



NORAD COLLECTED REVIEWS

10/2023

# Integrated-Program for Community Capacity Building (ICCB) – III

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**Norad**

End-Term Evaluation





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**Integrated-Program for Community Capacity Building  
(ICCB) – III**

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End-Term Evaluation  
Integrated-Program for Community Capacity Building (ICCB) – III

NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION-NDF  
WEST SHIBRAMPUR (DANGAPARA), SADAR, PO BOX 14,  
Dinajpur-5200, Bangladesh

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Harold Sougato Baroi, PhD

Rita R. Costa

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**Acronyms**

ATSO	Adivasi Traditional Social Organization
AAR	Action Review Research
CBO	Community Based Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GUP	Gram Unnayan Parishad
ICCB	Integrated-Program for Community Capacity Building
IGA	Income Generating Activities
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSC	Most Significant Change
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NDF	Northern Development Foundation
PMF	Peace Mediation Forum
RBAF	Regional Adibasi Federation
SGO	Saving Group Organization
UBAF	Upazila Based Adibasi Federation
UBAP	Union Based Adibasi Parishad
UP	Union Parishad

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## 1. Introduction

Northern Development Foundation-NDF is a Christian non-profit, non-political, non-sectarian community development organization that has been working in Bangladesh since 1986. Founded upon Christian values and God's universal love for all mankind based, NDF has been committed to serving the most disadvantaged people in the community without any discrimination because of their religion, color, race, caste, or ideology. From the very beginning, NDF's primary focus has been on the social, economic, and cultural development of the most vulnerable people, particularly, the indigenous communities living in the northern regions of Bangladesh. The people in the project area have been facing a variety of problems such as land grabbing, false cases on land-related issues, land disputes, and lack of access to government services. There has been a gap in understanding their rights and entitlements which has often led to discrimination and injustice in the form of a lack of access to services, fair wages, and livelihood opportunities. The project has contributed in most of these areas. The project has contributed to building community awareness on land rights and land-related documentation, particularly, what documents they should keep and how to preserve key documents that could safeguard their land and uphold their rights. The Integrated Program for Community Capacity Building (ICCB) is the flagship project of NDF which was started in 2008 to promote social, economic, and legal empowerment of the indigenous and marginalized people by promoting civil, political, social, and cultural rights through civil societies and leadership of indigenous people, providing legal support for land-related issues and also by creating employment opportunities through skill and leadership development and building linkage with government departments. Since its inception, the project has passed through two five-year phases from 2008-2017 and the present phase is anticipating that there would be a greater sense of ownership and capacity enhancement toward sustainability as more groups and federations take more responsibilities by themselves which would contribute to their economic, social and cultural empowerment. The project further anticipated women in leadership roles and there is gender equality at different stages of individual and social life. Normisjon is NDF's only resource-sharing partner since the beginning. ICCB is the flagship project of NDF which covers 9 sub-districts of 2 northern districts-Dinajpur and Gaibanda. The third phase of the ICCB project is coming to an end in December 2022. The overall purpose of the end-term evaluation of the ICCB project is to assess the result of the project at the outcome and impact level, learnings from the project, and get indications for the next course of action in the project area and beyond. More specifically, the study is focusing on the following set of objectives:

- a. To assess, verify and identify the **Results/Achievement** of the project at the outcome/impact level.
- b. To evaluate according to the empowerment assessment tool (EAT).
- c. To assess the **effectiveness and sustainability** of the project (i.e. are the project activities adequate to realize the objectives? What degree can the project continue after the after donor support has ended).
- d. To assess how has the project contributed to learning.
- e. To come up with **Recommendations** in ways to improve the new project design, with special focus on the main thematic area.

## 2. Study Methodology:

The study employed a participatory qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of the impact and effectiveness of the project. The evaluation took a summative approach where the team try to understand how and to what extent the program realized its expected results and outcomes by capturing respondents' experiences, perspectives, and opinions. By engaging project beneficiaries, program staff, and other key stakeholders, the study made sure that there was a joint reflection on how the project contributed to a common project goal and what have been the key lessons learned collectively. The fieldwork was taken place from 1st November to 5th of November 2022 in the Dinajpur district where the project is operating.

The study used a purposive sampling technique to identify study respondents. The reason behind selecting purposive sampling was to get rich and deep insight into the project intervention and the kind of impact the

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interventions have brought in the lives of the common people so that the changes, success stories, and key lessons are rightly captured and reflected through the study report.

For most qualitative studies, 10 to 30 interviews and/or 4 to 12 focus groups are sufficient per target group or geographical location. For this study, around 22 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and 13 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted with community members based on the components and specific groups that the project had been working on to measure the project impact of services rendered through the intervention. The study also employed observation/visits, and document reviews as key methods for data collection. It contributes to the triangulation of data provided, meeting evidence that breeds credibility. In this way, the team supports its findings and reduces the effect of potential biases and allegations that may arise if a single method or source is used.

### *Document Review*

To unearth a real picture of the situation, the study carefully reviewed a list of documents and all possible sources of information that include a project proposal, annual reports, all relevant M&E documentation, pictorial documents, and success stories, related to the program. The relevant documentation was ready to pull out information relevant to answering each evaluation question. The findings from secondary data were triangulated with the data collected in the field, which allowed the team to see information gaps and adjust fieldwork efforts accordingly through the other data collection tools used during the field visit.

### *Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)*

For KIIs, the study was proposing sessions with Project Staff, Adivasi Traditional Organization (ATOs)<sup>1</sup> and Saving Group Organizations (SGO)<sup>2</sup>, Upazila Federation leader, Community-Leaders, Local Govt. Representatives, local NGO leaders, Government Officials, Legal Aid Receivers. The location for the field visits were decided based on criteria such as various project components, access, security, representatively of well-performing/less performing activities and types of population, etc.

- GUP (2)
- UBAP (2)
- Peace Mediation Forum (2)
- Local Youth-Skill Development (2)
- Students (2)
- Farmer Group (2)

### *Focus Group Discussion*

An ideal Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) should involve 8-12 participants group. The study conducted 12 FGD sessions with 144 persons. The respondents for the FGDs were purposively selected from Community Based Organization CBOs<sup>3</sup> Gram Unayan Parishad (GUP), Union Based Adibasi Parishad (UBAP), Peace Mediation Forum (PMF), Local Youth-Skill Development, Students and Farmer's Group. There was one staff reflection session organized to understand the impact of the session through their eyes and also recorded key lessons that

<sup>1</sup> Adivasi Traditional Organization (ATSO) is formed with the indigenous people of the local community with the objective to ensure their social and cultural rights. An ATSO is formed with 15-20 members of which the majority are female.

<sup>2</sup> Saving Group Organizations (SGO) is a groups formed by local indigenous and vulnerable people in the community to get involved in savings and credit activities and the overall socio-economic condition of the community.

<sup>3</sup> Community-Based Organizations are formed by the members of the community to achieve the collective goal of the community and are managed by the group members as an independent entity. The average size of a CBO may vary depending on the size of the population, and the characteristics of the particular community from which the group is formed. In the case of ICCB, the CBOs were formed by the indigenous people living in the project areas and the marginalized poor community for which the project is working since the beginning.



they have learned from the project. The participants were briefed and made understood the purpose of each of the sessions before the interviews and FGDs were taken place.

Methods	Stakeholders	Tools	Sampling
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	Project Staff (4) ATOs and SGOs (1+1=2) Upazila Federation leader (2) Regional Federation leaders (2) Community-Leaders (2) Local Government Representatives (4) Local NGO leaders (2) Government Officials (2) Legal Aid Receivers (2)	Semi structured interview guideline	Purposive sample from a list of key representatives of the variety of stakeholders related to the organization
Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)	GUP(2) UBAP (2) Peace Mediation Forum (2) Local Youth-Skill Development (2) Students (2) Farmer Group (2)	Semi structured FGD guideline	
Field observation	Visit of the project sites.	Check list	Projects purposive sample among a list of projects and infrastructures

Once the data was collected from both primary and secondary sources, data went through validity and reliability checks through triangulation. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected and draw inferences. The Evaluation report was shared with the NDF core group of this study before being finalized. The report provided a narrative explanation of the main findings (including some anonymous and most relevant quotes from the interviews) organized as per the main dimension of the study and as per Evaluation Questions. The findings were followed by a set of recommendations for improvement. The level of empowerment was measured by Digni's Empowerment Assessment Tool.

## 2.1. Ethical Consideration

### 2.1.1. *Quality Assurance, Validity, and Reliability*

The study was conducted by an experienced team of individuals with extensive knowledge and expertise in evaluation development projects and who had handled a similar project for international organizations. This study used a rigorous process including research plans, the development of research instruments, forming a research team, consultation, and discussion before and after the fieldwork with NDF staff, and local communities. A study plan was discussed with NDF staff. All the research instruments that were used in the study were shared, reviewed, and pre-tested before the exercise. The evaluation team had an in-depth orientation session together before the fieldwork. The schedule for fieldwork was discussed and finalized. The time and suitable place for the FGDs were decided by the respondents.

Information sources were triangulated as much as possible. The request for information was constant before and during the fieldwork as the aim was to have evidence-based findings. For each session, the facilitator used a discussion guide and a record keeper who recorded comments and observations. The initial findings of the study were discussed and shared after the field visit with the project staff. A debriefing meeting took place with NDF to present the preliminary findings of the mission.

### *2.1.2. Confidentiality and Sensitivity of Information*

The research team while writing the report made sure that no names (In the Case Study/Quote) were mentioned anywhere in the report while using quotes and opinions of the respondents. The end of the project impact report will be the property of NDF and the information obtained will remain confidential. Any publication or citing will require prior written approval. All discussions and documents relating to this report were treated as confidential by the parties. The research team was sensitive to gender, ethnicity, and local culture. The team seeks permission from the female members to participate in the FGDs. Also, pictures were captured with the permission of the respondents.

### *Respect for Local Culture*

The research team was sensitive to gender, ethnicity, and local culture. The team seeks permission from the female members to participate in the FGDs. Also, pictures were captured with the permission of the respondents.

## **3. Achievement of the project at the outcome/impact level.**

### **3.1. Strengthening Civil Society**

One of the main objectives of the project was to strengthen civil society so that they can exercise their right to public services and opportunities available locally. The project has a series of interventions that were designed to fulfil that objective. These include training on financial and managerial skills, account management and record keeping, organizational management and leadership, government services and rights, advocacy, lobby and networking, and the role and responsibilities of local government and civil society representatives, drug addiction, group meetings of Upazila Based Adivasi Forum (UBAFs)<sup>4</sup> and Regional Adibasi Federation (RBAF)<sup>5</sup>, Gram Unayan Parishad (GUP) meeting. Besides, the project helped communities in building a good relationships with government departments and formal and informal networks at the sub-district, district, and divisional levels so that service recipients could seek services from different service providers and exercise their rights to public entitlements.

#### *3.1.1. Access to Government Services and participation in various structure and decision making process*

There is a significant improvement in access to government services, particularly, social safety net, agricultural support, training, and skill development initiatives. A total of 5085 CBO members have received various services from government and non-government departments in this phase. CBO members are represented in government structures such as Union Parishad, and Standing Committees of Union Parishad. 2 of the CBO members have participated in the local government election at the union and sub-district level and got elected, and there are other members who got nominated as standing committee members. They are participating in Ward and Open Budget Meetings where they are introducing their local issues and needs to the local government representatives and

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<sup>4</sup> The local government of Bangladesh has 4 administrative tiers which include the ward (the bottom tier, mainly operated at the community level), Union (The upper tier of the ward, but a lower administrative unit than Upazila/sub-district), Upazila (sub-district), Zila (district). UBAF is an association of Union Community Based Advasi Organizations at the sub-district levels.

<sup>5</sup> Regional Adibasi Federation (RBAF) is an apex organization of CBOs that are formed by the representatives of the Upazila Adibasi Federation (UBAF) to perform supervisory and leadership roles over CBOs at the upazila, union, and community level so that when NDF is phased out these CBOs can function under their supervision.

seeking allocation for public infrastructure such as roads, tube wells, and latrines. They are expressing their opinions in these meetings and are involved in the decision-making process. These changes may not be equal across the project-rather it can be said that in some areas the change has been significant and in some areas, there are markers of positive change in people's participation in the process of decision-making on those issues that influence their day-to-day life. In the past, indigenous people were afraid and felt shy to go to public offices and their voices were never heard. But, now, the indigenous people are visiting Union Parishad and also government offices like the department of social services, women and child affairs, etc. where they are asking service-related questions, and share their opinion on issues that influence their day-to-day life. Several testimonies can validate the claim.

### *3.1.2.Social Empowerment*

Indigenous people under the ICCB project are organized in groups where they are involved in different activities. These CBOs have given the group members a sense of representation, a platform from where they can communicate their needs confidently. Most of the group members are participating in group discussions and raise issues and challenges that they face in day-to-day life. In the past, they were often ignored and go unnoticed. They were afraid to talk to people, and visit government offices. They did not have the confidence to speak up. But, a majority of them are now visiting government offices regularly and making their points straight to government departments. All the members of CBOs are involved in savings and credit activities. Many of the group members are now involved in income-generating activities. These changes are now acknowledged in the community. Many of the group members have received social safety net schemes and other government opportunities like any other citizen entitled to that particular service. People's perception in general, towards them, is changing day by day. Government representatives are acknowledging the way the indigenous people are exercising their rights and asking for their entitlements.

This can be substantiated by a statement of one government official who said:

*I want to share an event that took place a few years back. This person was waiting outside my office since morning. I was going out to attend a meeting and noticed him standing and I thought maybe he was waiting for someone else. So, I went to attend the meeting and came after a few hours later and found him standing right there. I asked him who he was waiting for. He said that he was waiting for me. I was so ashamed that I did not ask him earlier. I asked him to come inside the office. The thing that blew my mind completely was the fact he removed his sandal outside my room and got into my room, something, I have never seen before. Usually, with non-advansi people, you will not see people keeping their sandals outside the office, but they did, which showed the level of fear they had before entering a public office. But, now, the indigenous people come to my office and are not afraid to talk to me or any other officer. That is the kind of change you see in their lives. I am happy to see them coming that far, it is remarkable.*

### *3.1.3.Community acting collectively to solve social issues*

The CBOs are regularly engaged in different social activities. They are involved in consensus building and taking action against early marriage, drug addiction, and violence against women and children. Most of the CBO members are familiar with the existing laws against child marriage and violence against women. They are actively involved in identifying any issues of violence and inform the local government representatives and concerned government departments to act on any offense occurred in the form of child marriage and trafficking so that due support could be offered to the victims of child marriage and violence against women and children in the program locations. As

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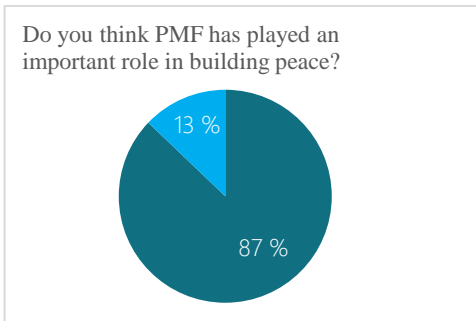
a result, the number of child marriages and violence against women has reduced compared to what the situation was before. Several testimonies substantiate the finding. Alongside, 50 local issues, that included, violence against women and children, land-related and family disputes, etc. were resolved through CBOs.

**3.2. Peaceful Co-existence**

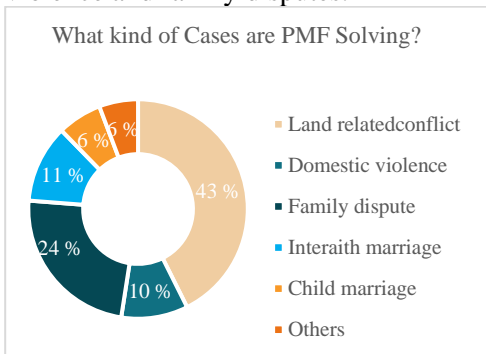
The project has implemented a set of activities to achieve peaceful co-existence of people living in the project locations that included celebration events on indigenous rights and days, development of promotional materials for indigenous language and culture, training on cultural rights, training and the motivational session on the indigenous culture, ethnic and minority and land rights, dialogue and seminar on societal peace and communal harmony. Alongside, Peace Mediation Forums (PMFs) have been formed to mediate conflict in the local areas.

*3.2.1. PMF playing an important role in building societal peace and harmony*

Peace Mediation Forum (PMF) has been formed with the people in the community who are willing and committed to contributing to establishing a peaceful community in their area. The study has found that PMF is regularly involved in identifying cases where there are conflict and tensions and developing strategies that include identifying actors that could potentially contribute to resolving the issue or visiting and meeting parties involved in conflict, dialogue, and discuss of a solution. With close collaboration with local government representatives, local leaders and religious leaders, and other key actors PMF has stopped child marriage, divorce, and violence against women. Interfaith religious dialogue and harmony have been regularly held, as a result, social cohesion and harmony noticed in the project locations. When asked about whether PMF is playing an important role in building peace, 87% of the respondents found that PMF has played an important role in peace building in the project areas.



Further, the study has found that PMFs are mostly involved in resolving land related conflicts and domestic violence and family disputes.



One PMC member articulated his experience in the following manner. He said:

*PMF is working well in the community. We have been actively engaged with people from different faith, local influential people to identify local issues that lead to local conflict and disputes. We have solves several cases in the community with dialogue and discussion. People in the community value PMF for their problems.*

A respondent from the ethnic community said:

*Whenever there is a conflict in the community, that can related to land or interfaith marriage, domestic violence, we prefer going to PMF first. There are representation of people from different faith and occupation in PMF which helped resolving these cases sooner as people listen to them and they have earned a special position in the community.*

### *3.2.2.Promoting local culture*

There were seminar and awareness building session with the CBO members on indigenous culture and cultural rights. Apart from that the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was observed with rallies, discussion and promotional materials and writing completion where students are asked to write about their culture and language. These events contributed to promotion of local and indigenous culture and language. The study finds that indigenous people, particularly youth, are respectful towards their culture and language. Respondents want to see textbooks written in their own language recognizing their right to education inn their mother language and have in raising this demand at different levels. They are in the discussion with the ministry of education on how to incorporate their demand to have textbook in their own language.

One youth representative said:

*We have had several meeting with different tiers of administration on textbooks in our own language and we will continue working on it until we achieve it. We have made significant progress towards our goal and we are hopeful that we will have textbooks written in our own language sooner or later.*

### *3.2.3.Legal aid solving land disputes*

The project has provided legal support for local people to release mortgaged land. In the last the project has provided legal support to 283 people to release 134.06 acres of mortgaged land. 83 cases of land disputes have been resolved or mediated through court cases which was more than the target set in the project plan. 552 people have received legal assistance or getting rid of false court cases and also for maintaining land related documentation which make the estimated support to stand at 1042.52 acres of land. Legal support has strong impact in terms of fighting cases maliciously imposed on marginalized people of indigenous community. Those who did not have the money to carry out the cases due to poor economic condition, have had the support to continue the cases properly. Several testimonies can substantiate the findings.

While expressing her feeling one legal aid recipient said:

*I have been fighting this battle for a long time. Since the beginning, NDF was with us. Their lawyer helped us organize the land documents and proved it in the court that we are the owner of this land. Now, we are happy that we can live in our own land without the fear of losing it.*

Similarly, another respondent said:

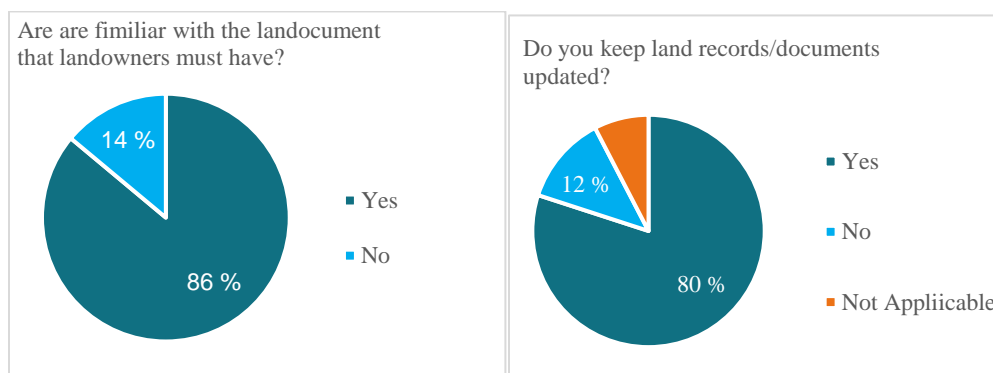
*We had a piece of land which we used for cemetery. One day some local influential people from Muslim community came to grab our land. But, with the help of NDF we ought the case and could save our land. We are grateful to NDF.*

### *3.2.4.Indigenous people are carefully preserving land related documents*

The study has found a positive change in preserving land-related documents among project beneficiaries. The knowledge and awareness of what documents need to be preserved and why land tax and update land records are

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important to avoid land gapping and conflict that might happen because of not having proper documents. The figure shows 86% of the group members are aware of the importance of land records of which 80% of the respondents said are preserving the records updated regularly and 12% said are not regularly keeping records and 8% do not have land.

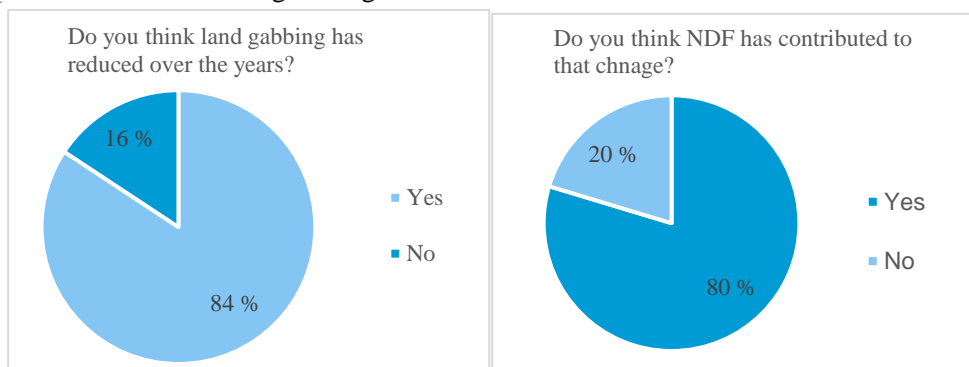


One respondent said:

*Yes, NDF provided training land laws and land related issues. Group members now are reasonably aware of what kind of documents they should have and also keeping land taxes and documentation updated. Also, people are careful in preserve document in safe place so that they could show relevant documents when people ask you to provide specific information.*

### 3.2.5.Land grabbing and land related disputes has reduced

Land-related issues have been one of the most common challenges that the Adivasi people have been facing for a long time. Lack of awareness about land-related laws and documentation was identified by NDF as the primary cause of this problem. NDF has been actively engaged in making people aware of land rights and training the on how and what to preserve to avoid false cases and land grabbing. As a result, people understanding of land-related documentation and land laws have been increased and they are now keeping the records updated, which has had a positive impact on making a strong stand on false documentation-led land grabbing. Apart from that, PMF has been playing a vital role in settling land-related disputes and cases of land grabbing.



One respondent said:

*In recent times, there was no event of land grabbing. But, a few years back there was an incident when influential people came to grab our land and threaten us to leave with false documentation. During that time, NDF played an important role to stay with us and offering legal support. They also gave us cash support to run the case filed against us.*

### 3.3. Environmental Stewardship

The project has emphasized sustainable agriculture and environmentally-friendly technology to make the best use of land and increase productivity. There were a series of activities planned and implemented to achieve the objective which include training on organic and vermin compost fertilizer production highly productive vegetables, organic and insecticide management, poultry and livestock management, organic pesticides and insecticides management, animal husbandry, and homestead gardening. The project contributed to climate awareness and also, and there were interventions in agricultural adaptation. There is a regular discussion in the farmer's group on chemical-free cultivation in presence of NDF staff who are providing them with necessary information about how to use natural ingredients instead of chemical fertilizers and insecticides in the field.

#### 3.3.1. Climate Change Adaptation and Alternative Farming

Group members are producing vermin compost and organic fertilizer and using it for cultivation, as a result of which, the quality of land has increased and the production of crops has increased. Chemical-free vegetable cultivation has helped farmers to learn about the harmful effects of using chemical fertilizers and pesticides and alternatives to chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Group members have adopted organic farming by using organic fertilizer (vermin, compost) and adapting chemical-free cultivation techniques have expressed that the production has been increased by 15-20% and the fertility of land has improved. Hazard-tolerant varieties of rice have given the farmers profit as they could harvest the crop before monsoon. People have developed the knowledge of the impact of climate change and about adaptive strategies, food security and tree plantation. As a result of these events, people have not only come to know about the risks of climate change but also people are planting trees in the locality and adapting new technologies such organic fertiliser and chemical free cultivation.

##### One farmer said:

*We have noticed a change noticed in the timing of monsoon and it has been a very dry summer for the last few years. It has impacted the cultivation of traditional rice. In one of our farmer's meetings, we were discussing that in the neighbouring upazila, there was some farmer who are doing vegetables instead of rice. NDF staff during our monthly meeting also discussed the opportunities that alternative farming could bring in. In the last couple of years, we did vegetable cultivation on small land and I made a good profit. So, I am going to engage in alternative cropping next year on most of the lands that I own.*

- 18 solar plant and biogas plants which were installed in the project areas are working well and were planted in the project area as a part of its commitment to climate change and the environment. 19 nursery plots were developed and are well maintained in project areas.
- CBO members are engaged in homestead gardening and meeting nutritional needs from the vegetables produced in the garden. Some of the respondents have said that they are selling surplus vegetables and earning money from them.

##### One farmer said:

*I started to produce vermin compost a year back in our home with the help of NDF staff. Initially, I used vermin compost on a small piece of land and the result exceeded my expectation. Then, I used it in all the lands that I have and the production was way better than that of the previous year. It is not so costly and difficult to make. The use of vermin compost has had a positive impact on agricultural production.*

- Farmers are regularly sharing the problems they face in agricultural production with the government agriculture department. The project has helped them to build a good relationship with government officials and as a result of which, farmers of the group have received seed, fertilizer, and medicine from them. A favourable environment in terms of relationships with and accessibility to services from government agricultural departments has given the farmers timely advice and information on the production of a new
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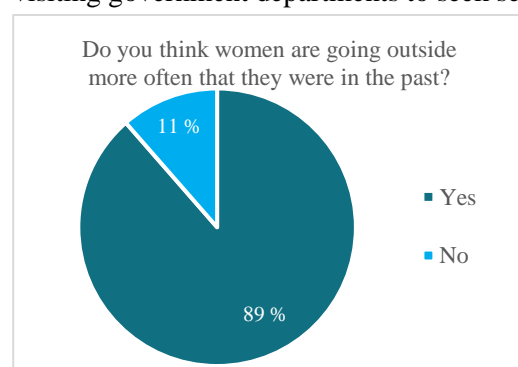
variety of crops. Farmers now have a better understanding of different aspects of farming and agricultural production and the services available in the agriculture office at the local level.

### 3.4. Gender Equality

The project has a set of activities to ensure gender equality which includes sensitization on gender equality, training on gender equality, seminar and campaign against gender-based violence, and discussion and awareness-building sessions on gender equality. These training and sensitization sessions focus on areas like gender roles, gender-based discrimination, community perception towards gender-boys and girls, men and women and reflect on household roles and responsibilities.

#### 3.4.1. Social Mobility

There have been positive changes noticed among Adivasi women as they are now going outside without any hesitation and shyness. They are participating in various events at the union and sub-district levels. They are also visiting government departments to seek services.



89% of the respondents thought that women are going outside more often than they used to go in the past. This finding can be substantiated by the following statements.

One government official said:

*One remarkable change that can be noticed is that women are now more confident than they were in the past. They are not hesitant to go out in public and what impresses me the most indigenous women who were so shy that they could not introduce themselves a few years back, now visit public offices and ask for social safety net allowance or allocation. NDF has done a great job in building their confidence.*

One CBO member said:

*There is a significant change noticed in indigenous women, the way they talk and the level of self-belief that we have noticed now is remarkable. If five years back someone tells me that indigenous women are regularly visiting public offices and talking to officials about widow allowance, keeping the fact that these women could introduce themselves to a stranger properly, I would not have believed that. But, now it is all happening and these women are going outside and asking for their rights. It is a great achievement and I would give a lot of credit to NDF to achieve that.*

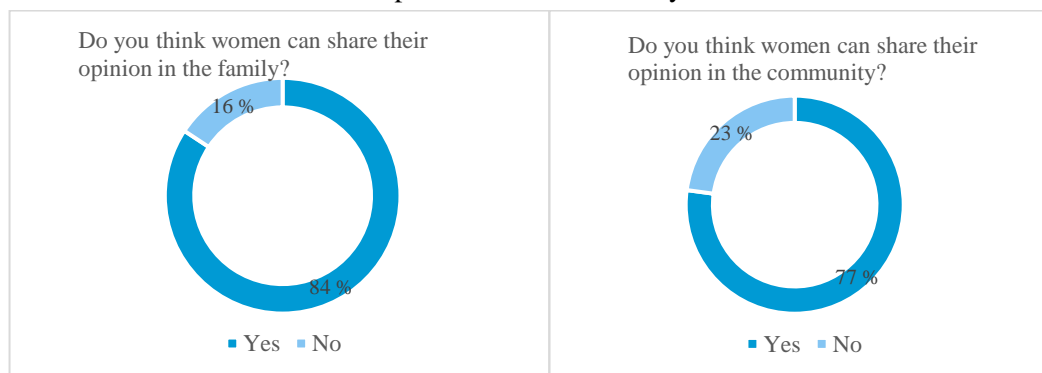
#### 3.4.2. Opinion and Decision making

The study has found that women are actively participating in various meetings at the union level, which include ward-level meetings and open budget meetings. They are also represented in various standing committees of Union Parishad, where they are expressing their opinion freely and making a contribution to decision-making. Their

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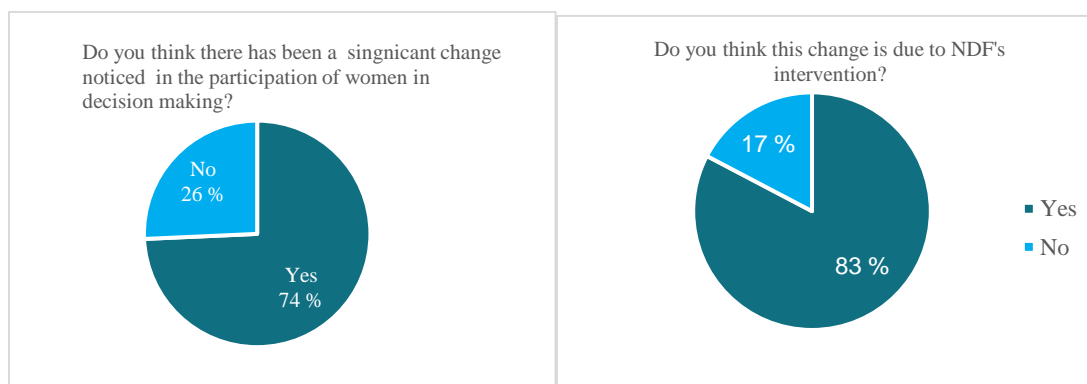
opinions are welcomed and respected by the other members of the community. The study finds that 84% of the respondents said that women now can share their opinion in the family. At the same time, 77% of the respondents said that women can share their opinion in the community.



*A CBO member said:*

*There is a positive change in the mindset of men in particular since NDF started its intervention. Women-driven policy in the formation of CBOs has given women confidence. Various training program has built their knowledge and skills. Women's opinions are getting accepted both at the family and community levels.*

When asked about the participation of women in decision making 74% of the respondent expressed that there is a significant change in the participation of women in decision making of which 83% think that the change has occurred due to NDF's intervention.



*While explaining it further, one CBO member said:*

*I would say, women are more confident than they were before as a result they do not feel shy to speak and express their opinion. Also, there is a change in society toward women. Their opinions are respected and valued in society. As a result, there is participation of women in various committees and events organized by different government departments, where they are expressing their views and opinions and these opinions are accepted in the decision-making process.*

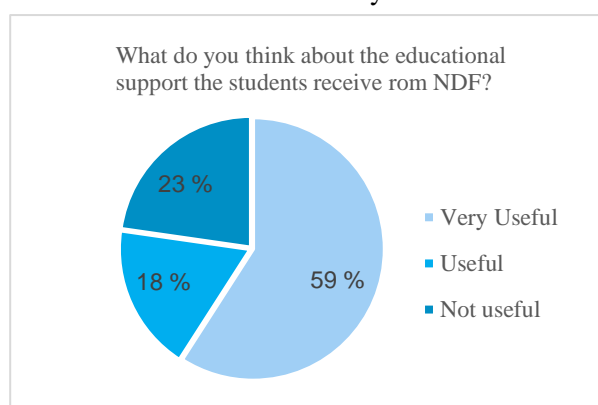
*A local government representative said:*

*In my constituency, a large segment of the population belongs to the indigenous community. I have closely followed their movement and their way of life. I would say, indigenous people, particularly, women were shy and not very open to speaking out. But, in recent years, I have noticed that a lot of indigenous women are coming outside, participating in meetings, and visiting*

public offices. They are expressing their opinions in the Union ward meeting and there is a change in their behaviour-they have become confident and can now talk freely. A lot of credit goes to NDF for working with these people and building their confidence.

### 3.5. Quality Education

NDF has been working on providing educational assistance to students in the project areas since the beginning. They have continued to support students in this phase as well. Supports are offered to students for different purposes such as admission to college, technical school, examination fees, etc. Educational support has a positive contribution to these students as many of these students are from poor families and support in crucial times helped them to continue their education. Training on technical skills such as automobile, mobile repairing, and electrical courses that are offered in the trade school is also helping them get alternative career opportunities. When asked about educational support, 59% of the students considered it very useful and 18% found it useful. Whereas 23% of the students found it not very useful.



#### One CBO leader said:

Usually, for any training, we sit in the group meeting and assess training needs. Based on that, we nominate members for particular training. NDF staff also help us select the right person for the most appropriate training. So far, our members have received training on cow rearing, vegetable gardening, and poultry and women leadership. Many of our members are already into income-generating activities. NDF has also provided some of our members with financial support to start up the business. Now, their income has increased and they are happy with the way their lives have changed.

#### Among some most promising testimonies, the one that stands out was a trainee who received mobile repair training. He said:

I was a college dropout and was doing nothing. I was not sure what am I going to do with my life. One day, there was an NDF staff who I knew for some time, asked me whether I would like to attend a technical training course that NDF was going to start in a month. I decided to give it a try. I went to the session and started to enjoy it a lot. It was mobile repair training. This is for the first time in my life I was enjoying the learning process and most of the thing I was learning was practical where I got to know the problem and to solve it practically. I completed the course and got a small job in the local market where I worked for the owner. For the first time in my life, I got a salary. It was a small amount of money but it was a great feeling. I started my shop in six months and now I have a stable income. I know, others like me are also involved in income-generating activities.

While sharing her experience, a beneficiary of NDF's employment generation initiative, said:

*NDF has created a lot of opportunities for indigenous women by organizing them in groups and capacitating them with knowledge and skill, which builds their confidence and self-belief. When I got married, I was a simple housewife and did not have any idea of how I can make an economic contribution to my family. I was allowed to learn swing and tailoring work. I started to make small items like pillow covers, handkerchiefs, etc, and now gradually, I am producing bed sheets and runners, and rugs which I am selling in Dhaka. I am now happy that I have a small business which is my labour of love and NDF plays an integral part in this process.*

Most of the students who did not find the support useful have expressed that the support should be given on monthly basis instead of given for a particular purpose.

While backing their stand one student said:

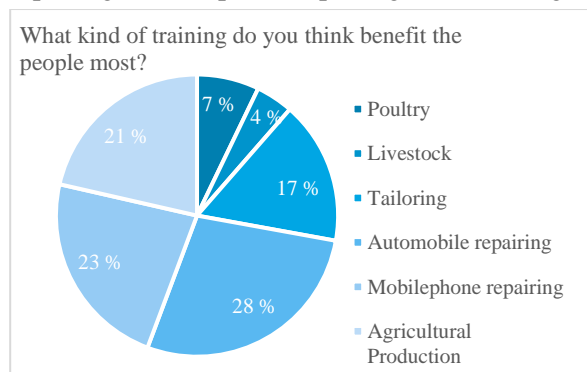
*There is no denying that educational support is helping a lot of students in meeting admission or examination fees. But, sometimes the need is continuous and a student finds it difficult to bear all their expenses once start an academic program. That is when they need support to get the study going. It would be better if the need is addressed.*

### 3.6. Economic empowerment

To create economic empowerment, the project took a series of interventions for under privileged youths so that there can be employment opportunities and youth leadership created. These include trade skills training in electronics, electrical, automobile, tailoring, embroidery, beauty parlor, computer, and saloon and driving. Also, entrepreneurship and business development, and cost-benefit analysis training were organized for a graduate students. Savings groups are operating in the project areas.

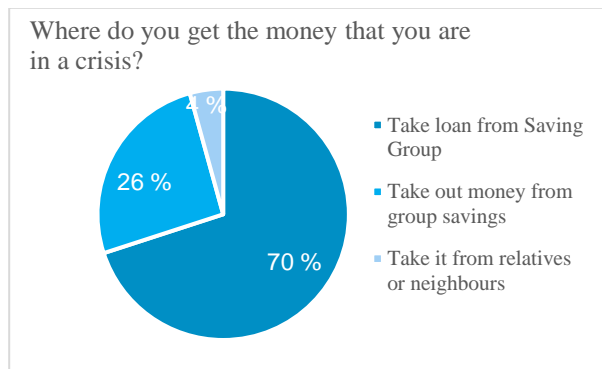
#### 3.6.1. Employment generated and income increased

ICCB's skill development initiatives have had positive contributions to employment and alternative livelihood development and small business development. Trainees have now engaged in income-generating activities as such cattle and goat rearing, poultry, cow fattening, mobile rearing, automobile repairs, saloon, tailoring, small business-tea stalls, grocery, cloth shops, farming-vegetable garden, fish, poultry, eggs, duck farming, dairy, etc., and agricultural production after finishing their courses. A total of 1074 youths have been employed and self-employed since they receive trade skill training through ICCB and helping their families by earnings. When asked the respondents about which training they thought benefited the most they said agricultural production, automobile repairing, mobile phone repairing, and tailoring are the most useful training courses that were offered the training.



### 3.6.2. Coming out of loan trap

One of the most significant achievements of the project is that people are not borrowing money from the local landlord at a high rate of interest. The project has formed Saving Groups where the group members are saving a particular amount regularly. The group is managed by the group members. The money that each group saves are used as a fund from which the group member can take a loan when they are in a crisis. The study found that in the past there were cases where group members had to borrow money from landlords at a high-interest rate and later could not repay the loan and their land or an asset such as cattle or personal belongings were taken back. But, since the saving group was formed no such event occurred as group members can now take loans from their group and repay the loan gradually with no such pressure of high interest or loss of personal belongings exist. When asked about where the CBO members get the money when there is a crisis or need, 70% of the respondents said they take it from the Savings group as a loan, and 26% said they take it from their savings that are kept in the group.



This indicate that CBO members are no longer taking money from landlord or traditional money lenders. The finding can be substantiated by the following statement.

*A CBO member said the respondent said:*

*Previously we use to mortgage our land as during lean season we did not have work to sustain our livelihood. But, a lot of people have worked across the year as some of them are into an alternative livelihood and people are also saving money in the CBO's account for the lean period. I would not say that it has completely stopped but the situation has improved from the past as there are very few to no cases of mortgages found in the community.*

### 3.6.3. Handful rice Support group member in crisis

Weekly savings of a handful of rice is helping group members in time of crisis. Usually, with a handful of rice, these members do is they keep one handful of rice aside while a meal is prepared and they do the same two times a day. They store the rice for the whole week and bring it to their group. All the members do the same and store it in one place. By doing that, they collect a good amount of rice monthly and sell it in the local market. With the money, they have created a fund of their own which they are using in the dry season when there is no job/income. Many groups, already have saved a good amount of money from this initiative. This was not a regular activity of the project but they have used ATSO as a platform to work collectively on this. This is a good practice and this type of savings technique can apply and continue to increase the capital of ATSOs.

*One ATSO member said:*

*When we form ATSO, it gave us a common platform which gave us strength and collective feeling. We thought it would be great if we can do some saving which we could use in a time of need. But, most of us are female and we do not have income. But, what we can do is, we can save a small amount of rice daily and create a fund of our own. We started to collect handful rice, we did not realize it would be so useful for us in the coming days. As the time progressed we realized that collectively we could do a lot more than*

*what we have thought initially. Now, we have over one lac taka in our account from the handful rice only. We provide financial support to our members in the time of need. It has turned out to be an excellent initiative as it gives us strength, hope and confidence. I want other small groups to do the same to bring sustainability.*

*Similarly, another respondent said:*

*As we collect handful of rice, it may appear that it is a small amount of contribution and may not have a significant impact on people's lives. But, when we consider the collective strength of these small contribution it is collective resource and it can make small changes in people's life, particularly, during lean season when people have less work and they find it difficult to secure food for their families. In our group, we have provided support to the neediest families in the dry season.*

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## 4. CASE STUDIES

### Case Story 1: A Confident Kalpona Is Now Self-Reliant

*'If you are confident you can do whatever you want to do.'* Kalpona Soren.

Kalpona Soren (32) lives in Goalpara village of Aladipur union under Fulbari thana of Dinajpur district. She got married when she was only 16 years old. Her husband is a Farmer. They have two daughters – Mithila (8) and Shithila (6). The older one is in class three and the younger one is in class one.

Kalpona dreamt for a happy and peaceful family life during her young age. But her dreams have not turn into reality due to poverty. Just after few months of her marriage she found her husband was very poor and not very hard working. Her husband could not meet the daily family needs. Most of the time he remained angry with his wife and children. Her in-laws often quarreled with her for even minor issues which made their family life unhappy and unpleasant.



Under this adverse situation she tried to overcome such unhealthy family crisis. At that time, she met with one of the NDF staff who motivated her to join a CBO (ATSO) formed by NDF. Kalpona received various training and attended awareness building orientation sessions and seminar on Leadership, agriculture and health issues, and skill development training on cow rearing etc. In the meantime, she received financial support from NDF. Now, she has both knowledge and skill and finance to take these resources to the next level.

*NDF came to me as an angel and they provided me support to overcome with my adverse situation and they gave her loan and with that I bought a cow.*

She took good care of the cow and now she has two cows, one goat in her cowshed and she became very interested in cow rearing. She took loans several times from her SGO and invested that money in her cow rearing IGA. At the beginning of her IGA her husband didn't help her. Her commitment and hard work helped her to make self-reliant. She built a semi pacca house with her income she maintained the family very well, As a result, her husband started to behave very well with Kalpona and also changed his behavior to the family members, he helped her a lot in taking good care of the cows and her in laws also give her value, one of her community member said our Kalpona is our pride and we are grateful to NDF. Now, they are very happy in their conjugal life. Her husband helps her now in the household chores. She still likes to continue to work hard. She believes that hard-work is the key to success in life. She hopes to be a good and expert businesswoman. She is very grateful to NDF ICCB project as this project helped her to bring the dreams into practice.



### Case Story: 2 Shudha Kispotta is now a Successful Poultry Farmer

2 no. Katla Union is situated on the last south end of Birampur, under Dinajpur district. In this Union, the village Chougharia is basically a village resided mostly by a tribal/ethnik group "Orao". There are total 45 Orao Christian and Hindu families living in this village.

The total number of tribal population of this village is 202. The number of male members are 91 and female are 111. The education rate of this village is quite low compared to their neighbor village. It is a matter of pity that apart from their residents they don't have any cultivable land. Most of the time throughout the year, both the male and female members of the family work on other People's land to meet their daily need. Sri Shudha Kispotta is living in this village for quite a long time. She is 38 years old now. She has been living with her parents since she was a little girl. Due the acute financial crisis she could not continue her studies after the SSC. She took the opportunity to work in an NGO to support her parents financially. After a few years she came back home and got married. At present he has a happy family of four including his wife, a son and a daughter. In 2018, Shudha Kispotta attended the NDF, ICCB project introduction meeting where he came to know about all the activities of NDF, ICCB. From that time on Sudha became an active member of ATSO (Adivasi Traditional Social Organization). As he became one of ATSO's active members, he got the opportunity to take part in different meetings and got a lot of trainings.



In 2018, Shudha took advance training on livestock training from Jubo Training Centre, Birampur Upazila, Dinajpur for seven days through ICCB project. After the completion of the training Shudha made his mind to make a chicken farm of his own. He then went to the workers of NDF to help him setting up the farm. The NDF workers assured him to give all kinds of support he might need in the process. After that, he put some of his land to mortgage and got 90,000 taka to set up the farm. He made an initial list of things he needed for the farm such as making the house, buying the chicks, buying the chicken feed, medicines etc.

The financial help from NDF as a loan of 50,000 taka along with the money getting from land mortgage, on 18/09/2018 Shudha started his chicken farm. Primarily he bought 100 pieces of Pakistani chicks costing 25 taka per piece that is 25,000 taka in total. After 3 months of care and hard work, Shudha was able to sell 450 KGs of chicken costing 200 taka per kg, that is 1,80,000 taka in total. Including the setup of the farm his total expenditure was 1,65,000 taka, the making of the house 90,000 taka, buying the chicks in 25,000 taka, the cost of chicken feed 35,000 taka, medicine expenses was 12,500 taka. The primary profit from Shudha's farm was 17,500 taka.

As an ATSO member Shudha has gotten altogether 4 times loan facilities in different times from NDF. Since the year 2018 till now Shudha kispetra has sold 13 consignments of chickens. With the financial help from NDF and with his family money (from mortgage) he has been running the far very well. With the profit gotten from the farm he has built a beautiful brick house to live happily with his family. Moreover, he has taken almost half acres land to grow betel leaf (Paan) and sell them in the market to make some profit out of it. He has also set up a Fishery beside his chicken farm. At present, Sudha has kept 2,000 pieces of new chicks in his farm which he has bought 31 taka per piece costing them 62,000 taka altogether.

The chickens he has now at present in his farm, are 53 days old. He expects a good profit by selling them when they complete 3 months. He is a very well-known farmer in the community and the new farmers take his valuable advice. Now, he has social acceptance, love if people and most importantly financial solvency and all because of he believes the support of NDF. It would have been impossible to get all these without their support to make him independent. He is truly thankful and grateful for all the support he has gotten from them.

### Case Story : 3 Technical education has changed Khademul's fortunes to become self-reliant.

Md. Khademul Islam, a 28 years old young man, lives in Shoulahar village under Birampur Upazilla of Dinajpur district. His family consist of 8 members including his father, mother, siblings, wife and a daughter. He used to live in poverty in his ancestral homestead. Due to financial insolvency, his father used to work in other's land as a day laborer and Md. Khademul used to learn mechanical work in a motorcycle servicing center alongside his studies. Poverty and deprivation were his daily companions. His father was the only earning member of their family so when his father couldn't find any work, they had to spend the day almost starving.



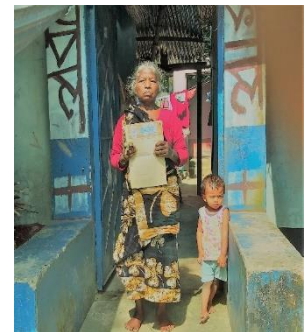
Because of the immense scarcity in the family and his life, Khademul always thought and planned how to get out of this situation. From 2008 Northern Development foundation- NDF started implementing ICCB Project in Birampur Upazilla. In 2013 Khademul admitted himself in the one-year technical education course of auto-mobile trade under NDF's mobile trade school. After finishing the training, he got a job in a motorcycle servicing center. By working there, he practiced his learnings and also planned to start his own servicing center.

In 2017, he took a loan of 200,000 (2 lacs) from Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) and started his own servicing shop named "Messrs. Khadem Motors" and this shop is still running since the opening. Alongside of motorbike servicing, his shop has many necessary parts of motorcycle which worth almost 5 lacs. He earns almost 80,000 tk every month from his shop and spends 40,000 for shop rent, electricity bill and salary of his 6 employees. So, his neat earning is about 40,000 tk per month. Now he is paying off the loan taken from GUK, in installment. Again, he has taken a lease of 1 acre land for 4 lacs and also has built a new house for living. He is taking care of his siblings' studies with his earning, he himself has completed studies from a Madrasa and now studying fine arts at Anwar Training Insititute, Dinajpur. Md. Khademul Islam presently claims to be a skilled and successful person because of getting technical education.

He is proud of his success and he shows his gratitude to Northern Development Foundation – NDF for his achievement. He encourages the young generation for technical education to get easy employment. He suggests NDF to start mobile trade school permanently in every district for a better future.

### Case Story: 4 Veronica has never given up hope

Veronica Hansda, a woman of 55, lives in a Santal village called Beladanga under Birampur upazilla, Dinajpur. Her family consist of 6 members- her husband Joseph, daughter and son-in-law and two grandsons. As she and her husband both have got old so they have to rely on their daughter's income. On top of that they do not even have any land of their own so it is hard and painful to run a family this big. Though her husband inherited some land but a local influential person, Md. Yusuf Ali tried to take over the land by filing case in 2013 showing some false documents. He harassed and tortured them.



Plaintiff Veronica, meanwhile, received three verdicts from the criminal court case. She got the first verdict in 2007 but in 2010, Yusuf Ali again filed a case appeal against the plaintiff which is still ongoing in the judge's court. Yusuf Ali is still trying to threat Veronica and her family. Seeing her suffering the villagers altogether



somehow brought back her land and she started cultivating there but sending some goons, culprit Yusuf Ali again snatched her land. Veronica's dream shattered again and she was passing days with uncertainty and hopelessness. Then one day she came to know about NDF, that helps indigenous people legally and financially regarding land related issues like land recovery, tax, papers recovery etc. through ICCB project. Then she contacted with NDF's manager and took the financial help of about 35,000 tk from 2015 to 2021. She also participated in various land related meetings, seminars, human- chains etc.

At present she has two cases running in the Judge's Court. It is uncertain that when her problems will be solved. She has to endure a lot of pain and distress due to this case but she is not willing to give up. Presently, Veronica's land's net worth is 1, 88, 00000 Tk, which she believes, can bring back her life and can give her solvency and social status. She is grateful and thankful to NDF's ICCB Project and the donors for working for the overall development of the indigenous people who are lagging behind and she wants this project to spread more vastly.

### Case Story 5: Agricultural Adaptation Brings Success

*“I had a long desire to have three times meals from my own small piece of land and ICCB project has given me that opportunity. Now I am arranging three times meals for my family members from my land and homestead and I am really happy for that” Patrash Kisku.*

Patrash Kisku (35) lives in the village of Surjo Para, Aladipur Union, Fulbari sub-district under Dinajpur district. His family includes his wife (27), one daughter. He is a peasant and has .40 decimals of land, he also cultivates in other neighbors land. The landscape of Fulbari encompasses the *Barind* Tract Area, which characterizes bareness. Frequency of rainfall even in the rainy season is very low in the area. As a result, the vast area becomes fallow for more than six months of the year. The land possessed Mr. Patrash is also the same feature. He used to cultivate the land during rainy season He could grow only single crop (*amon*- a variety of paddy) but did not get expected production due to low fertility of the land. As a result, he could hardly meet the family needs with the production and income from his agricultural lands. In this situation, he was looking for an alternative option for food security.



After having base line survey with village community, he showed his keen interest to involve in adaptive research during transplanting rice and cultivated short duration Transplanting rice spotorshi rice-28 on one acre land. He received direct input support from the upazila Agricultural office such as rice seeds, fertilizer, sign board etc.. After harvesting rice he cultivated mustard in the same land. The rice varieties were newly introduced in his area. Patrash harvested 2340 kgs of

rice last year in December 2021, he preserved for seed 80 kg rice and Patrash preserved 900 kg rice for family consumption. From his production Patrash already preserved 40 kgs of mustard as seed for next season and consumed 80 kgs. In addition to this, he sold rest 280 kgs of mustard.



*“ICCB project gave me both skills and knowledge on adaptive method. I also received input support from the upazila agriculture office. With the received knowledge and agricultural support, I grew short duration drought tolerant rice and corn. It was a great success as it ensured food security of my family for the whole year. Earlier, I used to cultivate long duration rice and also used inorganic agriculture. It has not only reduced the cost of production but also had helped me maintaining crop diversity. The production has also increased. I have plans to gradually expand the drought tolerant variant in my other lands and also to share seeds to my neighbors. I am grateful to both ICCB project and Upazila agriculture office.” Prakash Kisku*

## 5. Staff Skill Development

There are a series of activities implemented in this phase to skill development of project staff. These include revision of strategic plan, training, supervision and monitoring.

- NDF revised its strategic plan with special emphasis given on gender sensitivity in 2018. One of the gaps that the project has identified has been the lack of female staff at both central as well as at the field level.
  - A workshop was organized with the project staff on determining phase out process of federation and GUP in 2019. However, the process of transition has not been fully implemented yet as only a few GUPs have got or under the process of getting registered from the government departments. Also, there is no Capacity Assessment of GUPs or Federation have been done yet which could show the capacity of these CBOs to run independently.
  - 5 staff have received a 3-Month IT training which has increased their computer skills. However, field level staff needs IT training particularly in line with requirement of project’s M&E framework and how to support the M & E to provide required information effectively on a regular basis.
  - 178 program supervision and monitoring events were taken plan during the last phase. The monitoring and supervision was done through the monitoring staff who prepares the monitoring report and share it with program coordinator and other program staff.
  - There were 20 internal audit events were held and external audit were held each year across the last phase.
  - A mid-term evaluation was held in 2021. The project also did a baseline survey in 2022.
  - Proposal development events were held twice in the year 2018 and once in 2021 and 2022 respectively.
  - NDF also went through policy review and policy update in 2018.
  - One representative of NDF has also participated in Digni’s regional event in Nepa
-

## 6. Evaluation according to the empowerment assessment tool (EAT).

### The Rating of the Evaluation Team on Digni's Framework

Degree and Level of Empowerment	Level 1: Output Individual or Community	Level 2: Output Individual or Community	Level 3: Outcome Individual or Community	Level 4: Outcome Community and /or Society	Level 4: Impact Community /Society /Structural

Degree and Level of Empowerment	1	2	3	4	5
<p><b>Strengthening Civil Society</b></p> <p>The ICCB through its CBOs have built the capacity of civil society to first of all, aware of rights and entitlements of indigenous people and secondly, exercising these rights to get access to various services and entitlements. The participation of CBO members in the decision making process in matters that influence their lives can be noticed and is documented in the report. However, there is not much of success in government structure such as at the local government levels or various committees that exist in the local government structure.</p>					
<p><b>Peaceful Co-existence</b></p> <p>The ICCB through the PMC has worked towards peace building and societal harmony. The PMC has been able to build good relationship with all faiths and between indigenous people and the Bengali community. Land related disputes, domestic violence has been reduced. Also, inclusion of various stakeholders in project has also contributed towards achieving acceptance among those who are not directly beneficiary of the project. There is a peaceful co-existence among different stakeholders. There is social cohesion and social harmony among.</p>					
<p><b>Economic Empowerment</b></p> <p>The project has a different intervention, particularly, training and capacity building of the indigenous people so that they use these skills in income generating activities. The team has found that project beneficiaries are involved in income and employment generation and their economic condition has improved. They are also involved in saving activities. However, there are areas of improvement, particularly creating more and better opportunities for women in particular.</p>					
<p><b>Quality Education</b></p> <p>The project has provided educational support to students. However, there is need for educational support and technical skill and education. There is scope for technical and trade based skill development intervention which need precise plan on assessing market needs and providing youth the right kind of training that they need.</p>					
<p><b>Environmental Sustainability</b></p> <p>The project has had intervention focusing on environment and climate change in the form of adaption such as agricultural technologies- vermin compost, organic cultivation, and some basic orientation on climate change. People are adapting to technologies such as using vermin compost fertiliser and chemical free agricultural means. However, keeping the impact of climate change and the kind of vulnerability the greater northern region of Bangladesh is facing and will face more in the future, more focus need to be given on how the community resilience could be build and how the community could adopt to the adverse impact of climate change better. The evaluation team finds that there is a scope for improvement. Demand-driven technologies, indigenous technologies, low-cost technologies, easy to understand and locally developed technology, needs to be promoted in future.</p>					

## 7. Effectiveness and sustainability of the project

### 7.1. Effectiveness

The ICCB project was aiming at the well-being of marginalized poor and indigenous people and creating an enabling living environment by helping them realize their rights and exploring their opportunities in a participatory approach so that their capacity is enhanced to achieve sustainable livelihood. The main focus of the project has been strengthening civil society, peaceful co-existence of different communities, environmental stewardship, gender equality, quality education, and economic empowerment. The study has found that the project has contributed in most of these broad areas. Positive changes were noticed in people's accessibility to government services and structure and the decision-making process. The collective action of the ethnic community is solving social issues. Social cohesion and harmony can be noticed across the project locations. Land-related disputes have been decreased and the cases of land grabbing have been reduced. People are learning to adopt climate-adaptive technology. Social mobility of women has increased and there is better participation of women in decision-making both at the household and community level. The economic condition has been improved due to employment creation and an increase in income. At the end of the third phase of the ICCB, most of the project strategies have proven to be effective in achieving their desired results.

First, one of the main strategies that the project applied was capacity building of CBO members in different areas such as leadership development and organizational management, Income Generating Activities (IGA), small business and entrepreneurship development, human rights, advocacy, and networking towards ensuring rights and entitlements with the government departments, land rights, and land laws, environment, and climate change, environment-friendly and modern agricultural techniques, trade and technical skill development. To achieve sustainable development of indigenous people, the strategy to capacitate them with appropriate knowledge and appropriate skill contributed to achieving the desired change.

Second, engaging duty bearers in a rights-based approach helped right holders to get access to government services. Rapport and network building, follow-up, and sharing events as strategies to engage duty bearers. A good relationship with concerned government departments such as the Department of Agriculture, Youth Development, Women and Children Affairs, and Social Services helped them get government services.

Third, community awareness and knowledge building on land rights made the marginalized and disadvantaged indigenous community aware of land laws and land-related documentation and how to preserve important documents. Alongside, the legal support to those affected court cases on land-related issues has positively contributed to reducing land-related issues such as land grabbing by showing false documentation. The active involvement of the Peace Mediation Forum in dialogue and discussion with different stakeholders and their effort to engage key stakeholders in the process of peacebuilding and achieving social cohesion. As a result of which, local disputes between Adivasi and non-advasi people have been reduced and there is peaceful co-existence among different communities.

Fourth, CBOs as an agent of change has been the central strategy of the ICCB project. From the very beginning, has capacitated CBOs in a way that they could identify their local issues, raise their voices and seek services from duty-bearers. CBOs being engaged with government departments has contributed to building a strong network with the service providers which has made access to services better and influenced the change process at the community level. A series of training and orientation in the areas of leadership and management, accounting and financial management, record keeping, and resource mobilization has built group capacity to manage group activities efficiently. Regular savings and disbursement of loans which has given them financial stability. Network and relationship building and the opportunity to take part in a joint meeting with the government departments and local government representatives have built their capacity to maintain communication with them and other stakeholders which helped them to get better access to services. Most importantly it has given them the confidence and a pathway to becoming self-dependent and there is a strong sense of ownership among the committee members to become active and supportive towards local issues, particularly land-related issues.

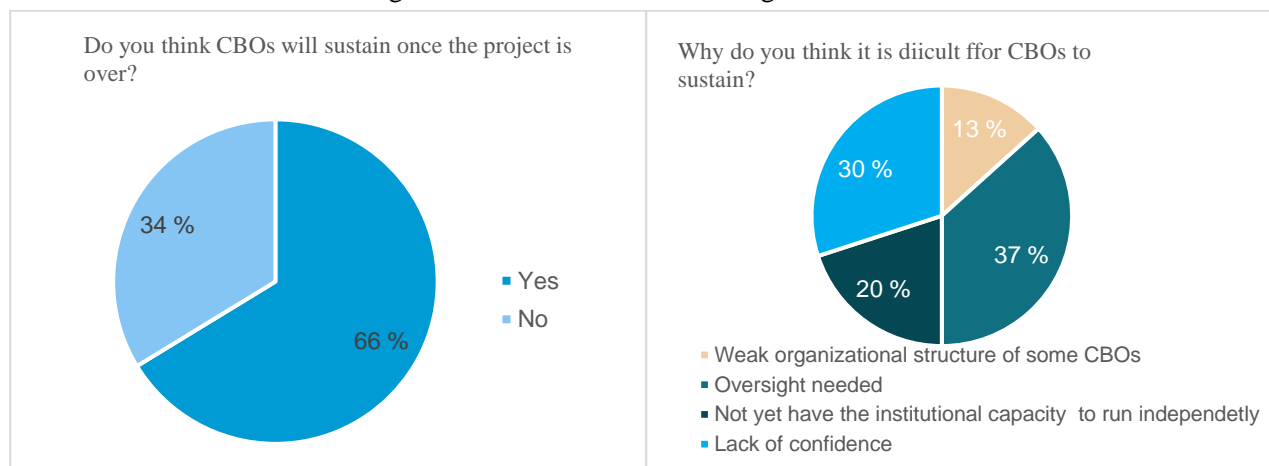
Fifth, a key strategy of the ICCB is to put women first and as the principal agent of change. Most self-help groups are run by women. They are better informed about their rights and are exercising their rights by claiming their entitlements and making their case directly to the service providers.

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Sixth, the engagement of various stakeholders through an integrated approach. The project has incorporated government representatives, local government, civil society, and religious leaders, to have a collective and common understanding about local issues, particularly, issues that the indigenous people face to bring in desired changes. Involving members of civil society, religious leaders, local government representatives, and government officials gives a scope to have a common understanding of different issues that the most disadvantaged and indigenous people are facing. There is the participation of different stakeholders in the discussion and dialogue. Also, there is a common understanding of land rights, unemployment, cultural rights, social cohesion, etc. As a result, in the project areas, there are fewer cases of land grabbing and land-related disputes, and people have better access to government services, particularly, the social safety net schemes. Adding to that, community leaders, particularly Imam, priests, and influential social leaders being a part of the project has helped the indigenous people to achieve social cohesion and social justice.

## 7.2 Sustainability

From the above discussion, it has been made clear that the project has performed reasonably well in achieving its intended objectives well. However, the important question that is often asked at the end of the project is whether this change will have a lasting impact on the community both at the structural and individual levels. To begin with, CBOs are functioning well. They are meeting regularly, setting up agendas to discuss, keeping resolutions, and maintaining financial activities well. Some of the federations have received registration under the government department to operate independently. The study has found that CBOs commit to continuing the operation of CBOs after the end of the project. When asked whether the CBOs will continue its operation once the project is over, 66% of the CBO respondents said it would sustain. However, 34% of the respondents found it difficult to sustain. While explaining why they think it will be difficult to sustain, 37% of the respondent said that CBOs need oversight to sustain, whereas 20% consider institutional capacity not yet there to sustain independently. Also, 30% of the respondents have said that there is a lack of confidence among CBO members to sustain themselves individually. Apart from that 13% of the respondents thinks there is a weakness in the organizational structure of CBOs which would be a challenge for them to sustain in the long run.



When it comes to the sustainability of ATSO and UBAP, it may depend on how well federations will be performing the roles to supervise their activities and how far the financial transparency and accountability will be ensured once NDF will phase out its activities from these areas. The big question here is-are the federation ready to take over the responsibilities solely without the support of the NDF. The evaluation finds that there is a lack of confidence and preparedness in terms of mindset and a monitoring system for the federation in place to take up the responsibility at this moment. Also, the team felt that mentally they are not yet ready to go without the support of NDF to run independently. The team also thinks that many weak CBOs are not yet ready to take that

responsibility. However, there is sufficient evidence that shows that the group members of the CBOs are committed to continuing what they have achieved through CBOs and the skills and knowledge that they have gathered, and the want to use it to improve their socio-economic condition. 20 federations have been registered by the govt. cooperative department and 35 federations have their bank accounts with scheduled/registered banks with which they will do monetary transactions easily and these are the indicators of self-reliance of ICCB-formed federations. This is a significant achievement of the project toward sustainability as it works towards the graduation model that NDF has been planning. Once these federations are registered, they are also accountable to the government departments for what they do as independent entities. The evaluation team recommends keeping in touch with the federations in some form to oversee their activities and provide mentoring support if required.

At the community level, there has been a significant change noticed among CBO members to speak out about their rights and take part in the decision-making process. Women are involved in managing group activities and are open to expressing their opinion on social issues on the broader platform. Improvement in the indigenous and Bengali relationship and reducing land-related issues will have a sustainable impact on the community. The young entrepreneur is using the skill and knowledge that they gathered from training to earn a livelihood. The evaluation team that some of these businesses are already running well and should sustain and that would inspire others to start new businesses.

So, it can be concluded here by saying that the change that the project has managed to bring in both at the structural and community level will sustain in long run.

## 8. AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND SUGGESTIONS

The ICCB has managed to bring in positive changes in the main thematic areas that the project was focusing at. However, there are areas that the study team think should be improved as they plan for its future interventions.

Areas of Improvement	Recommendations
<b>Strengthening Civil Society</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Despite CBOs running well, there should be a second line of leadership developed to take over the responsibilities if there is a vacuum in leadership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth leadership is promoted at the CBO level. There should be a proper induction and graduation plan for them in place.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Even though the ICCB has followed CBO centered right based integrated approach, there are very few people from CBOs become members of local government institutions or standing committee structures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue building linkage with government departments, particularly, with the government departments such as the department of youth development, department of social welfare, Department of Public Health and Engineering, Department of Agriculture, Department of Livestock and Fisheries, and Department of Women and Children Affairs to get access to services and facilities available at government departments.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a part of its sustainability strategy, the ICCB project has already formed the Federation and some of these have already got registration and are in the process of getting registered. However, the evaluation team did not find a well-defined action plan to build more capacity so that they become</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is important to remember that CBOs are not left out without a proper transitional plan until and unless there are proper signs and markers of sustainability and capacity and confidence to run these CBOs independently of their own.</li> </ul>

<p>confident to run these bodies independently and they can develop their own sustainability plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a SMART graduation plan for CBOs including capacity needs assessment, skill development intervention, and a strategic outline of how the graduation will be done over the period of time.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender Equality</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher female members have attended the gender training whereas male members are unlike to attend less in this particular training. The study has found that the main reason behind less participation of men against target has been the fact that most of the men are either agricultural workers or day laborers, mostly working far from the locality. As a result, they could not attend these sessions. Going the project document shows that the training on gender equality was planned for the CBO members and a majority of these members of women. Bringing in a change in the mindset is important to ensure gender equality at different levels and to achieve that, men's engagement in sensitization and awareness-building sessions is required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More participation of men and boys is needed in awareness-raising sessions to make men more sensitive and women's work more dynamic. More activities/programs need to be taken in to make men and women work together.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Without men's awareness, understanding, and support for ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment there will continue to be major constraints on their participation and societal contribution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men engagement initiatives such as induction sessions with men and religious leaders, regular dialogue and meetings, inviting them to group meetings, community gatherings, and other events to generate a social consensus and strong support base for NDF to implement gender transformation programming in the next phase.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local government has various committees. The presence of women in local government committees and a school management committee is very low and women do not have much participation. NDF women member presence in the committees is almost nil and very few of them are in the school management committee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A shift in the development approach that NDF follow towards a right based community-led voice and action approach where the primary focus has to be in making the community more aware of their rights and entitlement and facilitating to do advocacy work on representation in the committee structure so that they can influence program designing process at the local government level.</li> </ul>
<b>Peace-coexistence</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been no specialized training on Conflict Resolution and Peace Building organized for PMF. As a result, Peace Mediation Forum (PMF) members lack specialized knowledge on conflict resolution and peace mediation. There is no specific place on how PMF will sustain once the project is phased out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDF must engage sustainability plan for PMF.</li> <li>• Provide conflict resolution and peace-building training for PMF members.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drug Addiction, particularly, alcoholism remained a major issue in the project areas. There have been a lot of activities in the form of seminars, awareness building, and meeting to stop drug addiction. Even though there are some positive changes in reducing the number of child marriages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent meetings and awareness building on drug addictions and help them learn positive parenting through orientation and training.</li> <li>• Develop a training module on Life Skills focusing on general social skills and drug resistance skills,</li> </ul>

<p>in project areas, it has not been up to a satisfactory level. A lot of the achievement might fade away if drug addiction is not appropriately addressed and the community is not continuously mobilized to act collectively to reduce the risks</p>	<p>and provide life skills training to children and youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging CBOs to promote a healthy lifestyle among youth and adolescents.</li> <li>• Promote community-based intervention to promote positive norms, positive behaviors, and interactions with parents, peers, teachers, and mentors.</li> <li>• Identify cases where youth and adolescents have developed an early pattern of drug abuse and link them with the professional center and well-trained personnel to get them back to normal life.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Economic Empowerment</b></p>	
<p>Training that was provided in the trade school needs to be market driven. There is no assessment done so far on analyzing market skill needs and organizational capacity to provide training to build skilled human resources to meet those needs. Not only that, there should be more focus given on how to get access to market place and build a value chain.</p>	<p>NDF needs to develop a coordinated and well-planned strategy to sustain the trade school as there is no business plan developed outlining the vision and mission of the trade school. NDF needs to think about developing a strategic plan outlining how the trade school should run successfully in the future. –</p>
<p>One of the gaps of the programmatic design was that it missed out on an important aspect-value chain. There was no market linkage to improve the value chain, in particular, livestock, poultry, handy craft, tailoring, etc. to increase the income of the producers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical training for educated unemployed can be arranged through referral linkage systems for more sustainability.</li> <li>• Conduct training needs assessment in line with the market needs. NDF project can conduct an internal market assessment to understand what kind of training can be appropriate for which kind of participants. For instance, computer and outsourcing training, digital marketing, and Entrepreneurship development can be a good starting point for the youth.</li> <li>• Build linkage with government departments that provide training to youth and vulnerable women, particularly the department of youth development, department of social welfare, and department of women’s affairs. This department also provides financial support to trainees for small businesses. NDF can help the youth and disadvantaged women to get training and financial support from these departments.</li> </ul>
<p>Women need to be given more emphasis on income-generating activities. As many Indigenous women who use to work as agricultural workers no longer have a regular livelihood.</p>	<p>More skill development training and support for alternative livelihood will benefit those women immensely.</p>



<p>NDF must assess the need of these youths and continue offering them training in the future. However, NDF needs to be precise and well-prepared with its plan to link these trainees with the job market as well as provide startup support for those who want to start their own business.</p> <p>Due to the use of machinery in agricultural land, many of the agricultural activities that were done manually by the day laborer are now done with the help of machines. It has had an impact on the livelihood of agricultural laborers. Also, there is a skill gap to be involved in alternative livelihood. Covid-19 has also accelerated the risk further. Alternative market and value chain development has impacted marginalized and small farmers.</p>	<p>Develop a detailed Value Chain and Market Development Plan with a proper analysis of market and sub-sector.</p>
<p>There is neither a market chain for organic vegetables nor a specific plan regarding how to create a sustainable platform for organic farming products in the project.</p>	
<p>There is no common platform for farmers where they can engage in collection bargaining and negotiate better terms and conditions with large businesses than they could achieve on their own.</p>	
<b>Environmental Stewardship</b>	
<p>There has been a change noticed in the environment in the entire north-western region in temperature, seasonal calendar, the timing of rainfall which is putting an enormous impact on livelihood particularly small farming and livestock and food security. The Adivasi community is at the receiver's end due to unemployment and food insecurity. Effective climate-adaptive strategies need to be taken as NDF's focus in the last phase has been limited to vermin-composed and organic farming and some tree plantation. Climate adaptation measures-technology, research on climate change and its impact on food security and livelihood needs to be encouraged and incorporated further.</p>	<p>Demand-driven technologies, indigenous technologies, low-cost technologies, easy to understand and locally developed technology, need to be promoted in the next phase. Strategies such as adaptive crop selection, submergence-resistant and high-yielding varieties, short-duration and high-yielding varieties, disease-resistant varieties, drought-resistant varieties, indigenous fish species, and homestead Gardening can be included as a starting point toward climate adaptive technology in the project areas.</p>
<b>Organizational Development</b>	
<p>Documentation and research activities are not up to the mark. Even though NDF has exclusively been working for an indigenous group of people, research outputs are poor. As a result, many of its achievements remained unknown to the wider audience who work on similar issues.</p>	<p>IEC materials and success stories need to be published and publicized to reach out to a wider audience to understand some of the key issues such as land rights and local culture and social cohesion. Using print and electronic media to communicate these stories is one area, the project needs to focus on in near future.</p>
<p>There is no provision for internal lesson sharing or stop and reflect study to assess progress and reflect back on the planned activities or lessons learned during project implementation.</p>	<p>There is no provision for exchange visits or cross-organizational learning in the plan. There are different organizations working on climate change adaptation in the southern coastal region and their experience and innovation can benefit the NDF staff in many ways.</p>

There are skill gaps in the areas such as documentation and report writing, monitoring and evaluation, communication, resource mobilization, and IT.

An organizational assessment must be done in the coming days to look into the skill gaps, training needs, job satisfaction, resource mapping, and resource mobilization strategy, and a road map is prepared with setting up specific milestones for NDF to strengthen its organizational capacity to find itself as a pioneer organization to serve social, economic and cultural development of the indigenous people living in the plain land.

## 9. Concluding remark

Even though the project has achieved many of the objectives fully and also some of the objectives partially. There are many areas of improvement which has been already discussed. Also, new challenges have also been emerged which have had an impact on the overall achievement of the project as well. Alongside, some emerging challenges should be addressed immediately. NDF must work reflect on improvement areas and plan its future intervention.

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