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NATIONAL

Improved planning and management of the National Service Programme stressed

A fact-finding study of TI Bangladesh on the National Service Program (NSP) found a number of anomalies in it which include limitations in planning and implementation, political influence and incidences of corruption. The findings were released at a press conference in Dhaka on 2 November. Ms Nina Shamsun Nahar, Deputy Programme Manager, Research and Policy (R&P), Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) presented the findings of the study that analysed the NSP implemented in 11 Upazillas.



According to the study NSP marked remarkable successes and contributed in increasing social, economic and familiar awareness among beneficiaries; encouraging women to move out from their homes and engage themselves in income generating activities; improving financial condition and bringing positive changes in the lifestyle of beneficiaries and

increasing their savings; increasing financial transaction and capital flow in the project area; encouraging beneficiaries to invest their savings through cooperatives and thus create self employment; and creating scope in getting training from expert government officials.

Despite these successes, the programme witnessed a number of limitations and irregularities in programme planning and implementation, selection of beneficiaries and training programme. In addition to these, illegal transactions also took place. Major irregularities are employment of all applicants including the students which was against planned number; faulty selection survey; employment of more than one member from a single family and members of economically solvent families; employment without being unemployed; employment in two jobs under NSP at a time; forgery in application by producing fake academics certificates; illegal transaction in selection; advance payment ranging from ten to twenty thousand taka to secure a job in NSP etc.

The study recommended 13 measures to increase the effectiveness of the NSP. Major recommendations include; adoption of an extension policy, introduction of a long term plan involving the beneficiaries, employment of skilled and competent personnel against vacant posts, regular payment of monthly allowance, adoption of a training policy and inclusion of beneficiaries and citizen's representatives in the coordination committee.

Bangladeshi photographers win Transparency International's photo competition



Sony Ramany, Sumon Yusuf and A M Ahad – three young Bangladeshi photographers have been awarded respectively the first, second and special mention in the International Youth Photo Competition organised by Transparency International (TI) to mark the 20th anniversary of the global coalition against corruption. Sony's photo shows a man holding dead fishes because of industrial pollution in a Dhaka lake. He was handed over the award on November 8 at an international conference in Berlin. Sumon's photo pictures the Rana Plaza tragedy while Ahad's photo shows people raising hands in an anti-corruption oath-taking event in Dhaka.

TIB and RAC aggrieved over president's consent to ACC Act

TIB and Reporters Against Corruption (RAC) in a joint statement on 21 November condemned the Bangladesh President's consent to Anti Corruption Commission (Amendment) Bill-2013 that makes mandatory provision of seeking government's approval to file corruption cases against the judges, magistrates and civil servants. The President on 19 November mid-night signed this much controversial bill. Legal and constitutional experts, conscious citizens, media and civil society have long been demanding to scrap this provision.



TIB has long been advocating for an independent, impartial institution and effective ACC. Immediate after passing the bill at the National Parliament, TIB in a press statement on 11 November condemned this ill motivated move of the government. TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman termed this move as matter of great disappointment, suicidal and hypocritical. Later on 19 November, TIB forwarded a petition to the president and appealed for not assenting to amendment and send it back to the parliament for review.

The amended ACC Act is anti-constitutional as it offered special and differential treatment of public servants and curtailed ACC's power in fighting corruption. TIB fears that this evil move of a group within the government will promote the culture of impunity and further spread corruption. However, TIB will continue its advocacy in making the ACC independent, effective and impartial.

CCC NEWS

Charbaria mothers to work for quality education



Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Barisal organised a Mothers Gathering at Batna Government Primary School of Charbaria Union under Barisal Sadar Upazila on November 18. CCCs across the country have been organising such gatherings on regular basis with an aim to improve the overall quality of primary education, involve mothers in properly educating their children and ensure their participation in school management. These gatherings provide a unique opportunity for mothers to get themselves with activities of school management committee and school authority.

At the program, mothers were curious to know how they could contribute in ensuring quality education to their children. School Head Master Mr Md Abdur Rahim replied to their questions and explained the position of SMC and school authority. He informed mothers that despite limitation of resources, the school authority is committed to further improve the quality of education. He termed mothers' gathering as an excellent tool to establish good governance at the school. He assured about all out support of the school authority in organising future mothers' gatherings.

Collective efforts to improve the quality of health services



CCCs have long been working to improve transparency, accountability and the quality of services at selected health institutions at local level. CCCs with the help from concerned authority regularly organise opinion sharing meetings with service recipients. The objective of such meetings is to identify governance challenges of health services and strategies way forward. This time Munshiganj CCC in collaboration with the Munshiganj Civil Surgeon's Office, organised a similar opinion sharing meeting with the service recipients at the conference room of Munshiganj General Hospital on November 27, 2013. CCC President Md. Jahangir Hasan

presided over the meeting while Civil Surgeon Dr. Kazi Shariful Alam was present as chief guest. Service recipients raised different service delivery related problems and difficulties they faced including but not limited to lack of human resource, medicine, emergency blood; inadequate cleanliness; influence of middlemen etc. They urged the authority to take effective measures to solve these problems.

Opinion sharing stresses on peoples' participation

CCC Natore organised an opinion sharing meeting with the Lakshmipur Kholabaria Union Parishad (UP) authority on 24 November. The objective of the meeting was to create an opportunity for union people to participate in the decision making process and thus promote transparency, accountability and improve the quality of services. CCC President Begum Hamida Banu presided over the meeting. UP & CCC members and other participants discussed about various development issues as well as regular activities of the Parishad. They agreed that increased participation of people can ensure transparency and accountability in UP activities which would ultimately make the development sustainable.



UP Chairman Mr Rafiqul Islam said that such Joint initiative would enhance the capacity of UP and accelerate development initiatives. He assured that he would welcome any constructive opinion or recommendation to turn the UP into an ideal one.

YES NEWS

Anti corruption campaign at Patiya



Patiya YES organised an anti-corruption campaign in front of Patiya post office on 16 November. The campaign included satellite Advice and Information (AI) Desk, distribution of stickers and leaflets among students and the employees of different institutions, affixing stickers on transports etc. The campaign is expected to empower and sensitize service recipients on their civil rights of access to public service related information. CCC members including its president Mr S M A K Jahangir and YES members attended the program.

Right to Information Campaign at ULAB

'Right to Information Act 2009' is a blessing for the people of Bangladesh. Keeping this in mind different YES groups regularly organise workshop and campaigns on RTI with the hope of bringing transparency particularly at service delivery institutions. University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) YES organised an RTI campaign on 23rd November at the campus premise as a part of the initiatives.



Taking part in the campaign, excited Nahid Alam – the group leader of ULAB YES said, 'We are proud to be a part of empowering us as well as other people on RTI. We hope, invincible youth will create a corruption free Bangladesh by ensuring free flow of information'. Around 1000 participants took part in the day long campaign. During the campaign, they oriented the students how to fill up the RTI form and seek information. They also disseminated RTI brochure and stickers among the students. Approximately 1,000 students were reached through this campaign.

Workshop on Effective Communication and Anti-Corruption Campaign



TIB organised a day long workshop titled 'Effective Communication and Anti-Corruption Campaign' for YES members on 9 November in its conference room. A total of 32 YES members from Development Studies Department of Dhaka University and YES 1 groups attended the workshop. Participants got brief idea on communication process, planning and effective use of media in planning and designing of anti-corruption campaigns. YES members worked in two groups and devised two campaign plans to demonstrate their learning.

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