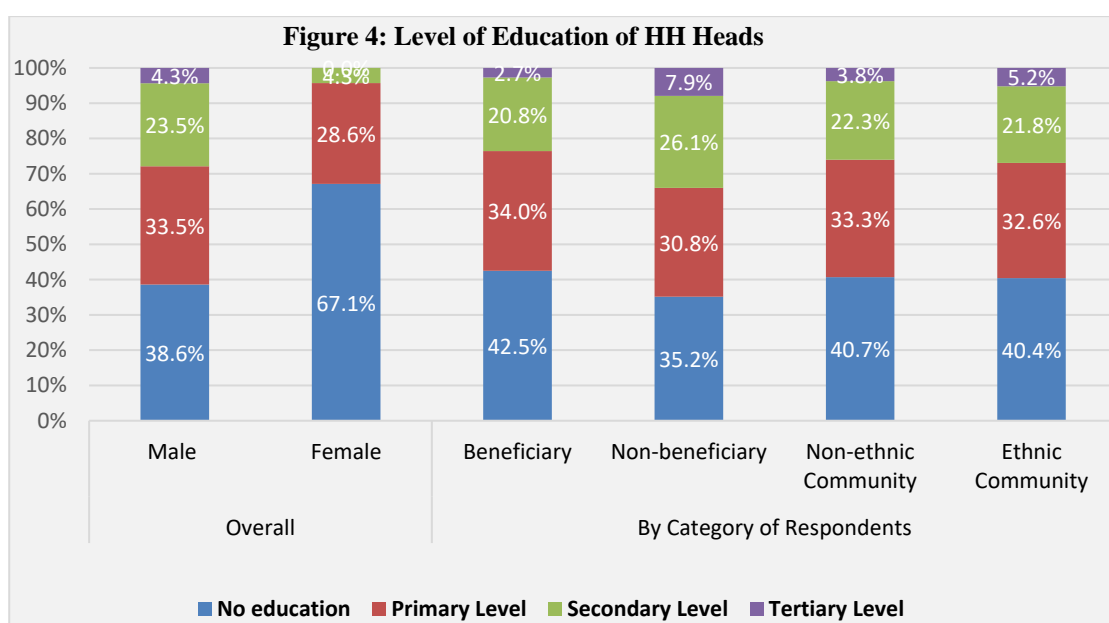


¹¹Bangladesh's HIES: Average Household Size data was reported in Dec 2016

Education:

Overall 40.6% respondents were illiterate, 33.2% had primary level education, 22.2% had secondary education and 4% had tertiary level education. While looking at the status of education between beneficiary and non-beneficiary HHs, it revealed that 42.5% beneficiary were illiterate compared to 35.2% non-beneficiary HH. Yet, 34.5% respondents from beneficiaries and 30.8% non-beneficiary had primary level education. Data also revealed that 40.7% Non-ethnic and 40.4% Ethnic respondents were illiterate. Figure 4 detailed level of education of family members of surveyed HHs.

According to baseline data, overall literacy rate in the project district was 45.2% for Non-ethnic and, 31.6% for Ethnic community. Currently, the literacy rate for Non-ethnics is 59.3% and for Ethnic, it is 59.6%. This result could be stated as a significant improvement of education. Figure 4 detailed current status of education.



Income and Expenditure:

Average monthly income and expenditure of HHs were BDT 11,716 (€124.45)¹², and BDT 9,357 (€99.39) respectively. However, average monthly income and expenditure of Ethnic minority HHs were BDT 10,686 (€166.60) and BDT 8,630 (€91.67) respectively which portrayed that both income and expenditure of ethnic people were lower than the average. Average monthly income was BDT 7887.0 (€122.96) during baseline study in 2016.

HH access to Loan and Savings:

Overall, 66.2% HHs had unpaid loan (debt), of which, 67.3% beneficiary and 63.2% non-beneficiary HHs had loan. To be noted that 66.7% Non-ethnic and 66.7% Ethnic HHs interviewed had loan. Average outstanding loan was BDT 36,366 (€566.98) where average loan of Ethnic HHs was BDT 22,367 (€237.59). This is lower than average outstanding loan of non-beneficiaries which is Tk.53,

¹² One Euro is equivalent to BDT 94.14 as on 19 January 2020

185.0 In Baseline survey, average loan was BDT 28465.0 (€302.36). Regarding savings, 83.8% beneficiary and 80.2% non-beneficiary HHs had savings while 82.2% Non-ethnic and 86.5% Ethnic HHs had savings. Average savings was BDT 14,353 (€152.46) where average savings of Ethnic HHs recorded as BDT 15,233(€161.81) while BDT 10889.0 (€115.67) was savings during baseline. In both cases, no significant differences were observed by categories of respondents. Accessing in financial services is an important aspect of having scope in managing economic activities and no such discrimination is observed irrespective of respondent HHs.

Occupation:

Among the respondents, the highest 44.6% HHs of Ethnic minority were daily wage labour as main occupation, while 8.8% involved in agriculture and fisheries and 42% HHs were involved in different off-farm activities. Among the Non-ethnic communities 18% HHs were daily wage labour, 8.3% HHs involved in agriculture and fisheries while 64.7% HHs had other type of income options. However, 1.0% Ethnic and 2.1% Non-ethnic communities had no source of income. Highest 60.1% had only one? earning member in the HHs, followed by 30.5% HHs who had two earning members while 7.8% HHs had more than two earning members in the HH.

Homestead land and Housing:

Overall, 93.4% HHs (93.0% beneficiaries and 94.6% non-beneficiaries) had homestead land, of which, 87.6% HHs were from ethnic and 94.9% HHs were from Non-ethnic communities. About 98.7% respondent HHs were living on their own land and no significant variations were observed among the beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries or ethnicity categories.

Housing:

About 55.7% HHs had single roof tin shed living rooms while 30.1% HHs had two roof tin shed and 13.2% HHs had four roof tin shed living rooms. Nearly 0.8% HHs who were from Non-ethnic community had concrete-made rooms.

Electricity Connection:

Almost all categories of HHs had electricity connection and not much difference was noticed. About 96.2% SSNPS beneficiaries, 97.6% non-beneficiaries, 96.7% Non-ethnic and 95.9% ethnic minorities were connected to electricity facilities.

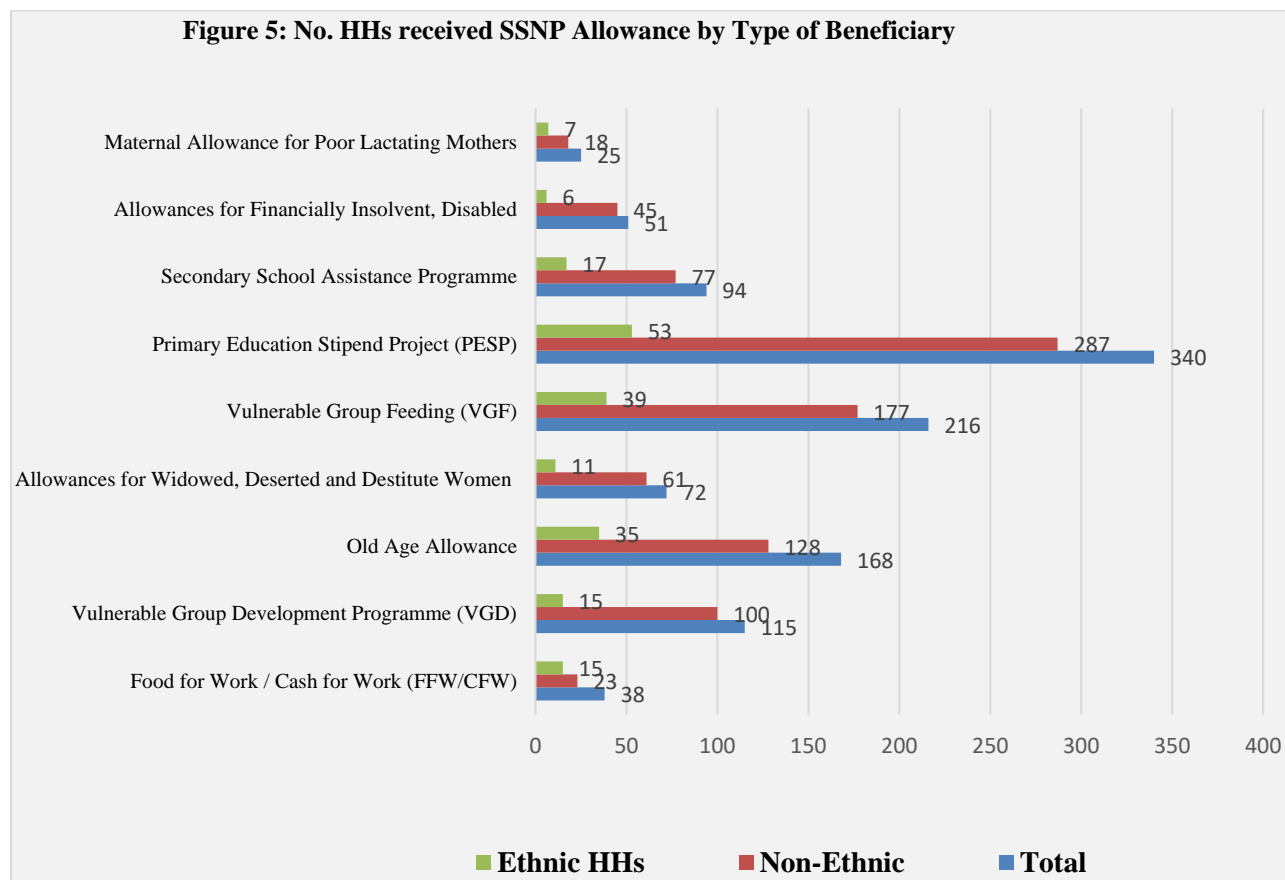
Communication Devices and Communication:

About 93.5% (928) beneficiaries had cell phone sets, while 93% (687) of non-beneficiaries had cell phones. It revealed that 1.1% (8) beneficiary and 2.8% (7) non-beneficiary HHs had computer and it was also noticed that 2.1% ethnic and 1.4% non-ethnic HHs had computer/laptop. Overall, 54.5% (541) HHs had TV sets of which, 52.9% (391) were beneficiary and 59.3% (150) were non-beneficiary.

3.2 Findings on Access to SSNPs

During FGD with community people (male and female) from both non-ethnic and ethnic communities, it was revealed that among the 96 participants (8/FGD), 53 (54.69%) were beneficiaries of SSNP, out of which, 47 (49%) were male and 49 (51%) were female, 35 (37%) were from ethnic

communities and 61 (63%) from the non-ethnic. Figure 5 presents the number of HHs received SSNP support within the surveyed HHs.



However, all eligible persons were not included in SSNP schemes due to application and selection process by the Union Parishad Committee (except for Primary and Secondary Education Stipend). Concerned departmental officers at District and Upazila level during the interview showed concern in the process of beneficiaries' selection at the Union Parishad level. According to them, all SSNP allocations are fixed by the government for each fiscal year. After having the allocation by the government, all the UP Chairmen and subsequently general public are informed through advertisement and general notice through loudspeaker (miking). People then apply with photograph for the allowance in the prescribed form at the Union Parishad or Upazila office of concerned Ministries as applicable (applications for VGD and Maternity Allowance are required to be done online, which are filled by the Union Information Centre at Union Parishad or by the Upazila Office and photograph is not required for FFW).

Based on the application, the primary selection of beneficiaries is done by the Union Parishad beneficiary selection committee and the beneficiaries' list is sent to the Upazila Committee for approval. According to the respondents, the problem occurs at the Union Parishad, where about 30% names are included due to local political pressure and favouritism by the Chairmen/Members.

3.3 Achievements of EVPRA against Target

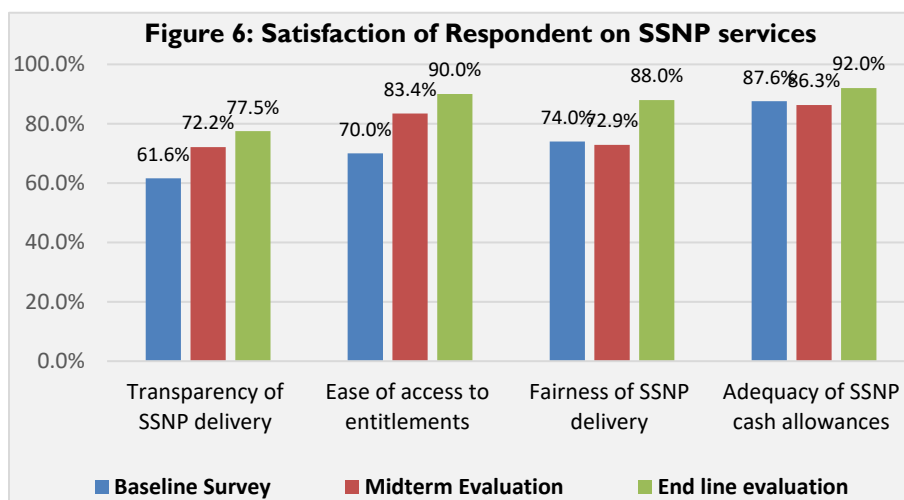
Overall Objective

Empower Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working for the rights and development of ethnic minority groups, Local Authorities (LAs) and communities to promote the most vulnerable peoples' social development through access to Social Safety Net Programmes (SSNPs).

The EVPRA project has contributed in socio-economic development of the vulnerable people through access to SSNPs. It was found that the average monthly income of HHs increased to BDT 11,716 (€124.45)¹³, during end project evaluation from BDT 7887.0 (€122.96) during baseline in 2016. Number of more than one earning member/household has also increased. The end project evaluation found that 31 % HHs had 2 earning members and 8% HHs had more than 2 earning members compared to 27% and 6% respectively during baseline.

Indicator: OI.1 Percentage of the target population with increased satisfaction and other elements regarding the delivery of SSNPs by the end of the project

Four elements of SSNP including transparency, easy access, fairness and adequacy of SSNP were measured, each having a targeted 20% increase at the end of the project period. The end project evaluation found that their satisfaction level has increased on each four accounts. However, only one element (easy access to SSNP entitlement) has met



its target with 20% increase in satisfaction level. Figure 6 details satisfaction level during baseline, midterm and end line. On each account 3 levels of satisfaction of the respondents (Very Good, Good and Fair) were measured as depicted in the following table.

¹³ One Euro is equivalent to BDT 94.14 as on 19 January 2020

Table 2: Satisfaction level for the different issue of SSNP of the respondents

Indicators	Very Good	Good	Fair	Total
Transparency of SSNP delivery	5.5%	34.0%	38.0%	77.5%
Ease of access to entitlements	11.0%	46.0%	32.0%	90.0%
Fairness of SSNP delivery	5.0%	39.0%	44.0%	88.0%
Adequacy of SSNP cash allowances	17.0%	47.0%	28.0%	92.0%

Indicator O.1.2 *Number of policies, system, structure, practice or programmatic changes to improve access to SSNPs by the most vulnerable people, specifically including ethnic minority groups and women, contributed to by EVPRA by the end of the project.*

This indicator is not considerate of existing Government policies because policies and programme is reviewed at the central level, which targeted vulnerable people have no scope to influence until the issues are strongly addressed by the common people. Generally, broad policy, system, structure, practice or programmatic has been changed (and is still done) to improve the standard of governance and fund allocation too is being made to facilitate this process. A big number of NGOs, CBOs and other types of civil society organisations, more than ever before, as well as committees in the various local government bodies (e.g., Standing Committees of Union Parishad or specially formulated committees) are now active to promote the cause of governance. Fact is that the Safety Net Coverage and financial incentives are higher than that of the previous year. Budget for the fiscal year 2018-19 was BDT 44,354.1 million while the budget for current 2019-20 year is BDT 52,318.0 million, though in terms of allocation by percentage of total budget, it decreased this year by 0.43%.¹⁴

While looking at the status of fund allocation against total 9 selected SSNPs, it was illustrated that total allocation was increased for 7 SSNPs for FY 2019-20 while 46% budget was reduced than previous year against the stipend for Primary Schools and 65.5% was reduced for Secondary School. Figure 7 detailed on 9 SSNP's budget allocation for FY 2018-19 and FY 2019-20.

According to the log frame of EVPRA, at least 3 changes were to be made by the end of the project (e.g.: increased budgetary allocation towards provision of SSNPs, administrative actions that reduce leakage, access to information provisions, introduction of explicit community targeting guidelines, etc.). These results were ambitious in the current context and EVPRA needed revision of this indicator to set a realistic target to achieve.

The project management of EVPRA arranged policy consultation sessions in Dhaka to inform concern policy makers and relevant stakeholder of SSNP. All 5 policy consultation sessions were organised at CIRDAP Conference hall and sessions were chaired by 3 Ministers (Minister of Planning, Minister of Social Welfare and Minister of Food), State Minister of Education and the Chairman of Palli Karma Sohayok Foundation (PKSF). The community leaders and project beneficiaries took part in those sessions and raised their concern to the members of the parliament (MPs), Secretaries of different ministries, District and Upazila level concern officers, UP and Upazila Chairman, and Members.

¹⁴Social Safety Net Programmes, Budget 2018-19, 2018-19 (Revised) & Budget 2019-20

Government took some steps during 2016-18 related to management committee re-formation where participation of common people was excluded. However, some changes were experienced in the management modalities of SSNP¹⁵, which are as follows:

Government Notification by date.

- a. Central management committee of social security formed, 11 July 2016
- b. Divisional management committee of SSNP formed (date?)
- c. District management committee of SSNP formed, 27 August 2018
- d. Upazila management committee of SSNP formed, 27 August 2018

Government also increased allowances for maternity from BDT 500 to BDT800/month, but it is difficult to claim it an achievement of this project.

Specific Objective 1: To strengthen the organisational capacity and sustainability of targeted local CSOs that are working for the rights and development of ethnic minority groups

Indicator SO1.1 Increased percentage of targeted local CSOs that are exhibiting improved organisational and management capacity by the end of the project.

Table-3: Capacity of beneficiary increased by type

Issues	Baseline Survey	Target over the Project	Midterm Evaluation	Endline evaluation
Know about fundamental human rights and could explain them	15.0%	60.0%	52.25%	94.1%
Receiving information about SSNP entitlements	9.40%	60.0%	43.35%	98.0%

The project initially conducted a CSO mapping and organisational capacity assessment to identify and locate ethnic CSOs in the targeted project areas and analysis of their specific organisational capacity and training needs as well as locate ethnic communities without representative structures. Accordingly, new CSOs were formed where there was no such CSOs and existing ethnic CSOs reformed or reactivated which remained dysfunctional and unable to support the ethnic population. Those CSOs were supported for institutional strengthening through new leadership having active boards, the conduct of credible annual elections, inclusion of women, and setting up robust operational structures and systems.

The project formed 100 CSOs with 30 members in each CSO. All the CSOs received training(2days duration) on leadership development, organisational management and savings and credit. In addition, 300 CSO leaders were capacitated with new advocacy and campaign skills. Progress of CSOs improved organisational management capacity were assessed annually through CSO Survey conducted by the EVPRA project. Significant achievements of the CSOs are as follows:

All the targeted CSOs (100%) are now functional, having new constitutions and written by-laws with vision, mission and objectives and HR policy which is one of the important elements for smooth operation and sustainability of CSOs. 96% women were included in leadership positions. A total of 21 CSOs were registered by government department, 23 already submitted their application for registration. All CSOs used to arrange regular monthly meetings and make resolutions. Written documents in place are evidence of all the CSOs improved organisational management capacity. Table 4 details the status of CSO organisational and management capacity by years.

¹⁵ Project Manager. EVPRA, World Vision Bangladesh

Table 4: Performance on organisational and management capacity by year

Elements of Organisational capacity	Number of CSOs with improved capacity by year			
	Dec'16	Dec'17	Dec'18	Dec'19
CSOs have prepared their constitution (board standards)	22	72	100	100
Inclusion of women in leadership positions	91	95	96	96
Written documents in place for organisational policies, roles and responsibilities of CSO leaders	0	78	100	100
CSOs officially registered with the GoB	18	19	19	21
CSOs regularly organise monthly meetings	100	100	100	100
CSOs keep meeting resolutions in resolution book	100	100	100	100
CSOs have savings	32	52	78	86

Source: CSO Annual Survey conducted by EVPRA project

Table 5 portrays the changes during baseline, mid and end evaluation status on CSOs organisation and management capacity. Against the 60% target, 100% CSOs are exhibiting improved organisational and management skills and against the target of 40%, CSOs having Ethnic women on their boards or committees, the end line evaluation found that 45% CSO boards are exclusively operated by women. This indicates that the project has achieved its specific objective 1.1.

Table 5: Performance on organisational and management capacity as revealed in different studies

Particulars	Baseline Survey	Target of the Project	Midterm Evaluation	Endline evaluation	% of increase
Local CSOs are exhibiting improved organisational and management capacity	0%)	60%	50%	100%	100
Women's organisations	0%	40%increase	40%	45.0%	112

During the qualitative study, EVPRA project staff mentioned that Apex¹⁶ bodies formed in the 5 Upazilas, held annual meetings with the Upazila level line departments with the aim to negotiate on SSNP service delivery to eligible beneficiaries. The Apex bodies also facilitated CVA working groups. An MOU on citizen's right to SSNP was signed by the Apex bodies.

Specific Objective 2: To promote transparency and accountability of existing government SSNPs

Indicator: SO.2.1 Percentage of vulnerable people (specifically including ethnic minority groups and women) with increased knowledge of target SSNPs specifically eligibility criteria and/or grievance and redress mechanism by the end of project

More vulnerable people (especially ethnic minority group and women) are aware of some of the critical criteria of SSNP, e.g. selection criteria, grievance redress mechanism, and other related local issues. The selection criteria was known to 96.4% respondents compared to baseline value of 74.2%. Significant increase in awareness of redress mechanism was observed during end line study to 80.3%, which was 12.3% at the time of Baseline. Table 6 detailed:

Table 6: Status of Increasing Awareness of SSNP service

Particulars	Baseline Survey	Target of the Project	Midterm Evaluation	Endline evaluation	Percentage of increase
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¹⁶Apex bodies are the highest community level forum at Upazila level consisting of 17-19 members, selected from the CVA working group. 5 Apex bodies were formed in 5 Upazila.

Proportion of respondents aware of SSNP beneficiary selection/eligibility criteria	74.2%	10% increase	78.3%	96.4%	22.2%
Proportion of respondents aware of SSNP grievance redress mechanisms	12.3%	60%	55.3%	80.3%	68%

Alongside with other elements, SSNPs are generally known to all respondents of all categories. Almost 100% of respondents are aware of Old Age Allowance, 99% are aware of Primary School Stipend Project (PESP) and 98% of all respondents are aware of Widowed Women's allowance. Around 80% of respondents of all categories except the non-beneficiaries have knowledge on the public complaint mechanism for SSNPs.

When discussed with EVPRA project staff, it was informed that significant progress regarding social accountability and transparency was made through awareness of public complaint/grievance redress mechanism which could be attributed to the establishment of 100 complaint boxes at the CSOs, as well as 46 complaint boxes in 41 Union Parishads and 5 municipalities by the EVPRA Project. One phone with a specific number is available across the CSOs. *“No such arrangements were found to exist during baseline. Due to EVPRA initiative of complaint mechanism, Union Parishads (UPs) now has complaint/responses committees, headed by the UP Chairman and the UPs publish beneficiary list in public places or at UP office premises. These are important elements for governance, viz., accountability and transparency. The complaint box is opened every 15 days by the complaint committee and complaints (if any) are documented in a registered book and response action taken as required”* mentioned EVPRA project official, WV Bangladesh.

It was learned from the UP Chairman/Member and during FGD with community people that after final selection, beneficiaries list was displayed in the display board at the Union Parishad to ensure accountability and transparency. However, some respondents during FGD mentioned that even if the list is not displayed, community members become aware of who is selected within their community. *“The list is not always displayed at the Union Parishad. But we come to know from someone or other who is selected from our area to get the allowance,”* said a beneficiary during FGD. The respondents also mentioned that community members can provide their opinions or complaints regarding selected beneficiaries if anyone is not eligible or if any eligible person is missing from the SSNP services whether it is the community member himself/herself or someone else. This reporting of the community members verifies that the EVPRA project has contributed to capacitate the community people through CSOs to raise their voice in case of any discrepancy of SSNP beneficiaries. *“One person in our area was not poor. But he was selected for VGF. When we came to know, we went to the Chairman and protested. His name was crossed out from the list”* said another beneficiary during FGD.

Chi-Square Test

Statistical significance between ethnic and non-ethnic about awareness of public complain mechanism

Chi-square test has been made to see whether any significant difference in awareness about public complaint mechanism:

H₀: No significant difference between ethnic and non-ethnic population on public complaint awareness; H₁: There is significant difference between ethnic and non-ethnic population on public complaint awareness

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.204	1	0.023
Continuity Correction ^b	4.672	1	0.031
Likelihood Ratio	5.667	1	.011

Chi-square test shows that $\chi^2 = 5.2-4$ and $p = 0.023$ implies that $p < 0.05$, null hypothesis is accepted i.e. no significance difference in awareness between ethnic and non-ethnic on public complain mechanism regarding SSNPs.

The increased awareness among the community people on eligibility criteria for the 9 SSNPs can be credited to the projects approach of educating the people through IEC materials. These included a pictorial flipchart and folk songs developed by the project with messages on eligibility criteria for the 9 SSNPs. The flipcharts were used by the project's Community Facilitators to educate the community people and folk songs were performed by local theatre groups at community level which was also attended by the UP Chairman/members. The project also developed and printed SSNP seasonal calendars which indicated timeframe of application by SSNP beneficiaries, selection of beneficiaries, approval of beneficiaries and distribution of SSN to beneficiaries for each of the nine SSNP. The SSNP seasonal calendars were displayed in the line department office and Union Parishad.

Indicator: SO.2.2 *Number of new mechanisms (e.g. inclusion of CSO representatives, including ethnic minority groups and women, in local government committees, establish complaint response mechanism on SSNPs, transparency and accountability boards, etc.) introduced by local government to enable vulnerable communities to raise their voice on the delivery of SSNPs by the end of the project*

Although a big challenge in terms of inclusion in any process of SSNP selection, the EVPRA project conducted various activities from the local to the national level to promote engagement of CSOs by establishing strong network with concern UPs. Data revealed that no members from CSOs were included in the selection committees before, because there is no scope of CSOs representation in the local government SSNP committees as committees are formed according to prescribed format of the government. However, at the end line evaluation, it was found that EVPRA project has made it possible for CSOs to be included as observers. CSO survey findings revealed that 19 % CSOs are now the member of local government committees. (Baseline value: 0). 21 CSO representatives have been included in the SSNP selection committees as observers, 7 CSO members are now involved in UP Standing Committees (Sanitation Water Supply & Sewerage Committee & Rural Infrastructure Development and Maintenance Committee etc.) and 2 CSO members are included in the SMC. The project's initiative of preparation of Guidance Notes on the inclusion of ethnic CSO representatives in local government SSNP committees through analysing the 9 SSNP policies and holding consultations with the line departments contributed to this achievement.

Noteworthy to mention here that the project facilitated interface meetings through Citizens Voice Action (CVA) approach at Union Parishad among the CSOs, elected representatives (UP Chairman/Member), relevant government officials and community people. These meetings spearheaded by the two partners: Pollisree and PUMDO provided a platform for discussion and public hearing between UP representatives and CSOs for ensuring social accountability. Although these

meetings were introduced by the project as a part of CVA (governance) they are not part of the SSNP governance process.

The CVA working group that included CSOs (15x46 units) received TOT on CVA approach. Key informants and FGD respondents reported that during interface meetings community people had the opportunity to make complaints, demands and suggestions and accordingly actions are taken by concerned government officials. 2 Interface Meetings were held every year in each union. A total of 368 meetings were held in Dinajpur & Joypurhat during the 4-year project period. Anecdotal evidence from talking with key informants shows that at least 41 UPs committed to continue the meetings.

It also came up from FGD that all eligible persons are not included in SSNP schemes due to application and selection process by the beneficiaries at Union level where primary selection is done by the Union Parishad Committee (except for Primary and Secondary Education Stipend). Concerned departmental officers at District and Upazila level showed concern in the process of beneficiaries' selection at the UP level during interview, where the target community could create enabling environment to listen their voice and the project tried to establish through participation in the UP committees. It was informed in the FGD that about 30% name were included in the list as aspirant of SSNPs due to local political influence/pressure and favouritism by the Chairmen and Members.

The project's initiative of various day observation such as Human Rights Day, International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, Santal Revolution Day, Rights to Information (RTI), and International Women's Day also created an opportunity for the CSOs to be actively involved in local-level campaigns to raise their voice on their rights to SSNP services. Photographs of various campaign events by CSOs holding placards with messages on transparency, accountability and their right to SSNP (presented by WV) are evidence of their active involvement. The project also organised two TV talk shows in private TV channels (Independent TV and Jamuna TV) participated by the Director of Social Welfare Department, Director of World Vision and University Teachers, to promote rights of ethnic minorities to SSNP services.



Specific Objective 3: Increase the total number of Vulnerable People with access to SSNPs from the Government

Indicator: R3.1. Increased % of people (disaggregated by gender, ethnic minority and other vulnerable groups) in the target communities with access to SSNPs by the end of the project.

Table- 7: Coverage by SSNPs among the respondents

Particulars	Baseline Survey	Target over the Project	Midterm Evaluation	Endline evaluation
Received any one or more selected 9 SSNP services	5.32%	20% increase	50.58%	74.5%

Among the total 992 surveyed HHs, 739 (74.5%) persons (4,402 male and 7,775 female) and (ethnic 135 and non-ethnic 604) received Social Safety Net support of some type or the other under the Government's nine SSNP. The target was 20% increase. This particular indicator has exceeded its target, which could be due to the fact of EVPRA projects sincere efforts. Table above details the achievement of the project and following table presents SSNP coverage by type.

Table-8: Type of social safety net services households received

Social Safety Net	Total		Non-ethnic		Ethnic	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Food for Work / Cash for Work (FFW/CFW)	38	5	23	4	15	11
Vulnerable Group Development Programme (VGD)	115	16	100	17	15	11
Old Age Allowance (OAA)	163	22	128	21	35	26
Allowances for Widowed, Deserted and Destitute Women	72	10	61	10	11	8
Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF)	216	29	177	29	39	29
Maternal Allowance for Poor Lactating Mothers	25	3	18	3	7	5
Primary Education Stipend Project (PESP)	340	46	287	48	53	39
Secondary School Assistance Programme	94	13	77	13	17	13
Allowances for Financially Insolvent, Disabled	51	7	45	7	6	4
Total	739		604		135	

Result 1.1: Functional CSOs, that are working for the rights of ethnic minority groups, exist with effective leadership in practice

Indicator: R1.1.1 Percentage of targeted CSOs implementing new organisational leadership mechanisms (e.g. new board standard, periodic/annual elections, inclusion of women, operational structures and systems etc) for effective CSO governance.

A total of 100 CSOs (96 CSOs with 100% ethnic and 4 CSOs with non-ethnic community representatives) were formed by the project. Each CSO included 30 members. All project activities were delivered through the CSOs. About 3,000 ethnic people were the main actors of this project.

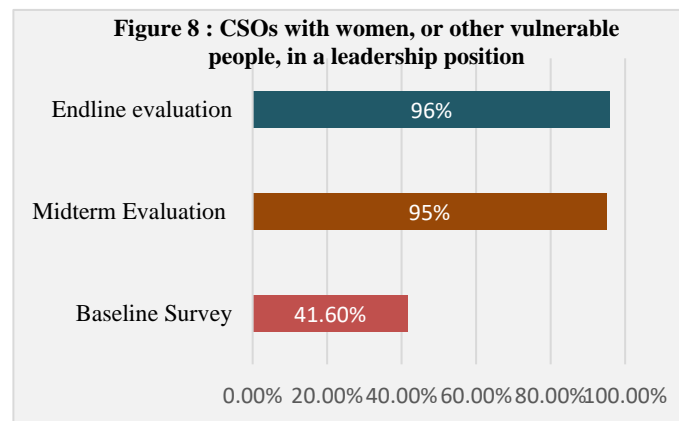
The WVB team members of EVPRA and implementing partners (Pollisree and PUMDO) informed that majority of the CSO members are females. The project conducted leadership development, organisational management, and advocacy and campaign skill trainings for CSOs. These trainings helped the CSOs to manage their organisation smoothly, as well as increase their communication capacity. All CSOs now have their own constitution and an executive committee. Following findings from annual CSO survey are evidence that this project result (R.1.1.1) has exceeded its target.

- 100% of targeted CSOs are implementing new organisational leadership mechanisms where mid-term value was 84% and baseline value was zero.
- All the CSOs are practicing democratic process to select their leaders, documenting meeting discussion and decision.
- There are 659 executive committee members in 100 CSOs of which, 464 are females in 96 CSOs; 4 CSOs do not have any female members in executive committee.

The qualitative study found that the Executive Committee was formed by discussion with all CSO members or fair elections and have written by-laws with vision, mission and objectives. CSOs with their acquired advocacy and campaign skills are engaged in assisting the local government departments (Union Parishad) in making list of eligible SSNP beneficiaries.

Indicator: R1.1.2 Percentage of CSOs with either women, or other vulnerable people in a leadership position by the end of year 2 of the project

Assessment result showed that more than half of the CSO members are females and the majority are in a leadership position. They also reported CSOs have vulnerable people as members such as widows, elderly and ethnic people. Following are the major achievements: About 96% CSOs have women in leadership positions, including as President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer (midterm value 95% and Baseline value was 41.6%).



45 CSOs are female only and are therefore fully led by women. One CSO has a disabled person in a leadership position. 98% of CSOs are fully led by ethnic minorities (as of December 2017, 97% of CSOs are fully led by ethnic minorities). See Figure 8.

Result 1.2: CSOs working for the rights of ethnic minority groups have increased their understanding of human rights and entitlement

Indicator: R1.2.1 Increased access to knowledge and information about human rights and SSNP entitlements by the most vulnerable, including ethnic minority groups and women, by the end of the project.

According to assessment of implementing partners, most of the ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups had less or no access to SSNPs due to a lack of awareness of their rights and more specifically, the existence of SSNPs. CSOs were provided trainings on human rights and entitlements to ethnic and other vulnerable people.

In addition, the project implemented awareness activities through IEC/BCC materials such as posters, leaflets, billboards, folk songs, flipcharts etc. promotional messages on SSNP and human rights issues. A total of 9 leaflets on 9 specific SSNP were developed and distributed to the project beneficiaries. 30 billboards were erected by Pollisree and 21 by PUMDO in their respective union and Upazila level. Folk songs were conducted by local theatre groups at the community level.

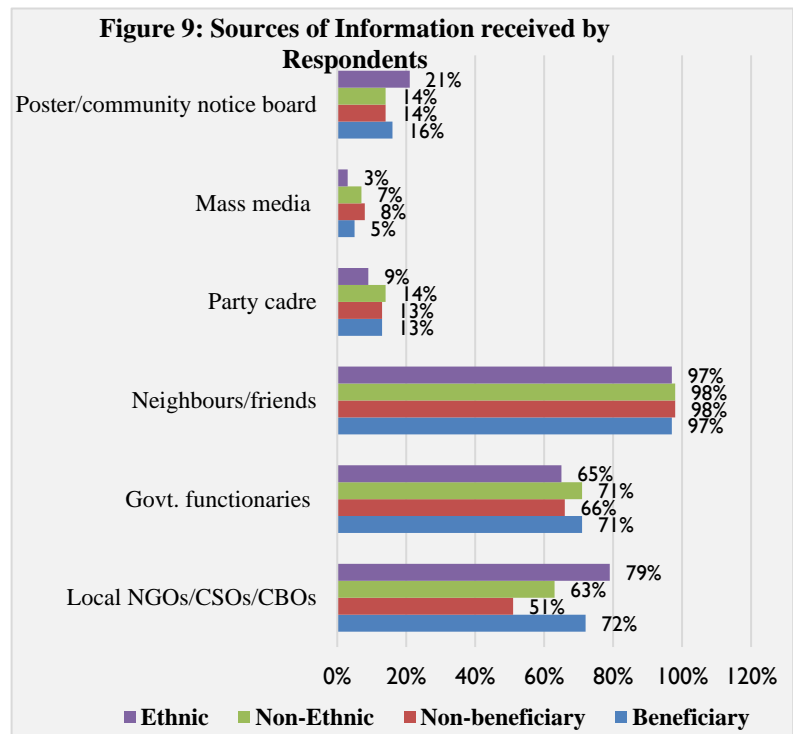
Increased awareness among the target beneficiaries can be attributed to projects initiatives for awareness raising through trainings and various communication methods as mentioned above. Table below portrays the status of changes of knowledge on SNNPs.

Table 9: Status of Knowledge of respondents revealed in different studies

Particulars	Baseline Survey	Target over the Project	Midterm Evaluation	Endline Evaluation
Know about fundamental human rights and could explain them	15%	60%	52.25%	94.1%
Receiving information about SSNP entitlements	9.40%	60%	43.35%	98.0%

Neighbours were the major sources on information about SNNPs followed by government agencies and local NGOs/CSOs/CBOs. Though it is not very important, target beneficiaries have access to know the message, where role of government or Local Government could be considered as the first source of all information. Sources of information on SNNPs were explored by the beneficiaries and is shown in Figure 9:

Government officials at district and Upazila level during KII opined that the EVPRA project was successful in building awareness among the community people regarding SSNP service delivery through mobilizing CSOs.



Result 1.3: Effective networking and collaboration between relevant government and non-government organisations (GOs and NGOs) is established.

Indicator: RI.3.1 Increased effective engagement between GO and NGOs on issues which promote vulnerable peoples' access to SNNPs, specifically including ethnic minority groups and women.

The EVPRA project conducted various activities for establishing a functional network with local and national level Government and Non-Government agencies that enabled in accessing services of those agencies. The project also conducted training on SSNP selection to officials of line departments in 46 batches at union level (27 in Dinajpur and 19 in Joypurhat). This was not a planned activity of the project but was implemented as a requirement for enhancing SSNP knowledges of concerned government officials.

Members of the CSO took extension services from local Agriculture department while they got easy access to other Upazila level offices including Social service department, Women affairs department, Upazila Nirbahi Officer and Chairman’s office. The following are some training offered by different government agencies and explored by the beneficiaries.

- Basic computer literacy training – Jubo Unnayan Department

- Cow rearing – Jubo Unnayan Department
- Tailoring Training – Social Welfare Department
- Block Boutique Training - Social Welfare Department
- Poultry bird rearing - Upazila Livestock Department
- Home stead Gardening – Upazila Agriculture Department

One of the important aspects of the EVPRA project to increase the access and linkages between community and government offices from the local to the national level and this was successfully acquired through CVA approach. It was informed by implementing partners during KII that through CVA approach and Interface Meetings held twice a year, CSOs now are able to communicate with Union Parishad and relevant Upazila-level government officers regarding SSNP service delivery. The 5 Apex bodies formed in the 5 Upazilas with 17-19 CVA working group members played a negotiating role with the concerned departments on SSNP service delivery and facilitated the CVA working groups during interface meetings. Before the interventions of EVPRA, such evidences were not observed as mentioned in the Baseline survey.

Result 2.1: Inclusion of CSO representatives working for the rights of ethnic minority groups in local government committees.

Indicator: R2.1.1 Percentage increase in the number of CSO representatives included in local government committees, specifically including CSO representatives from ethnic minorities, women and other most vulnerable groups.

There were set rules and procedure for SSNP allocation and govern under the administrative policies government with no scope of CSOs representation. The EVPRA project has made it possible for CSOs to be included at least as observers. According to an internal assessment of the project, following are the achievements against the indicator where there was no such inclusion during baseline.

- Total 21 CSO representatives are now included in the SSNP selection committees as observers as a direct result of the Action.
- Seven CSO members are now involved in Union Parishad standing committees (Sanitation Water Supply & Sewerage Committee & Rural Infrastructure Development and Maintenance Committee etc.)
- Two members are included in School Management Committee.

Result 2.2 Target communities satisfied with access to SSNPs information

Indicator: R2.2.1 Increased proportion of people in the target communities with satisfactory access to SSNP information by the end of the project

Satisfaction was measured by scoring of good, moderate and not-satisfied. Respondents were asked about satisfaction with access to local government SSNP information and receiving information about SSNPs. Table below presented detail of achievements.

Table- 10: Status of Satisfaction on SSNP information

Issues	Baseline Survey	Project Target	Midterm Evaluation	Endline Evaluation
Satisfied with access to local government SSNP information	57.3%	20% increase	81.88%	84.32%

Respondents are receiving information about SSNPs	15%		54.35%	83.30%
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Result 3.1 *The Vulnerable are demanding Rights and Entitlements set out in SSNP Policies*

Indicator: R3.1.1 *Increased % of people (disaggregated by gender, ethnic minority and other vulnerable groups) in the target communities with access to SSNPs by the end of the project*

There were different factors affecting easy access to SSNPs by the beneficiaries: some were highly difficult to handle by the vulnerable people, like behaviour of Union/Upazila Parishad officials are insensitive and often non-cooperative mentioned by (87%) respondents including complex procedure, inadequate and inefficient support from implementing agency/NGO and lacking of required documents mentioned by less than 10% respondents.

SSNP was distributed only by the Union Parishad but now the Municipalities have also been included in SSNP service delivery which is due to EVPRA project implementation as claimed by the WV, EVPRA project personnel. Due to EVPRA project mistargeting of SSNP beneficiaries and overlapping have reduced significantly in project areas also claimed by the project personnel. The Table added below shows achievement in different period including end evaluation.

Table 11: Status of having SSNP services in different period

Particulars	Baseline Survey	Target over the Project	Midterm Evaluation	Endline evaluation
Received any one or more selected 9 SSNP services	5.32%	20% increase	50.58%	74.4%

It may be mentioned here that among the 9 SSNP though budget allocation has been reduced in 2 SSNP (Primary and Secondary Education), it has not affected the beneficiaries of Primary Education as claimed by the District Primary Education Officer.

Chi-Square Test

Statistical significance between ethnic and non-ethnic with receipt of SSNPs

Chi-square test has been made to see whether any significant difference in receiving the SSNPs between ethnic and non-ethnic population.

H₀: No significant difference between ethnic and non-ethnic population in getting the SSNPs supplies.

H₁: There is significant difference between ethnic and non-ethnic population in getting the SSNPs supplies.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.955	1	.005
Continuity Correction ^b	5.681	1	.017
Likelihood Ratio	6.403	1	.011

Chi-square test shows that $\chi^2 = 7.955$ and $p = 0.05$ implies that $p = 0.05$, null hypothesis is accepted i.e. no significance difference of receiving SSNPs between ethnic and non-ethnic population. This shows that the result indicator R3.1.1 has been achieved by the project.

Result 3.2: *Evidence of barriers to vulnerable peoples' access to SSNPs are presented at national level and solutions sought in collaboration with key stakeholders*

Indicator: R.3.2.1 Number of contributions to national level policy consultations with government to facilitate policy changes by the end of the project

From the EVPRA project, 4 Events on National level policy conferences and 5 National level dialogues were organised while 8 meetings with RtF and 2 campaigns were organised on accessing SSNPs. The annual conferences were participated by Ministers and State Ministers of various ministries as dignitaries.

(Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Food, Ministry of Social Welfare and Ministry of Planning). Other participants included project's CSO representatives, implementing partners, government officials, INGO & NGO personnel, academicians and media people (print & electronic). The last conference was held on October 14, 2019. Extensive media coverage was documented by the project. In addition, 2 SSNP campaign (1st and 4th year) was held at National Press Club. World Vision organised all national level programmes in collaboration with Wave Foundation, Secretariat of Right to Food Consortium.



World Vision organised all national level programmes in collaboration with Wave Foundation, Secretariat of Right to Food Consortium.

Table 12: Contribution to national level policy consultation in different period

Data point	Baseline Survey	Target over the Project	Midterm Evaluation	Endline evaluation
Contributions to national level policy consultations with government to facilitate policy changes	0	18	11	19

Table 13: List of events at national level

Serial No.	Name of Activity	Activity Code	Quantity
1.	National level policy conferences	A1.3.2	4
2.	National level dialogues	A3.2.4	5
3.	link/coalition meetings with RtF	A3.2.5	8
4.	Campaign on accessing SSNPs	A3.2.7	2
Total			19

As observed by the WV official (EVPRA), “the EVPRA project can claim that collaboration with the Right to Food Consortium during implementation of national level programmes has resulted to the drafting of the **Right to Food Act**”.

Ultimate intentions were to contribute to national level policy consultations with the government to facilitate policy changes. These events influenced the government to change and adopt policies in SSNP Management committee in different tiers. For example:

- Central management committee of social security was formed

- Divisional management committee of SSNP was formed
- District management committee of SSNP was formed
- Upazila management committee of SSNP was formed
- Amount of maternity allowance increased from(500 to 800) and duration has been increased from 2 to 3

Indicator R.3.2.2 Number of publications items and research pieces presented and disseminated at national level, to government and civil society, to advance access to SSNPs by the most vulnerable

As per project plan of action, the project developed policy briefs (4 nos.), one guidance notes, and one synthesis paper on SSNP standards for presentation at national and district level dialogue and Upazila level coordination meeting with relevant government departments. Links/coalitions with national level Ethnic people’s organisations were also established and investigative reports published by visiting media and media coverage on project events were documented.

The policy briefs were developed through a review of National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) each year. These policy briefs included gaps identified in the NSSS and recommendations to address the gaps. The synthesis paper which focused on beneficiaries’ criteria for the 9 SSNP was adapted from the 9 SSNP policies. The guidance notes focused on inclusion of ethnic people in SSNP committees. All these materials were effective tools used as ready reference by the CSOs and the SSNP service providers. In addition, SSNP curriculum, Newsletters capturing good practice and success stories, SSNP standards document and policy brief were published in Bangla and English language. The policy briefs which were used during dialogue at national and district level led to at least 3 progressive changes in policies by the end of the project (**Ref. R.3.2.1**). Research works carried out by the project included CSO Capacity Mapping, 7 CSO Surveys Baseline Survey, Mid-term Evaluation and End line Evaluations

CHAPTER -4: DISCUSSION ON EVALUATION

4.1 Relevance of Actions

4.1.1 Relevance of approach

The project proposal was submitted by World Vision to EU under the thematic area of “Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities, Priority 1 “Focus on country level: enhancing CSOs' and LAs' contributions to governance and development processes” Strategic Objective 1.1 “Enhance CSOs' contributions to governance and development”.

World Vision UK & World Vision Bangladesh were the main implementing organisations for project implementation at the field level. In description of action of the project submitted to EU, Project strategic management was led by WVUK, who provided technical support during inception period as well as overall management and CVA expertise training to further community-level support. Compliance/finance staff from WVUK ensured fully compliant with the EC contract requirements and conversant to the Action. WVB **was** responsible for day-to-day in-country coordination, monitoring and implementation of action through special grants and M&E staff. They were indirectly involved in delivering programme activities, e.g., project inception activities, arrange SC meetings.

Pollisree and PUMDO, who are local NGOs were involved as partner for implementation of activities as per project design with technical support from WVB. Inclusion of these two local NGOs as implementing partners was a relevant approach because it strengthened the operational capacity of WVB as well as WVUK for smooth implementation of actions. Both partners have long presence and experiences of development activities in the project area and better access to the community, LGs, and local administration. Their local presence would allow the project beneficiaries to continue non-finance activities, even after the end of the project.

The project targeted vulnerable people, with focus on the Ethnic communities living in plainland, especially in inaccessible areas having limited access to public supports and services. During project lifespan, EVPRA worked with 100 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) composed of/led by ethnic minority people. The project was keen on the involvement of CSOs as key actor, who were responsible for implementation of the CVA model in their communities. They disseminated information to the community people on ways to claim SSN entitlements from local government. The initiative of formation of CSO with ethnic community are relevant as per sustainable development ethos - *nobody is left behind*. The CSO members got a platform, through which they can continue raising voices and would be able to claim legitimate rights.

Local government representative was expected to be more cooperative to provide a hierarchy of instances up the government ladder where Ethnic and vulnerable communities are dissatisfied with local responses. Ultimately, elected representatives of local government were supposed to play a vital role for raising awareness on SSNPs, supporting beneficiary selection and targeting, whilst ensuring increased availability of information and improved public disclosure about SSNPs and services that will potentially contribute to greater transparency and accountability if used effectively. The project

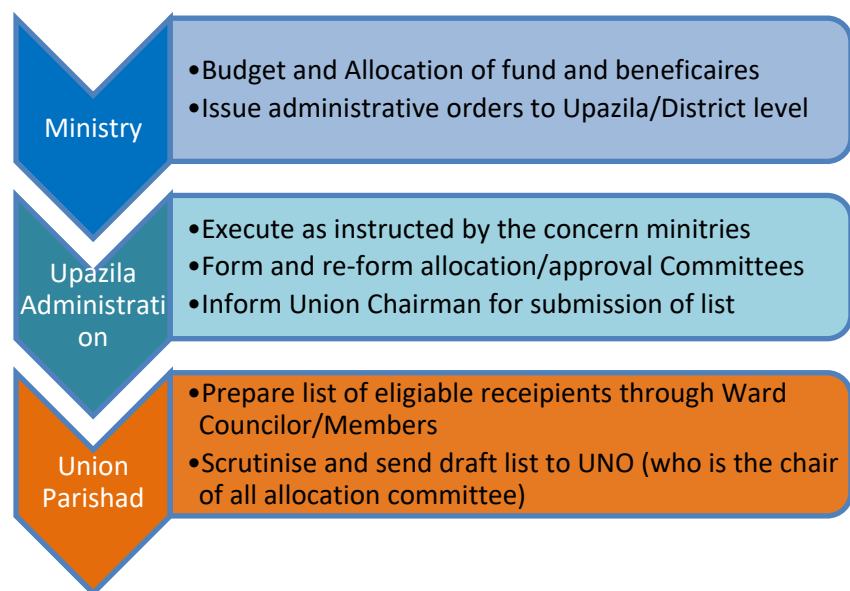
engaged local authorities¹⁷ in project as key stakeholder for implementation of robust and operational complaint/grievance redress and response mechanisms. They LGs were engaged in interface meetings, and responded to community feedback with new corrective measures.

4.1.2 Relevant of strategies followed by the project

The EVPRA project was relevant to National Social Security Strategy, the partnership to engage civil society in policy dynamics and accountability mechanisms. The partnership approach was fully in line with the EU Annual Action Programme for 2014/2015, the Programme Decision and Thematic Programme “Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities” and fully takes into account of the three priority objectives: 1) enhancing Civil Society Organisations’ and Local Authorities’ contributions to governance and development processes; 2) reinforcing regional and global Civil Society Organisations networks and associations of Local Authorities; and 3) developing and supporting education and awareness-raising initiatives fostering citizens’ awareness of and mobilisation for development.

EVPRA project supported the government’s national priorities for poverty reduction through SSNP service delivery. The 145 SSNPs were conducive to reduce extreme poverty and vulnerability. However, access to SSNPs was a challenge for majority of the ethnic minorities and also for vulnerable sections of the population. Project’s focus on the CSOs capacity strengthening and increase access of ethnic people to the supports and services from the local government are relevant to strategies.

SSNPs were executed by a government-led coordination system. However, the system had many shortcomings due to a complex Social Security System that is managed by 23 ministries. The absence of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism on performance, lack of coordination among actors were also notable shortcomings. Existing SSNP allocation and distribution process which are being followed from central to field level is mentioned below:



There were complementarities between EVPRA and many other government and donor-supported actions that enhanced the project’s impact in terms of the scale of donor support. In addition, the project also complemented the EU-funded Bangladesh Resilient Livelihoods Programme (2018-2022) and the upcoming Budget Support, whose general objective is to contribute to inclusive growth and the reduction of poverty and all forms of malnutrition in Bangladesh. In this regard, the EVPRA

¹⁷ Union Parishad and Government offices at Upazila Level.

project was relevant to the United Nations Agenda 2030, contributing primarily to the progressive achievement of Sustainable Development Goal:

SDG 1: “End poverty in all forms everywhere”.

SDG 2: “End hunger, achieve food security and nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”;

SDG 5: “Gender Equality” and

SDG 10: “Reduce inequalities”.

The project’s Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) has been updated. The gender approach has been well-integrated and supported with sex-disaggregated data against relevant indicators at all levels. All 13 indicators, at output and outcome levels, have been well designed to measure the extent of achievement. Though there have been no indicators in the LFM to measure social change due to project impact, during the End-line Evaluation, a number of Social Indicators were taken into account to measure EVPRA project’s impact. These indicators included water use; school dropouts; early marriage; domestic violence; decision making in the households; and coping strategy.

4.1.3 Relevance of targets groups

The EVPRA project was designed to respond to the needs of the ethnic minorities and other vulnerable population living in Dinajpur and Joypurhat districts. Due to the different characteristics of ethnic minorities in terms of socio-cultural traits, they were excluded by mainstream people. With occupational scarcity, less education and exploitation from local non-ethnic communities, the ethnic minorities of the plain land were in a deprived position on many accounts.

The number of eligible beneficiaries in a particular area was not taken into consideration to allocate fund. However, the UP Chairman and Upazila Nirbahi Officer could be convinced for allocation of the fund appropriately as legitimate for the ethnic and other vulnerable people. The most eligible person/HHs could be selected through active participation of respective community people. However, the project (EVPRA) could implement some interventions to form a single platform. They could at least reduce malpractice at the initial phase of listing of SSNP support and ensure allocation and maintaining transparency at the Union level while the primary list is prepared. However, in many cases eligible beneficiaries were left out and ineligible people were included. In addition, lack of awareness of people on SSNP eligibility criteria, lack of transparency and accountability of SSNP service providers, nepotism in the SSNP beneficiary selection process were barrier to the ethnic minorities and other vulnerable people.

In this backdrop, the EVPRA project was initiated with the aim to foster the social development of ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups for accessing the government’s SSNP services. EVPRA’s geographic scope and scale in the selected districts were significant because those ethnic minority of Adivasi origin are concentrated to those districts. Particularly, the project addressed the relevant needs of the ethnic minorities’ female representatives through various awareness and capacity development activities to build leadership skills and foster their economic empowerment. The project also initiated community participation during listing of primary level beneficiaries.

4.1.4 Relevance of Actions/activities

Community-based CSOs were engaged to work with local government and relevant government departments was relevant to the partnership approach. CSOs and local authorities have been fostering

effective governance and citizens' awareness and mobilisation to ensure access to SSNP. In the target districts, with support from the project, CSOs closely worked with the Union Parishads (Ups)- the primary implementer of SSNP services.

4.2 Efficiency

4.2.1 Efficiency of Actions and Approach

For efficiency of actions and approach, activities were performed as per project design & plan such as target beneficiaries were selected, CSOs formed/activated, capacity development training imparted to CSOs, network with key stakeholders established etc. EVPRA formed PSC, to oversee and monitor project performances and ensure good governance through quarterly progress review meeting. The PSC also resolved potential issues arise from partners during implementation process

The Regional Field Director of WVB, PUMDO and Pollisree Executive Directors worked as focal points of the Steering Committee (SC). Virtual and remote support were ensured from WVUK's Grants Portfolio Manager and Compliance Officer who represented in the committee. The SC was responsible for having an overview of programme management information at the national level.

The project management adopted a string of monitoring and reporting mechanism to track project performance and progress. Financial control established and reviewed on regular basis by the PSC. The field team were given proper and timely guidance for implementation of activities and achievement of outputs.

The skilled and experienced team including Project Manager had managed the project. The field team were given proper and timely guidance for the achievement of outputs and activity implementation as well as provided direction and advice on exceptional situations. WVB's monitoring team and partners played a crucial role for effective monitoring and provided necessary feedback to the management that contributed to efficient management of the project.

4.2.2 Time efficiency

The project team developed detail implementation plan to ensure timely service delivery and implementation of activities in a cost-efficient manner. There was no evidence of deployment of resources including human and financial. The Steering Committee played a vital role in overseeing and reviewing the progress and fund utilisation status against each action. All actions were timely implemented with cost efficient manner, that indicates efficiency of the project.

4.2.3 Management efficiency

WVB ensured management efficiency through partnering with two local NGOs (Pollisree and PUMDO) having long experience in the project area and easy access to the community, LGs, and local administration. All three partners were equipped with adequate human resource, logistic and professional capacities to ensure efficient implementation. EVPRA Project Officials maintained liaison with the government counterparts efficiently in relation to project implementation. WVB's CVA approach and "Interface Meetings" held at the Union Parishad with the participation of community people and duty bearers created opportunity for public hearing and ensure social

accountability. CVA approach efficiently paved the way for the beneficiaries in claiming their SSNP entitlements. The internal coordination and cooperation among partners were conducive to tackle unwanted situation. The sharing among partners was on a regular basis that strengthened the management efficiency of the project.

World Vision Bangladesh EVPRA team has 5 professional staffs including 1 project manager, 1 monitoring and evaluation coordinator, 1 finance and admin coordinator, 2 advocacy and communication coordinators 1 for Joypurhat and other for Dinajpur district. Implementing partners have got technical support from advocacy and communication coordinator in respective two districts. Pollisree was supported by one national Project Coordinator, one M&E Officer and a Finance/Administrative Officer. Pollisree mobilised 27 Community Development Supervisors (CDS) locally. PUMDO's human and technical contribution in the Joypurhat district amounts to 81 Community Facilitators, managed by a Project Coordinator, M&E Officer and Finance Officer. PUMDO has mobilised 19 Community Development Supervisors and 57 Community Facilitators. Both the NGOs had hired female staff to implement the EVPRA project.

From the government officials' response, it was evident that the EVPRA Project Officials maintained liaison with the government counterparts efficiently in relation to project implementation.

4.2.4 Efficiency of actions

World Vision's methodological approach "Citizen Voice and Action" (CVA) was based on a participatory process that involved community scorecard sessions and "Interface Meetings" which were held at the Union Parishad with the CSOs, elected representatives (UP Chairman/Member), relevant government officials and community people for public hearing and ensure social accountability. Due to interface meeting, people had the opportunity to make complaints, demands and suggestions and accordingly actions were taken by concerned government officials. Two Interface Meetings were held every year in each union. A total of 368 meetings were held in Dinajpur and Joypurhat district during the 4-year project period. The CVA approach was much appreciated by the local authorities and all the target beneficiaries. The core concept of CVA is to provide service first to the individual who is more vulnerable and to be selected by community. In this process, all vulnerable people will be covered through the services. This is a tested and result-driven approach of achieving highest degree of accomplishment.

The relevant government departments at district and Upazila level, Union Parishad and CSOs at community level continued to express full commitment to assist vulnerable communities and individuals, and advocated for resolving subsequent issue to EVPRA's completion.

4.3 Effectiveness

4.3.1 CSO engagement in local Government Committees

Edline Evaluation findings reveal that EVPRA project has achieved on most outputs indicators as planned with substantial progress over the years. EVPRA project exceeded its target on 3 Specific Objective Indicators. Among the 9 Result Indicators (R1 – 4 indicators, R2 – 2 indicators and R3 – 3 indicators) all have exceeded its target except for one indicator R2.1.1 (*Percentage increase in the number of CSO representatives included in local government committees, specifically including CSO representatives from ethnic minorities, women and other most vulnerable groups*) which did not achieve its target. This could be due to the fact that there is no scope of CSOs representation in the local government committees related to SSNP, as SSNP committees were formed according to the prescribed format of the government. However, the EVPRA project had made it possible, 21 CSO representatives were included in the SSNP selection committees as “observers”, 7 CSO members in Union Parishad standing committees (Sanitation Water Supply & Sewerage Committee & Rural Infrastructure Development and Maintenance Committee etc) and 2 CSO members in SMC (CSO Survey - internal assessment December 2019). The actions created the scope for disadvantaged and vulnerable for inclusion in government system and contributed to meet the goals.

The social norms and exclusion from existing resources and rights created a long-term mental state of the ethnic communities and they were neglected everywhere without having any reason. Now, they are more confident, sending their children to schools, doing business and increasing access to MFIs and other services. The EVPRA project has given them light of hope through establishing their rights by their own and CSO is the platform through which they are raising voices, taking decision for their development.

4.3.2 Access to SSNP

Out of the 992 respondents, 74.5% received Social Safety Net support or the other under the Government’s nine SSNPs. The EVPRA project has capacitated the CSOs who could play effective role in participatory selection process at the bottom line (UP) of the SSNP selection process. There were number of instances of wrong and motivated selection where non-eligible person included, and most deserved person excluded and no one was ready for listening complaints. Now, due to EVPRA projects grievance readdress mechanism there is one place where the affected person can put his/her complaint and CSO is capacitated for raising collective voices. (End line Survey).

4.3.3 Capacity Development of CSOs

EVPRA effectively built the capacity of 100 CSOs with a total of 3,329 members, of which 1,208 were males and 2,121 females. Out of 100 CSOs (96 CSO having all Ethnic community and 4 CSOs have only Non-Ethnic), 45% CSOs were female only and the rest were composed of male and female (mixed group). 96% CSOs had women in leadership position (Target was 40%) and One CSO had a disabled person in leadership position. 98% of CSOs were fully led by ethnic minorities. (All the CSOs (100%) were implementing new organisational leadership mechanisms (Target was 80%). All the CSOs practised democratic process to select their leaders. There were 659 executive committee members in 100 CSOs, of which 464 were females in 96 CSOs. (CSO Survey - internal assessment

December 2019). Following major activities were carried out by EVPRA during the project period and seemed to be effective for achieving objectives of the project.

- Strengthening capacity of community organisations
- Create CVA working group in each union level
- Provide capacity building training especially leadership and advocacy
- Ready and prepare the community to bargain about their entitlement
- Conduct monitoring scorecard with community organisations
- Organise the interface meeting with duty bearer and service recipient and make the action plan for improving services

Assessment results revealed that about 94% CSOs had increased understanding and knowledge about human rights and 98% had access to SSNP information and entitlements. (On both accounts the target was 60%).

4.3.4 Social Accountability and Transparency

Significant progress regarding social accountability and transparency was made through awareness of public complaint/grievance redress mechanism which could be attributed to the establishment of 100 complaint boxes at the CSOs, as well as 46 complaint boxes in 41 Union Parishads and 5 municipalities by the EVPRA Project. Community people during FGD reported that complaint boxes in the CSOs were opened every 15 days and complaints (if any) were documented in a register and appropriate actions were taken to readdress. In this way, every meeting became the follow up meeting for resolving previous complaint. Interface meeting became a platform to ask accountability between service provider and service recipients. Out of 46 Union Parishad, 24 UP reported of displaying beneficiaries list.

The beneficiary's' perception of the outputs' quality is positive overall as mentioned by the respondents during End-line Evaluation. They appreciated the training they received from the project which have made them confident to voice their grievances and no longer shy to approach government officials for seeking solutions to their problems.

4.4 Impact of interventions

4.4.1 Intended impact

The Action focused on raising awareness and capacity building of Ethnic communities had a positive impact in encouraging them to raise their voice and arranging dialogue with duty bearers for ensuring the services to all people irrespective of their socio-cultural affiliation. In addition to the improvements to the technical and management capacities of CSOs, the project created self-confidence and leadership among ethnic minorities which was not visualised before starting of project activities.

There are many other NGOs working in the project districts but EVPRA exclusively targeting the issues of Social Safety Net programme where the rights of ethnic communities were overlooked and/or not included as they were supposed to; the project activities improved the capacity of lobbying, advocating for SSNPs which increased in number and allowed the landless households to meet both food and nutritional demands, and search for additional livelihoods; poor lactating mothers able to

ensure essential food for themselves and their children through their allowance and poor students are accessed to education. 93.0% SSNP beneficiaries had homestead land, of which, 87.6% HHs were from ethnic and 94.9% HHs were from non-ethnic communities.

Except for 1.0% Ethnic and 2.1% Non-ethnic HHs who had no source of income, the rest were all engaged in some occupation for their livelihood such as day labourer, off-farm activities, agriculture and fisheries. Number of more than one earning member per household has also increased by end of project. It was found that 31 % HHs had 2 earning members and 8% HHs had more than 2 earning members in end evaluation compared to 27% and 6% respectively during baseline.

End Evaluation found that average monthly income and expenditure of HHs were BDT 11,716 (€124.45)¹⁸, and BDT 9,357 (€99.39) respectively. However, average monthly income and expenditure of Ethnic minority HHs were BDT 10,686 (€166.60) and BDT 8,630 (€91.67) respectively which portrayed that both income and expenditure of ethnic people were lower than the average. Average monthly income was BDT 7887.0 (€122.96) during baseline study in 2016.

Average outstanding loan was BDT 36,366(€566.98) where average loan of Ethnic HHs was BDT 22,367 (€237.59) which is considerably lower than outstanding loan of non-beneficiaries which is Tk.53,185. In Baseline survey, average loan was BDT 28465.0 (€302.36). Regarding savings, 83.8% beneficiary and 80.2% non-beneficiary HHs had savings while 82.2% Non-ethnic and 86.5% Ethnic HHs had savings. Average savings was BDT 14,353 (€152.46) where average savings of Ethnic HHs recorded as BDT 15,233(€161.81) which is an improvement compared to savings during baseline of BDT 10889.0 (€115.67).

Though Pollisree and PUMDO have been working as local NGO, but the agencies had inadequate understanding of CVA approach which could help in achieving better results and ensure maximum benefits from resources. The project allowed them in learning the approach of CVA social accountability which can be used further by both the NGOs in other development activities.

Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) is a social accountability methodology developed by WV, which transforms the dialogue between citizens and the duty bearers particularly decision makers in order to improve services, like health care and education, which impact the daily lives of children and their families. The CVA approach was adopted in the project and assumed to create positive impact in the targeted project location. CVA working group were trained and established in each Union Parishad and the working groups were responsible for arranging meetings with different stakeholders at Union Parishad and Upazila level that contributed in achieving project results.

The project visibility was ensured by a journalistic outlet, which covers the project interventions. The EU logo was visible on all printed sources throughout the project sites and all publications and research reports. However, taking into consideration that most of the beneficiaries are from remote villages and are illiterate, it was not possible to adequately communicate EU visibility. During the inception meeting, workshops, trainings and campaigns the EU logo was used as per guideline of using logo and people were informed about the generous funding support of the European Union.

¹⁸ One Euro is equivalent to BDT 94.14 as on 19 January 2020

4.4.2 Unintended positive impact

The EVPRA project positively impacted on the social life of the people. Early and child marriages, domestic violence and school dropouts has significantly decreased in the targeted community in last the 4 years . This can be attributed to the economic empowerment of the of 7,775 vulnerable women due to their access to social safety nets which is expected to have a lasting impact on their lives and the lives of their family members.

Major impacts observed during the end-line evaluation, through transect walk, short discussion with local elites, community people of the target area and FGD in both Dinajpur and Joypurhat district are presented below.

- Ethnic Communities established collective force through formation of CSOs;
- All CSOs have constitutions which is using as permanent guideline that enabled the long-term impact on moving forward for establishing rights through raising voice on relevant issues;
- Transparent and accountability is being practice at grass-root level. All CSOs maintained written resolution and leaders were elected by the vote of members;
- All CSOs started economic activities by taking loan from the accumulated savings of the CSO members;
- Many CSO members started both off-farm and on-farm income generation activities, that has contributed in improving their livelihood;
- Ethnic people are aware on the importance of their children's school enrolment. They discourage drop-out and resist early marriage in their respective communities, and are making decisions to improve their lives.



4.4.3 Overall Impacts

Several aspects of lives were considered for measuring and analysing the impact of SSNP among the recipients. Major issues those are elements and integral part of daily life. The issues were; public health (use of safe drinking water), family life (domestic violence, child marriage, family decision making) and coping during hardships. The impact has been categorised under the heads of the facets mentioned above.

Use of Drinking Water:

Overall 92.8% HHs used water from hand tube well while 98.4% HHs from Ethnic community have safe water facilities. See Table 12.

Table 14: Sources of Drinking water

Type of water source	Total		Beneficiary		Non-beneficiary		Non-Ethnic		Ethnic	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Hand Tube well	921	92.8%	689	93.2%	232	91.7%	731	91.5%	190	98.4%
Piped into dwelling	65	6.6%	45.	6.1%	20	7.9%	62	7.8%	3	1.6%
Others	6	0.6%	5	0.7%	1	0.4%	6	0.8%	0	0
Total	992	100%	739	100%	253	100%	799	100%	193	100%

About 91.7% respondents had own source of drinking water while 92.4% non-ethnic HHs had ownership and 89.1% HHs of Ethnic minority had their own source. Overall 6.9% HHs mentioned the water source was the neighbours and 1.2% using water sourced from common place. National average for use of basic drinking water services (using improved sources of drinking water either in their dwelling/yard/plot or within 30 minutes round trip collection time) is 98% (BBS, MICS 2019)¹⁹.

Noteworthy to mention that, overall 23.8% tube well were tested in which 21.5% tube well found as arsenic-free and 1.8% HHs are using arsenic contaminated water. National average of Arsenic contamination of household drinking water 50ppb (GoB standard) is 12.4%. (BBS, MICS 2019). It was found that 76.7% Water sources were not tested for ensuring the presence of arsenic where CSOs could play active role.

School Dropout:

Under the surveyed HHs, 41 (63%)[26 (63%) boys and 15 girls (37%)] were identified who discontinued their study in school. Among them, 6 boys and 4 girls were from Ethnic HHs and 20 boys and 11 girls from the HHs of Non-Ethnic. National average of school dropout rate (Grade V in 2017) 3.6% for boys and girls 1.6% and in secondary school (2017) is 36.0% for boys and girls 38.4%. Primary School Net Attendance for both sex is 76.3% in Dinajpur and 67.7% in Joypurhat and Secondary School Net Attendance is 68.6% in Dinajpur and 44.0% in Joypurhat (Gender Statistics 2018)²⁰. Stipends for Primary and Secondary School Education and other SSNP allowances among other factors, may have positive impact on the relatively smaller number of girl dropouts than boys. FGD findings revealed that the rate of dropped out children is reduced than past 5 years and motivational campaign of different NGOs and CSOs might be appreciated for this positive impact.

The major reasons for school dropout were mentioned as financial constraints (24) followed by 12 children engaged for earning income for the family and 5 children were the victim of early marriage.

Early Marriage:

According to the existing laws/Act of the country, marriage before the ages of 21 for boys or 18 for girls is termed “early marriage”. Survey data revealed that 52.7% respondents mentioned no early

¹⁹ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Progotir Pathey Bangladesh, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019, Key Findings

²⁰ Gender Statistics 2018 – page 97, 98, 110 & 111

marriage exists, while 27/% stated as rarely happened, 19% mentioned as sometimes and 1.1% respondent (11 HHs) said as frequently observing early marriage. Prevalence of Child Marriage National average is 62.8% (Gender Statistics 2018)²¹ and Joypurhat 83.5% and Dinajpur 78% (BBS 2015a)²². Respondents were asked to mention the incidence of early marriage of girls that happened during last one year and their responses are mentioned in the table appended below. It was found that 11 girls were identified as victim of early marriages and main reason was love affairs where 6 marriages were accepted by the guardians and arranged their marriage by the family.

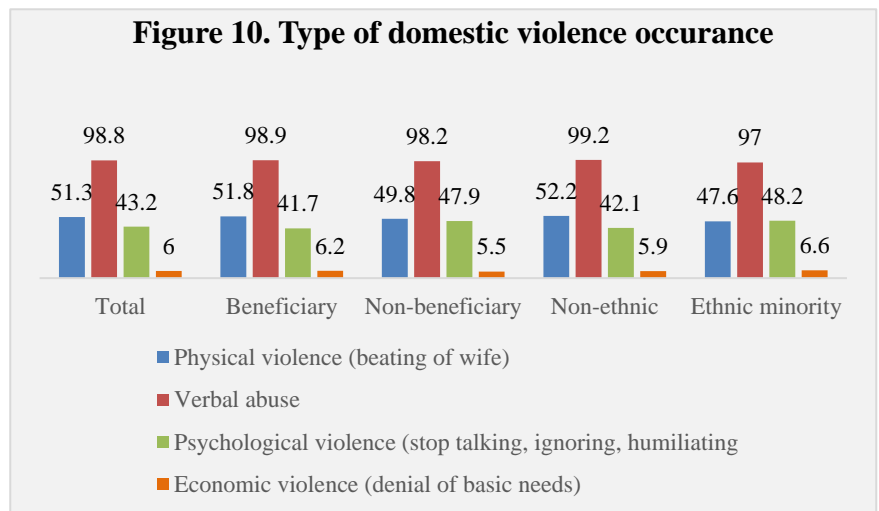
Table- 15: Girls (below 18 years) married in the locality/village in last one year

Responses	Total		Beneficiary		Non-beneficiary		Non-ethnic		Ethnic	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Never	523	52.7	385	52.1	138	54.5	399	49.9	124	64.2
Rarely	269	27.1	192	26.0	77	30.4	237	29.7	32	16.6
Sometime	188	19.0	152	20.6	36	14.2	152	19.0	36	18.7
Frequently	11	1.1	9	1.2	2	0.8	11	1.4	0	0.0
Don't know	1	0.1	1	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.5
Total	992	100.0	739	100	253	100	799	100	193	100

Domestic violence against women:

The term domestic violence is commonly being used, but the evaluation team believed that this violence is triggered from family feud, often happen quarrel with either of the spouse, and may be with other family members where women are found to be oppressed mentally, economically and even resulting in physical assaults. Women could take actions through arbitration or through law of the country, but due to patriarchal society, husbands were always enjoying their freedom of taking decision for divorce or breaking the relationship. No wide variations were observed between different categories of respondents.

Figure 10. Type of domestic violence occurrence



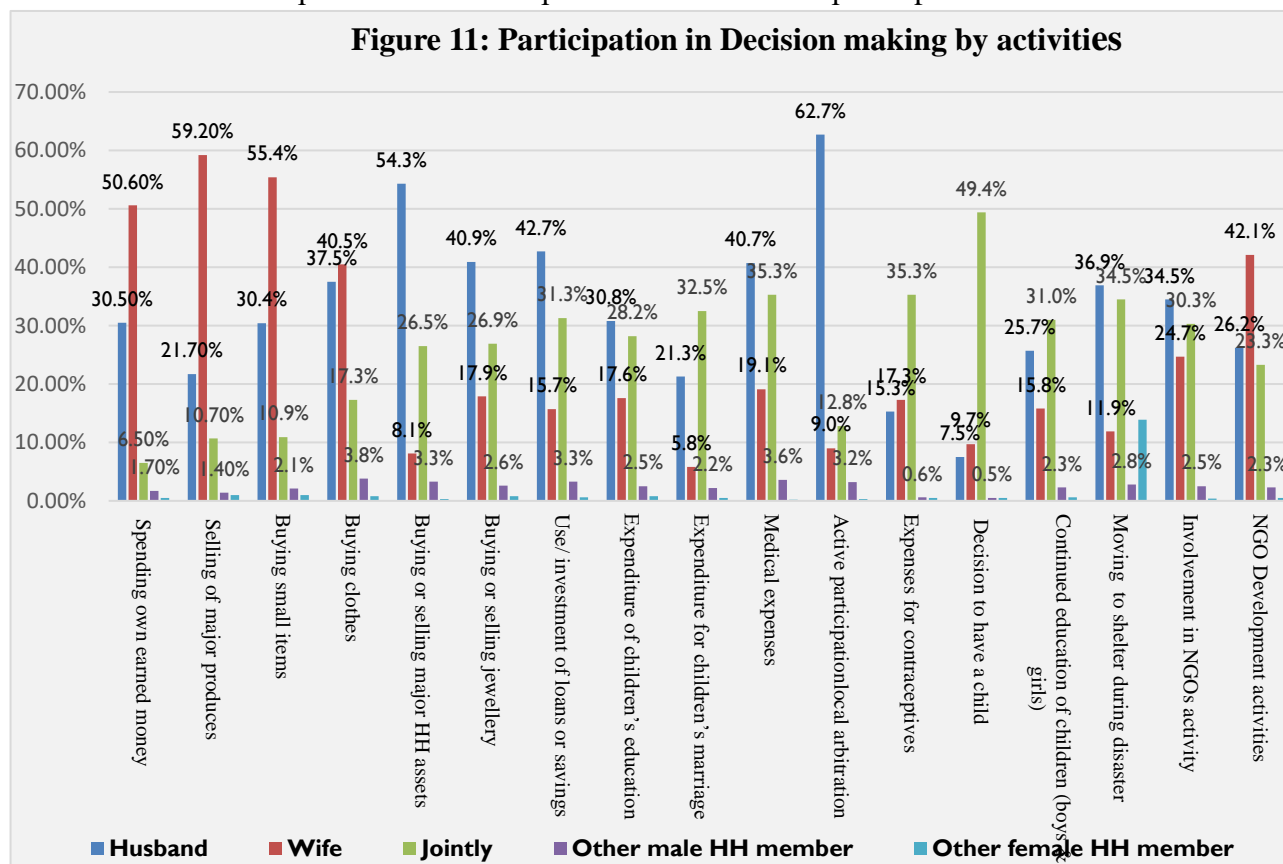
²¹Gender Statistics 2018 – page xxiii

²² Context of Child Marriage and its Implications in Bangladesh, Department of Population Sciences University of Dhaka, 2017 – page 18 <http://dpsdu.edu.bd/images/ChildMarriageReport.pdf>
Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). (2015a). Bangladesh Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2012-2013, Progotir Pathey

About 4% HHs mentioned about the incidence as often happening but more than 10% stated that there was no such instance. Figure 10 detailed the status of physical assaults to the women members of the surveyed HHs. HHs based data shows, overall 51.3% women (wife) were victim of beating by their husbands while 98.8% were scolded by using abusive words, 43.2% reported about psychological/emotional violence (stop talking, ignoring or humiliating) and 6.0% mentioned about economic violation. There was no significant difference between Non-ethnic or Ethnic HHs. National data shows 49.6% women faced physical violence, 28.7% faced emotional violence and 11.4% faced economic violence by husband (BBS, VAW Survey 2015)²³. This finding shows that though physical and emotional violence has increased, economic violence has reduced in the project area.

Decision Making in the Households:

Both urban and rural areas in Bangladesh, household’s decisions are made by husband and/or senior male member of the family. Women participation in the decision-making process is considered as an indicator of women empowerment. To respond to the issues of “participation in household decision



making, the respondents were asked to respond on their answers in 17 different categories like: spending own earned money, selling household produce as crop or cattle heads, buying small food items, groceries, toiletries or buying clothes for family members, moving to shelter during time of disasters, involvement in NGO activity and NGO development activities. The figure 11 details the participation status in decision making by husband, wife, both husband and wife jointly and other members.

²³Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Bangladesh VAW Survey 2015,

Coping strategy during the crisis:

Different strategies were adopted by the HHs for coping with food security during hardship. Data depicted that some variations existed between non-ethnic and ethnic minority HHs. Following Table details the coping strategies adopted by the HHs surveyed.

Table 15: Coping with food security during hardships

Strategies by type	Total		Beneficiary		Non-beneficiary		Non-ethnic		Ethnic	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Purchased food on credit or borrowed money to buy food	369	78.7%	293	79.6%	101	100.0%	375	100.0%	94	100.0%
Selling household goods	11	2.3%	7	1.9%	76	75.2%	301	80.3%	68	72.3%
Selling jewellery or gold	6	1.3%	1	0.3%	4	4.0%	10	2.7%	1	1.1%
Using savings	187	39.9%	145	39.4%	5	5.0%	5	1.3%	1	1.1%
Sending household members to eat elsewhere	19	4.1%	15	4.1%	42	41.6%	148	39.5%	39	41.5%
Skipping meal	52	11.1%	43	11.7%	4	4.0%	18	4.8%	1	1.1%
Selling productive assets	25	5.3%	20	5.4%	9	8.9%	42	11.2%	10	10.6%
Children (under 15) are working to contribute to household income	51	10.9%	31	8.4%	5	5.0%	19	5.1%	6	6.4%
support from neighbours and relatives	123	26.2%	101	27.4%	20	19.8%	34	9.1%	17	18.1%
Depending on government official (Safety net)	36	7.7%	35	9.5%	22	21.8%	108	28.8%	15	16.0%
Selling land, trees, and other immovable properties	9	1.9%	3	0.8%	1	1.0%	30	8.0%	6	6.4%
Begging	11	2.3%	9	2.4%	6	5.9%	7	1.9%	2	2.1%
Total	469	100	368	100	100	100	375	100	94	100

Findings reveal that CSOs were playing an active role in community through motivation and community-led actions. They encouraged of boys and girls to education, protect early marriage, solve family and community dispute through arbitration and helped fellow members in economic activities.

4.5 Sustainability of the achievement

4.5.1 Sustainability of achievement

EVPRA partially fulfilled the State's obligation to ensure vulnerable peoples' access to SSNPs in the two districts. The sustainability of the EVPRA project lies on its partnership approach of organizing and activating the CSOs at community level and promoting engagement between CSOs and

government officials to assist access of vulnerable peoples (ethnic and non-ethnic population) to the 9 targeted social safety nets. The projects contribution to building the organisational skills of the CSOs is expected to sustain.

On gender equality point of view, the project has contributed significantly to strengthening the unprecedented number of female leaders in taking the lead role in majority of the CSOs (96%). Almost half (45%) CSOs are female only. This gender equality trend can be expected to continue even after the end of the project. The community people are aware of the various SSNPs and the procedure/eligibility of accessing SSNP services and this knowledge of the community people will sustain through CSO.

4.5.2 Sustainability of actions

The projects Citizens Voice and Action (CVA) approach to hold Interface Meetings at Union Parishad level has been effective in ensuring accountability and transparency to some extent. The Interface Meetings held twice a year has opened the way for the community people, to interact with the concerned government officials and the UP chairmen and members regarding SSNP beneficiary's selection. It is expected that CSOs will continue to apply this technique to raise their voice against any irregularities related to SSNP service delivery. The projects initiative of expanding the complaint mechanisms (setting of complaint boxes at the Union Parishad and Municipality), has complemented the governments Grievance Redress System and is expected to remain available in the light of the upcoming National Social Security Strategy of Bangladesh.

4.5.3 Institutional sustainability

The CSO engagement in identifying eligible SSNP beneficiaries has been much appreciated by the government authorities at district and Upazila level, where they have limited scope due to lack of adequate manpower for effective monitoring. In fact, the stakeholders expect the experienced CSOs to continue their work and maintain seamless access to SSNPs.

4.5.4 Functional Sustainability

The on-going availability and appropriate disbursement of State budgets continues to pose a major challenge to sustainability, not only for EVPRA but also for other development project intervention in SSNP field. Another obstacle to sustainability lies in the GoB's intention to digitalise and automate the entire Social Security System. Communities who are not adequately literate may face another challenge that may exert an adverse impact on sustainability and infringe the right to digital privacy. This risk should be taken into consideration in any future intervention. Resources need to be identified to provide technical support for development of relevant skills among the beneficiaries respond to the need of digitalisation. In addition, the government should formulate a legislative framework on privacy policy, data protection rights and information technology protocols.

CHAPTER -5: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

The Action, EVPRA- Establishing vulnerable peoples' rights and access to social safety net programmes has been implemented through partnership with local NGOs, for a period of 4 years. Main focus of the project was establishing rights and access of vulnerable peoples particularly ethnic

minorities living in Dinajpur and Joypurhat district. Overall Objective of the Action was to empower local, indigenous civil society organisations (CSOs), local authorities (LAs) and communities to promote access to SSNPs for the most vulnerable communities by enhancing transparency and accountability in the provision of SSNPs. Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) approach created opportunity for CSOs, to increase their influence on duty bearers to respond positively to citizen participation in SSNPs service delivery decision-making and monitoring processes.

The project implemented various activities from the local to the national level to promote engagement between CSOs and government officials to assist improvement of the 9 targeted SSNP service delivery and increase access of vulnerable peoples (mainstream and Ethnic population) to the social safety nets.

The changes in policy may not have been much achieved due to SSNP allocation and control at the central level and implementation by the Upazila administration and the Union Parishad. Nevertheless, the project was able to include CSO members to represent in the SSNP committees as observer, and this achievement could be seen as a milestone where ethnic minorities had limited access to many public services including SSP.

CSOs now strengthened and have the capability to communicate with Union Parishad and relevant Upazila-level government officers regarding SSNP service delivery. The approach of Citizens Voice and Action (CVA) was observed as an effective method to ensure accountability and transparency to some extent. However, holding of Interface Meetings twice a year was not enough rather quarterly meeting could work better to create scope for the community people to interact with the concerned government officials and the UP.

On gender equality point of view, the project has contributed significantly to strengthening the unprecedented number of female leaders in taking the lead role in majority of the CSOs. Remarkable participation of women and ethnic minorities in the CSOs was found to be effective and spontaneous.

However, lot of changes are yet necessary to make the project outputs sustainable and beneficial to the target population. Communities who are not adequately literate may face another challenge due to GoB intention of digitalisation of SSN system. This may lead to adverse impact and trespass the right to digital privacy. In addition, on-going availability and appropriate disbursement of State budgets continues to pose a major challenge in SSNP operation and coverage to eligible beneficiaries.

Key recommendations are mentioned in the following for future intervention.

- Separate SSNP allocations may be considered for the plain land ethnic people through introducing quota system.
- Database on poor people need to be developed to ensure accuracy in SSN application
- Resources need to be identified to provide technical support for relevant skills development among the communities/beneficiaries to cope with digitalised SSNP.
- Legislative framework on privacy policy, data protection rights and information technology protocols need to be formulation.
- Provisions to be made by the government for time to time review and adjustment of SSNP budget allocations (e.g. Old Age Allowance; Allowance for the Widowed, Deserted and Destitute Women).
- Effective monitoring mechanism through involving audit, frequent visits and dialogues with concerned officials at Upazila Parishad and Union Parishad levels need to be initiated to

mitigate alleged apparent safety net leakages. Outcome of these audits, visits, dialogues, must be made public.

- Transparency and accountability need to be maintained to ensure eligible SSN beneficiary's selection through provision of inclusion of community (grassroots) representatives in SSN selection committee
- Details of the nine SSNPs need to be displayed for the public at UP, UZP and Upazila level relevant government offices. Information may include eligibility of recipient, amount, frequency and duration of SSN allowances (cash & kinds), recipient/geographical area coverage etc. EVPRA projects, SSNP calendar may be followed in this regard
- Formation of Secondary School Stipend Selection Committee need to have representation of disadvantaged people
- Report by Mobile Banking Agent to the Upazila and District Education Office must be made mandatory so that Upazila and District Education Office can monitor the distribution by the mobile banking agent.
- Young poor people (Specially: Widowed, partially disabled) should not be considered for safety net allowance. Instead SSNP should have provision of providing job skill training to make them self- dependent.
- Old Age Disable and Widow allowances should be given at the time of religious festivals such as (Eid/Puja/Christmas).
- WVB or other development agencies may replicate EVPRA in other districts of Bangladesh where SSNP service delivery requires improvement

Lessons Learned

The EVPRA project is a perfect example of community participation for community based CSOs to be institutionally organised and established as a collective force for claiming rights and entitlements of the vulnerable people particularly the ethnic minorities.

The projects CVA approach and interface meeting has been effective in reducing the gap between the community vulnerable people and the duty bearers. It created scope for community people to claim their rights through dialogue with the SSNP related duty bearers.

The project also helped in empowerment of the females who demonstrated confidence and leadership skills for protecting their rights and privileges who were otherwise discriminated.

There was scope to create space for advocating for the SSNP entitlements of the ethnic minorities at the Union Parishad, one of the key actors for primary SSNP beneficiary selection. The project made perfect use of this scope by engaging CSOs with the local government through CVA approach. This created a platform for public hearing at the Union Parishad where community people had the opportunity to have a say regarding eligibility of SSNP beneficiaries and helped the UP to prepare list of eligible beneficiaries. This situation was not visualised before starting of project activities

However, interface meeting was held only twice a year. Frequency of interface meeting (quarterly) would have been more effective in getting positive results.

A four-year duration may not have been enough for policy changes. But more intensive advocacy at policy makers level could have helped in sensitizing policy makers for consideration of SSNP policy

changes to ensure representation of CSOs/community people in SSNP beneficiary selection committee as members not only as observers.

The four-year project was first of its kind to assist community vulnerable people, particularly the ethnic minorities to access SSNP. WVB or other development agencies may replicate this project in other districts of Bangladesh where there is a need for improvement of SSNP services.

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