

GUK Profile



গণ উন্নয়ন কেন্দ্র
Gana Unnayan Kendra



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Context

Gaibandha, a northern district of Bangladesh, is a disaster and poverty-prone area which is surrounded by three big rivers, Teesta, Brahmaputra, and Jamuna. Geographically, Gaibandha is a pocket district and it is one of the poorest and most food insecure area in Bangladesh. According to 'Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES)-2016' published by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), poverty rate of the

district is 46.7 while the document mentioned 24.3% overall poverty rate in Bangladesh. Less level of economic development outside agriculture, widespread temporary unemployment and underemployment, very low wages, lack of skills and inputs contribute to continuing deprivation of this area. No industrial settlement has been established in this region. People living here have to experience natural disasters



particularly frequent floods, river bank erosion, cold wave and droughts almost every year which put huge pressure on their livelihood. Many families are internally displaced every year due to river erosion. The economy of the area is completely dependent on agriculture, which cannot ensure working opportunities for landless day laborers round the year. Male members from many poor families go to other cities of the country in search of work leaving behind their wives and children in a vulnerable situation. Some people goes abroad with the hope to change their fate, however, lack of proper information about safe migration leadsthemto seek support from informal channels, which increases the chances of trafficking, exploitation, and abuse. Due to lack of skills and employment opportunities, young suffer from frustration and get involved in various antisocial activities which brings disorder in family as well as society. Farmers do not get fair price of their products due to lack of storage and marketing facilities. People have very limited access to public and private resources. This area is severely impactedby climate change which affects women more severely than men. They have to experience severe problems during floods and seperated women, children and Persons with Disabilities become usually the most helpless. Women living here are always deprived from various oppotunies due to economic and social reasons which leads to gender inequality in family and society that makes barriers for women's participation in economic activities. Young women face multi-dimensional difficulties and constraints. They have limited access to education that force

them to get early marriage and consequently, suffer from various health complications due to inadequate health facilities. Pregnant and lactating mothers as well as children living in the remotest locations suffer from malnutrition. Women's right and dignity are hampered fatally in the hard to reach areas especially in the river island (char) areas. Not only physical and psychological violence, divorce, Nikah Halala, child marriage, and dowry, unlawful rulings or Fatwa are also used as weapons against women. Some dedicated social activists established Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) in 1985 to work for the disadvantaged and destitute people of this area with the purpose to bringpositive and sustainable changes in their lives. Although, the situation is gradually improving due to different initiatives undertaken by government and NGOs, however, there are still lots of problems.



Key Programme Focuses

Livelihood and Food Security, Education and Child Protection, Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Response, Climate Change Adaptation, Safe Migration, Inclusive Financing, Women Empowerment & Gender-based Violence, Human Rights, Good Governance, Skill Development and Job Placement of Youths, Health, Nutrition and WASH, Disability Inclusive Development, Agriculture and Market Linkage, Research and Policy Influence, etc. Different integrated programmes are taken by the organisation to achieve its objectives.

Legal Status

GUK is registered with the following authorities of the Bangladesh government; which are as follows:

- Directorate of Social Service;
- NGO Affairs Bureau;
- Micro Credit Regulatory Authority;
- Bangladesh Election Commission.





Vision

GUK envisions a poverty-free equitable society where justice, equality, human rights and dignity of all people are ensured.

Mission

Inspired by the credo "Release not Relief" GUK works with and for poor, extreme poor, vulnerable, excluded and all other disadvantaged groups of people especially women, children, ethnic groups and person with disability to bring about a sustainable positive change in their lives.





Strategic Objectives

GUK has set up the following as its strategic objectives which are considered during designing any programme or project.

- Human resource development and sustainable institutions building;
- Quality education for all children;
- Sustainable livelihood for poor and extreme poor;
- Gender equality and women empowerment;
- Community resilience in disaster management focusing on climate change;
- Health, nutrition and WASH;
- Good governance and democratic environment;
- Action research and innovation.

1 **Human Resource Development and Sustainable Institution Building**

Through this approach, Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) provides emphasis enhancing the life skills and capacity of poor and extremely poor people by transferring knowledge, information and resources. Capacity building of local community-based platform for raising their voice to bargain their rights and entitlements.

2 **Quality Education for All Children**

Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) is implementing education projects since 1989 with the purpose to provide quality education for children from marginalized and disadvantaged families living in hard-to-reach locations. Education interventions include formal & non-formal primary, secondary and technical education. GUK also implements intervention for adult education to reduce the illiteracy rate that contributes to the Bangladesh government's 'Education for All' programme. Inclusive Education is another key focus of the GUK education programme. The organisation is presently operating following educational institutions which are contributing to education for children from marginalized families.

3 **Sustainable Livelihood for Poor and Extreme Poor**

Poverty reduction means creating resilient livelihoods for the poor and extremely poor with protection measures against income erosion. This approach has been maintained through capacity building employment creation, income generation, asset transfer, entrepreneurship development, small economic support, micro insurance, private sector engagement, and market access with fair prices to ensure the development of life & livelihoods of people living in food insecurity.



4 Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

GUK is a gender-focused organisation and it considers different issues through a gender lens during designing and/or implementation of any project/programme. The organisation has been working on gender and women empowerment issues from the very beginning of its inception. Almost in all the projects/programme, GUK targets around 95% of women as a programme participants. Active participation and involvement of women are considered the highest priority for strengthening their overall livelihood condition.

5 Community Resilience on Disaster Management Focusing Climate Change

GUK is working for enhancing the capacity of people living in the flood prone and vulnerable to river bank erosion in northern districts of Bangladesh. Since 1987 GUK has been implementing disaster management, climate adaptation, emergency response, recovery and rehabilitation-related projects to help the disaster-affected poor people and trying to make a disaster and climate-resilient community. These interventions are extensively focused on humanitarian response, disaster risk management and climate adaptation through Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (PVCA) and Community Risk Assessment (CRA).

6 Health, Nutrition and WASH

GUK is working to ensure basic health, nutrition and WASH facilities for disadvantaged poor people through implementing different interventions. Through these interventions, the organisation provides primary health care services, Referral services, arranges health camps, therapeutic services for persons and children with disabilities, counseling on pregnancy health care, reproductive health care, elderly health care, etc. screening, treatment and referral support for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) (U5) children, renovation of SAM center in health, raising awareness on health, nutrition and WASH, establish resilient WASH facilities at the community level and advocacy.

7 Good Governance and Democratic Environment

With the purpose to establish good governance and democratic environment, GUK works with local administration, Local Government Institutions (LGIs), and government and non-government service-providing organisations through advocacy, motivation and civic education. The organisation

gives priority to engaging government officials and local government representatives with its field-level activities for ensuring transparency and accountability.

8 Action Research and Innovation

Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) undertakes a research project based on the organisation's long-term working experience with marginalized people to identify new ideas and the scope of suitable and viable way of approach for development interventions. The organisation has already accomplished several research projects in collaboration with different renowned research institutes and universities.



Mainstreaming Issues

The following themes are the mainstreaming issues within the organisation.

- Gender;
- Climate Change and DRR;
- Child Protection;
- Disability and Ethnic Minority.



Governance and Management



GUK has a transparent and accountable governance system comprising General Council, Executive Committee and Central Management Team (CMT).

General Council

GUK has a General Council (GC) comprising 25 members which is the highest authority of the Organisation. In this council 56% of the total members are women. As a rule, members of the General Council Members meet once a year to converse about policy reviews, budgets, various strategies, audits and major activities etc. The General Council is also responsible for the selection of Executive Committee members.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (EC) of GUK comprises 07 members elected every 03 years by the General Council. Meetings of the Executive Committee held at least 4 times in a year. The Executive Committee supports the “Central Management Team” for smooth implementation of the program. The Executive Committee is responsible to the General Committee.

Central Management Team

GUK has a Central Management Team (CMT) comprising 9 senior members from different individual units. The members of this team have strong leadership quality, recourse mobilization and management capacity, proven experiences and commitment. The chief executive of the Organisation continues to provide leadership to the central management team as an effective mentor. This team is responsible for strategic direction to ensure smooth implementation of programme operations. This team also maintains communication and liaison with government, people’s representatives and development partners.







Human Resources

GUK has a total of 2315 skilled, experienced and committed staff members. Among the total staff 1109 are female and 1206 are male. There are also 500 trained volunteers who are committed to working with GUK during any disasters.

Where We Work

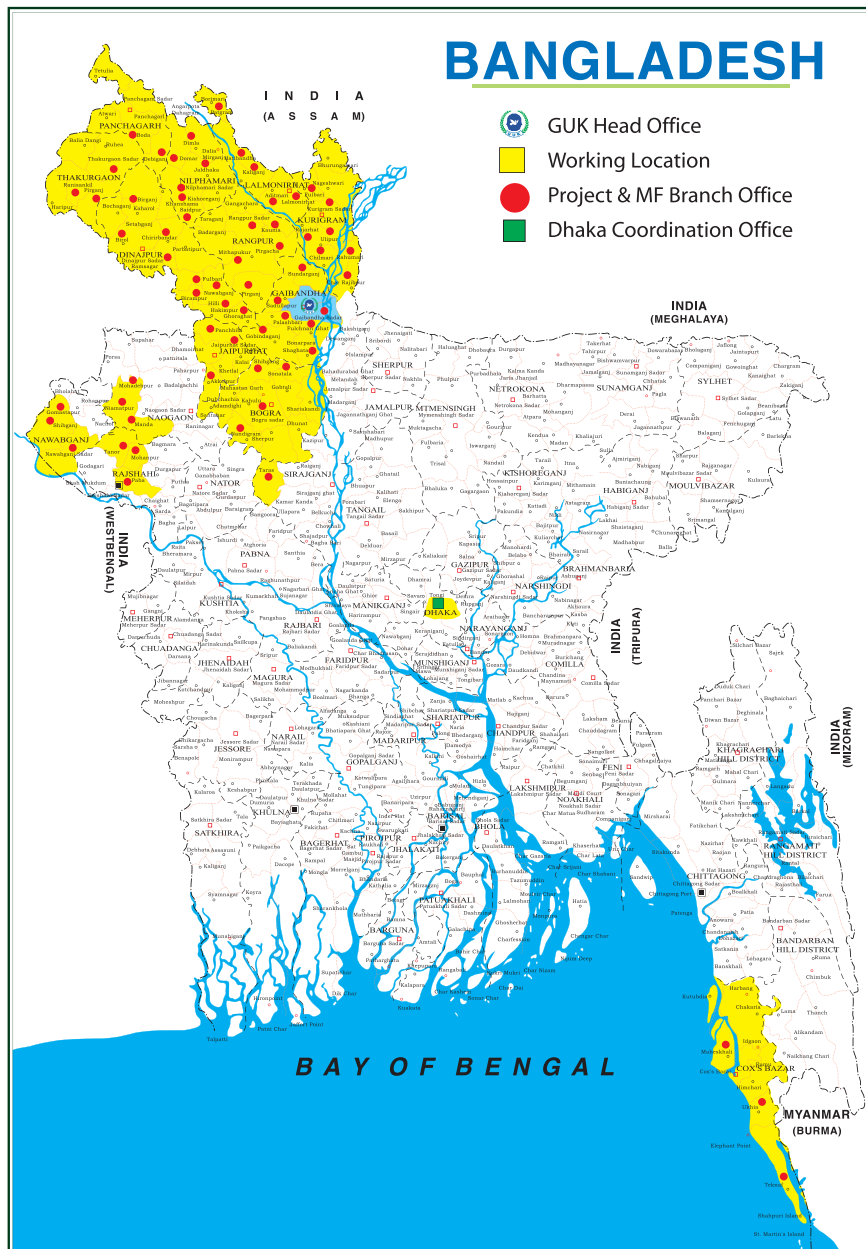
Generally we give priority to the following geographical locations for the improvement of overall livelihood condition of vulnerable and marginalised people.

- Disaster and poverty-prone areas;
- River basin areas and chars (river island);
- Most vulnerable and Indigenous communities;
- Displaced, migrated and refugee communities.

We Work For

The Organisation always gives priority to the inclusion of the following groups of people in its development interventions.

- Poor, extremely poor female and male;
- Persons and children with disabilities;
- Indigenous people;
- Marginalized farmers;
- Small and medium entrepreneurs;
- Adolescents, youth and children;
- Trafficking-in-Person and GBV Survivors;
- Those who suffer from unsafe migration.



Our Presence

GUK started its journey from Gaibandha and gradually expanded other locations in Bangladesh. Presently, it is implementing various development programme in 15 districts in the country. The organisation has capacity to respond any disaster in Bangladesh using its experiences and skilled staff members.



Organisational Division for Eradicating Poverty & Empowering People

- Social Development Programme;
- Financial Inclusion & Economic Empowerment;
- Social Business & Enterprises.

1 Social Development Programme

Under the Social Development Programme, the Organisation carries out different development and humanitarian projects. Currently, a total of 32 projects are being implemented in collaboration with government and non-government development partners including INGOs, UN agencies as well as GUK own resources.

2 Financial Inclusion & Economic Empowerment

Under the Financial Inclusion & Economic Empowerment Sector, GUK is operating Livelihood Microfinance Programme (LMP) for the economic empowerment of disadvantaged people especially women through inclusive financing. It is the core programme of the Organisation. It was initiated in line with other development projects with the aim of bringing sustainable development, especially in the lives of women and disadvantaged populations. Over 60000 families are currently involved with this programme. The microfinance programme provides three types of financing options for its group members e.g. 1. Jagoron (Awakening), 2. Agrosor (Move forward- a programme for enterprise development) and 3. Sufolon (Promoting livestock and agriculture). The group members are being engaged in diversified economic activities like agriculture, handicrafts, Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) by receiving inclusive financial support.

3 Social Businesses & Enterprises

GUK have social businesses for the better interest of poor people which are creating employment opportunities and market linkage to get a fair price. These initiatives are also contributing to making social changes. Total profit earned from these initiatives is being used in education for children from marginalized families as well as to promote social activities.



Social Business & Enterprises

- GUK Hospital;
- GUK Diagnostic & Physiotherapy Centre;
- GUK De-addiction and Rehabilitation Centre;
- GUK Institute of Engineering and Technology (GUKIET);
- GUK Super Tasty Food and Beverage;
- GUK Super Tasty Cheese;
- GUK Agricultural Farm;
- GUK Training Center;
- GUK Printing;
- GUK Media.





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