



KHAN FOUNDATION

Final End of Project Report

**EFFECTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF
NEWLY ELECTED WOMEN MEMBERS
IN THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE:
A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH**

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Preface

Khan Foundation was formed more than a decade ago primarily motivated by the basic concept of "Democracy for Development vis-a-vis Development for Democracy" espoused by the Foundation starting from national and international levels down to various grassroots level action programmes at the remotest of our villages. Towards these objectives KF is indeed facilitating rural women's access to local level policy making through the local government structure, providing novel credit facilities for disadvantaged women at the grass roots level as well as supporting international dialogues on sustainable development involving public representatives, academicians, professionals, civil society leaders and administrators thus building bridges between the two extreme ends of the spectrum in our society.

Khan Foundation believes that its hard work has paid off already and today there are thousands of poverty stricken women beneficiaries who now have access to a better quality of life and at the same time possess a stronger handle in the local level decision making authority in the "Union Parishads" (UP). The major emphasis in any activity undertaken by the Foundation has been to put the people first, to take a people centered approach and facilitate the empowerment of the underprivileged at all levels. Our conviction is, without these basic premises outlined above, any development effort or democracy exercise in the country would become futile and non-sustainable.

KF programmes are conducted in an interdisciplinary approach, through its various activities in the areas of Democracy and Development, Gender Balance, Effective Participation of the Women Members of the Union Parishad in the Local Government Structure, Empowerment of Women, Realization of Children's Rights as well as Advocacy/Mobilization Efforts, Training Programmes and Reform Exercises following a participatory method, thus providing the end users of the Programmes real ownership of the curricula they carry out themselves.

The vision of the KHAN FOUNDATION for the next millennium is firm yet quite flexible. It would like to see a future Bangladesh where Liberal Democracy flourishes and sustains along with the growth of Economic Development, where basic human rights and dignity are honoured, where the millions of downtrodden Bangladeshis no longer suffer under the yoke of poverty, rather adapt to a lifestyle which is simple, yet not impoverished, which is peaceful, yet not extravagant and which is decent yet not too materialistic.

In our efforts during the past years, we have received all out support from various groups, organizations and people. While we apologize for not being able to name everyone individually, we gratefully acknowledge the inspiration, encouragement and support we received over the years from our companions in development, in particular the Australian High Commission, The British ODA, Canadian International Development Agency, The Royal Norwegian Embassy, The Royal Netherlands Embassy, PCI New York, Swedish International Development Agency, UNFPA, UNICEF and USAID.

Introduction

Khan Foundation, as a part of its democracy programme, has undertaken a number of activities to strengthen and sustain the democratic tradition as well as to stimulate a "democratic culture" in the country together with economic development of the grassroots people, in particular the disadvantaged groups e.g. women and children. It is a unique strategy of the Foundation to ensure social and economic empowerment of the poorest of the poor, thus leading them to participate effectively in the local government, local level planning as well as in different facets of the democratic as well as development process in the country. Khan Foundation is pursuing the programme with the belief that transition to democracy involves effective participation of people and is achieved through a gradual process, emanating from grassroots level up to the national level.

Khan Foundation strongly believes that true democracy involves participatory democracy by the people at all levels so that people have a voice in the decision making process at the higher policy level as well. Democracy is possible when people's empowerment and participation at the grassroots and other levels with responsive and accountable processes and institutions at both the local and national level is ensured in an appropriate sense of the term. As democracy begins at home, this process can not be sustained unless the empowerment of the total population at the grassroots level and their meaningful participation is ensured in the day to day activities of the local government and this cannot be achieved leaving out the women populace in the society.

It may be noted here Khan Foundation as part of its democracy programme successfully organized in December 1993 the first ever international parliamentary conference in Dhaka, in collaboration with the parliamentarians for Global Action in New York and British ODA on development and democracy and intends to hold the similar conference once again.

Following the successful organization of the above mentioned conference in December 1993, the Foundation organized a Workshop in August and another in November 1994, in support of the United Nations International Conference of Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo (Egypt). The first workshop, entitled "The Road to Cairo" gathered together the most of the members of the Bangladesh official delegation to the ICPD in order to finalize a strategy of action vis-à-vis selected issues of the Conference Agenda. The Second one, organized under the theme of the "The Road from Cairo: the ICPD Follow Up" focused on the development of plans to secure implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action at the national and local levels.

Similarly, two other Workshops were organized in 1995 (February and May) with a view to mobilize public opinion and build a network of multi-party political leaders, academicians, practitioners and governmental and non-governmental representatives committed to support the World Summit for Social Development and the implementation of its agreements.

In 1995, Khan Foundation also gathered parliamentarians, NGOs and women groups to World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995 in a Workshop entitled "From Cairo to Beijing : Women Environment & Sustainable Development". Our Guest of Honour in the Workshop was Dr. Nafis Sadik, The UN Under Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the UNFPA.

More recently during late 1997 and the beginning of 1998 the FOUNDATION organized two very important meetings at the national level; first on Strengthening of Local Governments and second the first ever Congress of Women Lawyers in Bangladesh. Both the meetings received tremendous appreciation in the country and the Foundation was able to involve virtually all leading people in both the areas in the country representing various shades of political and other opinions in the face of a bitter environment where there is a virtual confrontation going on between the government and the opposition inside and outside the Parliament and in this respect the exercises of the FOUNDATION at this point in time were considered extremely beneficial in restoring the goodwill between the legislators from the treasury bench and the opposition who deliberated during the above mentioned meetings under the same roof of the FOUNDATION's newly created Conferencing facilities in the heart of the capital city.

Last July, the Under-Secretary General of the UN & the Executive Director of the UNFPA visited the KHAN FOUNDATION Headquarters at Momenbagh Dhaka and formally inaugurated its "Democracy Auditorium". The FOUNDATION has since been chosen as the Country Focal Point in Bangladesh towards organizing the NGO Forum in the Hague at the beginning of February 1999 prior to the ICPD+5, a major UN Conference scheduled for next year. The FOUNDATION has also been accorded the observer status for the 39th Meeting of the UN Commission on Social Development to be held at the UN Headquarters in February 1999. The FOUNDATION has also been accredited to the PreCom Meetings at the UN, the first one on the Review of the progress of the PoA of ICPD held in New York from 22 March to 1 April 1999 as well as on the Review of the implementation of the Recommendations of the World Social Summit due in New York from 15 to 29 May both meetings leading towards the Special UNGA Session in New York this summer.

Other recent laurels to the FOUNDATION has been added by the Executive Director of the FOUNDATION through international recognition of her work by being elected to the "International Advisory Council of the "WORLDWIDE", the Washington based leading organization in the world working in the field of Women & Environment as well to the "International NGO Review Board of the UNFPA" on the implementation of Plan of Action of the 1994 World Population Conference of the UN.

The Project Summary

Empowerment of the rural women and leadership development is a prime focus of KF's gender equity programmes. Women constituting 50% of the total population in the country, are the main beneficiaries of this project. KF also works with both male and female groups together in its other programmes to foster understanding, attitudes in the daily lives of all its member families. KF organizes women into groups, encourages them to work together to understand their status, rights and the potential of collective organization. KF tries to ensure that women derive requisite benefit from its development interventions.

With this realization Khan Foundation initiated a nationwide programme of organizing district level participatory workshops for the women members of the Union Parishad which is the lowest tier in the local government. As a part of the nationwide series, Khan Foundation organized the first workshop on July 7, 1994 at Narsingdi, almost all the women members of 70 Union Parishads under Narsingdi district attended in this workshop.

Since 1994, KF already completed participatory one day training workshops in 43 districts and received tremendous response from the elected women members of the UP's because such training is an unique combination of local government and gender, two hottest issues in the country. The post evaluation study conducted amongst the participants immediately after the workshop clearly reveals that this type of consultative workshop gives an opportunity to a deeper discussion of the issues. This helps them to crystallize and refine their thoughts as the representatives of the women community in the real life working condition of the local government. With that conviction and realization, KF also organized In-depth Training Workshops for Women Members who participated in the follow-up Workshops to train themselves on the status and rights of women members in the UPs. It is an undeniable fact that women have been working as partners of men in all spheres of life since time immemorial. However, there is neither formal appreciation of their work as such nor they were accorded authority of decision making in the real sense of the term at home. The present programme was formulated with these ideas at the back of our minds. After the initial outreach training programmes the Women Members participants in the basic one day workshops often suggested further in-depth and extended training programmes in order that they can have a full comprehension of the training components over a longer time span thus having a full grasp of the issues relating to the status, privileges, rights and responsibilities of women members thus make their role effective in the Union Parishad deliberations and decision making processes, parallel with the chairmen and other members from general seat thereof. Consequently KF designed the in-depth follow-up exercises in order to carry on its training programmes involving the women members within the same framework of the UPs which was usually assumed in the past as the rallying ground for men only, in order to secure the effective functioning of the nearly 4500 UPs around the countryside.

In this context, Khan Foundation has undertaken a nationwide programme entitled "**Effective Involvement of Newly Elected Women Members in the Local Government: A Participatory Approach**" organizing participatory workshops at District levels for one day (basic training) and later, an in-depth training of the Women Members on the Union Parishad in Dhaka with the help of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bangladesh. This programme was to involve each and every woman member over a time period. Khan Foundation has until now completed one-day outreach basic training programmes in 43 Districts and a total of 46 Sessions of in-depth training in Dhaka.

The earlier basic training workshops were the first of their kind in the country and a first critical step towards securing the full access of women to all levels of decision-making. But their contribution will not be fully realized until they were reinforced by new actions and efforts. The fact that the female members are able to exchange views and discharge their duties and promote participation in all development work of UPs together with men, if and when provided with appropriate opportunities, as a consequence of the training imparted upon them by the Foundation, resulted in promoting development work of the UPs as well as creating a congenial relationship between the members as men and women working on the same footing. Having gone through the training process many participants in these workshops wrote letters of gratitude to KF. They expressed that they were overwhelmed by the exercise through participation in the one day and in-depth training workshops and gained a lot out of it. They expressed their interests to further participate in these types of workshops whenever possible in the future. This kind of positive response not only strengthens our basic premise but also provides us confidence that our objectives are indeed being achieved through the present exercises which are benefiting those for whom this training programme is really meant to be.

The project personnel have tried to reach every Union Parishad women members of the Thana and District under consideration and motivated them to attend the workshops. Road communication between Thana and Districts is not too bad but the communication between Thana and Villages are bad indeed. Kacha Roads or at best brick-paved roads connect most of the villages with the Thana. Thus it was not too easy for them to be brought down for the workshops. Nevertheless, they came to the workshop spontaneously once they were made aware of this programme by our field workers and participated very attentively. They asked numerous questions to the resource personnel and made queries relating to their responsibilities, duties, rights vis-a-vis the Union Parishad as well those related to civic and human rights.

General Objectives

To further encourage and facilitate women's active participation in decision making at the local level as well as national level.

Field Identification

To start with, the Foundation organized one-day basic training workshops at local levels and then side by side organized follow-up in-depth training sessions in Dhaka, for those who already received the one-day basic training at local levels. In accordance with this phase of the project, Khan Foundation went out to 18 Districts for the basic one-day training programmes. Total numbers of participants from 18 districts were 3070 for the one-day programmes. The Foundation in addition held 46 in-depth training sessions participated by 2448 women members who traveled to Dhaka from far away districts.

Training of Trainers

As per Khan Foundation principles, formal training course has been organized every six months for the purpose of skill development of its trainers and strengthening of Local Government Project. In 1998, formal programme for training of trainers were taken up which

also focused on gender discrimination, leadership training, social and legal awareness as well as capacity building in general. A trainer team of ten members has been developed having consciously bearing in mind the gender considerations in the composition of the Team. The methods followed in the training programme itself as well as to be employed for the training of the women members of the women members of the Union Parishads by this training team comprised of the following methodologies:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| A. Two-way communication | B. Formal Lectures |
| C. Question & Answer | D. Role Play |
| E. Case studies | F. Hum & Buzz Group |
| G. Brain Storming | |

In addition to theory and exercises in the classroom, the training programme also included field visits.

Work Plan: November 1996 to December 1998

Duration of Time	Description of Work	Remarks
November 96 - December 96	Staff Recruitment/ Field Identification/ Audit Report/ Report 1996	Completed
January 97 - June 97	Development of a Monitoring Mechanism/ One day Workshops/ Publication (Newsletter)/ Financial Statement/Midterm Report	Completed
July 97 - December 97	In-depth Training Sessions/ Monitoring (Formation of Thana & District Forum/Legal Counseling/Exposure of NEWMs in the National Level Round Table on Local Government) Publication (Newsletter)/ Audit Report/Report 1997	Completed
January 98 - June 98	One day Workshops/ In-depth Training Sessions/ Monitoring (Networking/Women Lawyers Congress/Legal Counseling) Publication (Newsletter)/ Financial Statement/Midterm Report	Completed
July 98 - December 98	In-depth Training Sessions/ Publication (Newsletter)/ Audit Report/ Final End of Project Report	Completed

Expected results achieved through the training

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR OF ACHIEVEMENT	OUTPUT	ACHIEVEMENT
Conscientization about the roles/ responsibilities of the women members	Knowledge/ideas/ concepts regarding roles & responsibilities of UP members around their community	More efficient working of the UPs involving both men and women	As a result of the KF Training Programmes under this Project, about 80% of women members reported that they were present in monthly and special meetings of the UPs whereas our studies have shown that previously hardly 10 to 15% of the women members participated in these monthly meetings. The members also started asserting their roles & responsibilities in the UP meetings.
Effective participation in development activities through the UPs	Strengthened say of women in UP deliberations	Development of Union plan books implying better conceptualization, formulation and implementation of development programmes	Effectively participating in monthly and special meetings, Many TNOs, chairmen and male members informed KF field officers that women members are very much eager to work in local level development programmes and are insisting that they should be involved effectively in all UP activities after they received the KF training. Women are participating in development of union plan books are other development planning process at local levels.

Strengthening of the local govt institutions	Confidence building in democratic institutions	Respect for elected members to local govt	KF training resulted in increased accountability and transparency relating to the activities of women members by way of their reporting and exposure of their activities to the people at large in their respective constituencies. It has often been remarked that even the chairmen and the male members are not as open to the public about their work in the UPs. Earlier notion among men and even among women was that of a passive participation in UP activities. The resulting achievement has been the strengthening of the local government system itself.
Advancing the cause of Women and Children's issues	Development of sanitation, health, MCHFP programmes	Motivation & commitment towards community development work	Women members are now participating much more in family planning programmes, immunization programmes, primary education and other community development programmes.
Empowerment of women	Change in behavioral pattern of men/male members in UPs	Incidence of larger number of women members in UPs as well as National Parliament	Women members have been motivated in coming to public life in much greater numbers. On the average 7 to 9 women members contested per reserved sit in last UP elections.
Economic emancipation of women	Assertion of economic status within the family	Increased rural credit programmes	Women members of local government are also motivating their local women to be associated with rural credit programmes for their economic emancipation and pay back their installment in due time resulting in increased authority and decision making power of women in the society at large.

Development of leadership qualities of women	Formation of project development committees involving women members as chairs	Increased participation of women in committees decision making	DC, TNO and LGED officials informed us it was satisfying to note that the women members who had received training are doing even better than male members in project implementation and other UP related activities in view of their sincerity of work and honesty of purpose.
Creation of network of NEWMs through circulation of publication (Newsletter)	Demand for the publication (Newsletter)	Enhancement of corporate feelings amongst the NEWMs across the country	The availability of Quarterly Newsletter “ <i>Trinamul</i> ” (The Grassroots) has totally transformed the awareness of women members around the whole countryside. The Newsletter is distributed free of cost not only amongst all the UP women members but also to Chairmen of all 4500 UP’s all over the Bangladesh as well as to all District and Thana administration and other relevant people in the field level. The Newspaper has already become a rallying ground for all women members in the country as “their” mouthpiece in reporting their grievances as well as their success stories and creating a fellow-feeling amongst all NEWMs around the whole country. There is already a demand for more frequent issues for dissemination of local government related information at the grassroots level in the country.
Development of a monitoring mechanism for protection of women	Formation appropriate committees involving local level administrators & NEWMs	Reduction in harassment of women at grassroots level	KF has already formed Monitoring Cell & Forum for women members at district and thana levels written receiving responses from 300-500 women members a month seeking support and assistance from us in not only in local govt/UP related work but also for various nature of assistance in their social and community lives, on many occasions seeking redress from harassment and persecution in a generally male dominated society.

The Detailed Project Components

A. Expansion of the Programme : One-day Basic Training

A.1 Introduction

Local government is being widely recognized in all developing countries as a vital institutional form for ensuring grass-roots level democracy and participatory development. Bangladesh is no exception. It is often argued that colonial intervention has had a lasting impact over the local government system in Bangladesh. Despite considerable efforts made over the years, local government system that has emerged in Bangladesh over the past one century continues to be plagued with various experimentation and it is agreed by all that it needs further strengthening. Central control through local bureaucracy has generally promoted authoritarian bureaucratic structure in such a fashion that bureaucratic control now pervades all spheres of life in the local society including the Union Parishad (UP). In spite of the publicized Democratic facade of most local government reforms during the decades, local government was not seriously considered as a viable democratic alternative by the government in post-independent Bangladesh.

In fact after nearly century-long experimentation, the Union Parishad in Bangladesh still remains as the only decentralized and elected Local Body as a grass-roots people's organization. Although the elected nine members (who are mostly male) of each UP elect three women members, in practice and reality, it is still a long way to ensuring equal rights as well as representation of the rural women in the UP structure which continues to be male dominated. The past programme conducted the women members to effectively participate in the Union Parishad and gave them an opportunity to acquaint with the local administration.

In this context from January 1995 to December 1998 KF completed participatory 44 one-day training (basic training) workshops in 43 districts and total participants are 6594. As these were arranged immediately after the new forum election i.e. women members are coming up through direct election, KF has received tremendous response from the elected women members of Union Parishad.

A.2 For the organization of the Training in District Level

- KF successfully involved the District and Thana level officials of in the administration, the National Institute of Local Govt. (NILG), Local Govt. Engineering Department (LGED).
- Cooperation and development of relationship among participants and interaction place for whole day

A.3 Specific Objectives of One-day Training Programme

- Encouragement and facilitating women's active participation in decision making at the local level and eventually at the national level;

- Familiarizing and ensuring interaction and liaison between EWMs and district, Thana level officials, National Institute of local Govt. (NILG), Local Government Engineering Department (LGED);
- Increasing EWM's awareness of their rights and responsibilities as members of the UP;
- Reinforcing the leadership skills of the UP members in order to enable them to take part in the design, implementation and evaluation of development policy and activities;
- Creating a forum for the exchange of views on the positive aspects and difficulties experienced by EWM in the performance of their duties;
- Facilitating the development of a sense of partnership and cooperation among men and women members of the UP by involving the chairman thereof in certain planned activities;
- Developing a monitoring mechanism to oversee the management of the UPs and secure the full participation off EWMs in their activities;
- Undertaking advocacy initiatives to promote the access of women to all aspects of decision-making and policy development at the local and national levels;
- Developing a network of EWM who will keep close contact amongst the UP's all over the country and develop action as well as cooperation strategies;
- Raising EWM's awareness of available mechanisms for the protection of women's rights, in particular regarding the existing "Violence Against women Committee" set up by the Ministry of Women & Children's Affairs;
- Ensuring effective involvement of EWMs in promoting women and children related issues;

A.4 The Future Expectations of the Overall Participants

The principle recommendation made by the NEWM participants in the one-day workshops was the organization of in-depth training programme this will enable them to;

Further their knowledge of Union Parishad management and development related issues.

Learn from one another across the country through the exchange of experiences accrued in the discharge of their UP duties.

Develop future plans of action.

Others male members of the Union Parishad will think that the women members have same right and responsibility of UP.

A.5 Educational Qualification of the Participants

Districts	Signature	1-5 Class	6-10 Class	SSC	HSC	Graduate	Total
Rajshahi	12	17	117	17	3	1	167
C.Nawabganj	20	9	81	8	2	-	120
Naogaon	36	42	118	11	3	1	211
Natore	16	9	60	13	4	-	102
Pabna	19	15	120	13	3	-	170
Sunamganj	39	9	156	6	2	-	212
Moulvibazar	8	12	120	16	2	2	160
Hobijgnj	27	5	104	10	2	-	148
Nilphamari	10	41	78	11	1	2	143
Panchagarh	9	4	68	5	2	1	89
Thakurgaon	13	13	82	8	3	-	119
Dinajpur	14	12	141	10	2	-	179
Rangpur	19	14	125	21	8	1	188
Netrokona	5	40	154	34	2	1	236
Munshiganj	-	27	94	42	10	2	175
Cox's Bazar	2	17	94	123	10	9	183
Chittaganj	10	24	94	103	41	24	316
Lxaimpur	-	17	83	33	3	6	142

A.6 Expectation of the Overall Participants

The principle recommendation made by the participants in the one day workshop was the organization of in-depth training programme which will enable them :

- Further their knowledge of Union Parishad Management and development related issues.
- Learn from another across the country through the exchange of experiences accrued in the discharge of their UP duties and
- Develop future plans of action.

A.7 Methodology

- Formal Lecture;
- Question & Answer;
- Brainstorming;
- Case Studies;
- Two way Communication;
- Hum and Buzz Group;

A.8 Materials

- Whiteboard;
- Flipchart;
- Whiteboard Marker
- Hand notes;
- Brochure;

A.9 Topics

Women members of the Union Parishad receive training based on following topic heads;

Present Local Government Structure in Bangladesh, evolution and function.

Women's participation in development activities in relation of Local Government.

Role of Women Members in Union Parishad.

Effective Involvement of women members in Local Government.

Women and Children related issues.

A.10 Name of the Local Level Officials in the Programme January 1997 to June 1998

Sl No	Name	Designation	District
01	Mr Kazi Farid Ahmed	Deputy Commissioner	Rajshahi
02	Mr Md. Mostadar Rahman	Executive Engineer LGED	Rajshahi
03	Mr Md Nazrul Islam	Deputy Commissioner	Chapai Nawabganj
04	Mr Samsul Alam	Additional Deputy Commissioner	Chapai Nawabganj
05	Mr Baset Mandal	Executive Engineer LGED	Chapai Nawabganj
06	Mr ABM Zahirul Haque	Assistant Director of Local Govt.	Chapai Nawabganj
07	Mr Md Ali	Deputy Commissioner	Naogaon
08	Mr Md Mokhlesur Rahman	Asst. Executive Engineer LGED	Naogaon
09	Mr A F M Saiful Islam	Deputy Commissioner	Panchagarh
10	Mr Md Salahuddin	Executive Engineer LGED	Panchagarh
11	Mr Muazzem Hossain	Deputy Commissioner	Rangpur
12	Mr Md Abul Kalam Azad	Executive Engineer LGED	Rangpur
13	Mr Md Abdul Alim Khan	Deputy Commissioner	Thakurgaon
14	Mr Md Matir Rahman	Executive Engineer LGED	Thakurgaon
15	Mr Azizur Rahman	Deputy Commissioner	Dinajpur
16	Mr A B M Israil	Executive Engineer LGED	Dinajpur
17	Mr Mahbubur Rahman	Deputy Commissioner	Pabna
18	Rafiqul Haque	Additional Deputy Commissioner	Natore
19	Mr Md Shahidul Islam	Asst. Executive Engineer LGED	Natore
20	Mr Md Iqbal Hossain Khan	Deputy Commissioner	Sunamganj
21	Mr Enamul Kabir Ahamed	Executive Engineer LGED	Sunamganj
22	Mr G K M Narul Amin	Deputy Commissioner	Moulvibazar
23	Mr S M Abdul Jalil	Executive Engineer LGED	Moulvibazar

24	Mr Borhanuddin	Deputy Commissioner	Habiganj
25	Mr Jaynal Abedin	Executive Engineer LGED	Habiganj
26	Mr A D M Kamrul Islam	Deputy Commissioner	Nilphamari
27	Mr Md Asraful Haque	Executive Engineer LGED	Nilphamari
28	Mr Md Saluddin	Executive Engineer LGED	Dhaka
29	Mr. Ali Akbar Akand	Deputy Commissioner	Netrokona
30	Mr Shyamal Kanti Ghosh	ADC (General)	Netrokona
31	Mr Md Lutfur Rahman	ADC (Rev)	Netrokona
32	Mr Sailendra Nath Sarker	XEN LGED	Netrokona
33	Mr Md Shahed Ali	AC (Land) Atpara	Netrokona
34	Mr A K M Kibria	DRRO	Netrokona
35	Ms Arifa Jesmin Advocate	Advocate	Netrokona
36	Ms Mahmuda Khanam	Advocate	Netrokona
37	Mrs Masuda Begum	Advocate	Netrokona
38	Mrs Dileera Begum	Advocate	Netrokona
39	Ms Sukla Rani Guha	Advocate	Netrokona
40	Ms Anijama Sarker	Advocate	Netrokona
41	Mr Monzu Khandaker	Advocate & APP	Netrokona
42	Mr Md Fazlul Karim	ADM	Munshigonj
43	Mr A R Khan	ASP Munshigonj	
44	Mr Mohammad Rezaul Karim	Assistant Engineer LGED	Munshigonj
45	Mr Md Helaluddin	Advocate	Munshigonj
46	Ms Momtaz Begum	Head Mistress	Munshigonj
47	Mr Nur a Alam	Journalist Weekly Munshigonj	Munshigonj
48	Mr Shamim Ahmed Faruq	Journalist Daily Provati	Munshigonj
49	Mr Muzammel Hossain Sajal	Journalist Bangla Bazar Patrika	Munshigonj
50	Mr Sajal Joswari	Journalist Monthly Vekrampur	Munshigonj
51	Mr Md Salim	Journalist Ajker Kagoj	Munshigonj
52	Mr Md Atiqur Rahman	Joint Secretary Press Club	Munshigonj
53	Mr Ali Imam Majumder	Deputy Commissioner	Cox's Bazar
54	Dr M A Monen	ADM	Cox's Bazar
55	Mr Abdur Razzaque	XEN, LGED	Cox's Bazar
56	Mr Hari Prasad Paul	Assistant Director LG	Cox's Bazar
57	Mr M A Akhtar Hossain	Asstt. Engr. LGED	Cox's Bazar
58	Rebeka Sultana	Advocate	Cox's Bazar
59	Ms Jesmin Sultana	Advocate	Cox's Bazar
60	Mr Syed Rashid Uddin	Advocate	Cox's Bazar
61	Professore Someswar Chakravarty	Professor	Cox's Bazar
62	Mr Md Delwar Hossain	ADM	Chittagong
63	Ms Madhumalati	Advocate	Chittagong
64	Mr M Ashraf Ali Khalja	Thana Nirhahi Officer	Patiya/ Chittagong
65	Mr Md Mostefa Hossain	Thana Engineer LGED	Patiya/ Chittagong

A.11 Places and dates of the workshops held during January 1997 to December 1998

Sl/No.	Date	Districts	Total Number of Participants	Present	Percentage
01.	22-02-97	Rajshahi	231	167	72
02.	23-02-97	Chapinawabganj	135	120	89
03.	24-02-97	Naogaon	297	211	71
04.	25-02-97	Natore	156	102	65
05.	26-02-97	Pabna	213	170	73
06.	30-03-97	Sunamganj	243	212	87
07.	31-03-97	Moulvibazar	198	160	81
08.	01-04-97	Hobijgnj	231	148	64
09.	06-04-97	Nilphamari	183	143	78
10.	07-04-97	Panchagarh	129	89	69
11.	08-04-97	Thakurgaon	153	119	78
12.	09-04-97	Dinajpur	306	189	59
13.	10-04-97	Rangpur	258	188	73
14.	17-02-98	Netrakona	258	236	91
15.	08-03-98	Munshiganj	207	175	85
16.	28-03-98	Cox's Bazar	192	183	95
17	29-03-98 & 30-03-98	Chittagong	585	316	54*
18.	31-03-98	Lakshmipur	153	142	93
Total		18 Districts	4128	3070	

A.12 Observation

In every districts the women members responds very enthusiastically. The percentage of response is as above in the chart. In every districts the percentage of attendance was very high. KF arranged the one day workshop in Chittagong for two days it is a big area.

**The relatively lower turnout at the Chittagong Meeting was due to a cat call transport strike on 29/09/98. It is inspiring to note the at one stage we thought of canceling the Meeting but decided to carry out the Programme when we realized the enthusiasm of participants to come to the Meeting in spite of the "Hartal".*

On the 31-03-98 the workshop place was Lakshmipur where there was strike but overcoming all the obstacles KF successfully completed the workshop and participation was also exceptionally high given the circumstances.

From these observations KF believes that the workshops with the women members is the demand of the time. All the district level officials who were involved in the workshops also cooperated very warmly throughout the programmes and appreciated the efforts undertaken by Khan Foundation.

A.13 Motivation

The social structure in the predominant agrarian economy of the country is still dominated by traditional kinship pattern to a great extent and changes are being perceived only recently as a consequence of changing economic pattern. More and more state intervention in the rural life so alleged to have developed a new configuration of dependency relationship between the agents of the central govt. at the local levels, the local power elite and the rural poor, the local notables being the clients of the state and the rural poor as their dependents. In this situation, benefits of decentralization are often enjoyed by social intermediaries rather than by end users. The Local Government Institutions continue to be either weak or grossly dependent on the central state apparatus.

Women and children are specially vulnerable under the prevailing social order. Both women and children are not only socially discriminated, but are subject to threat exploitation and harassment at times by the more dominant men folk which poses great problem for women and children especially in the rural areas.

All the above problems can be overcome, if we strengthening the Local Government and bring awareness among the rural person. Therefore such workshops had a great contribution towards development and true democracy.

A.14 Women are committed to fulfill their responsibilities as UP members

Such commitment was shown by the high level of participation in the workshops. A participation that often required from them long traveling hours and that in one specific case, resulted in the attendance of the NEWM with 20 days old baby in her arms. breaking a century old tradition that dictates women should not leave their home during the first 40 days of their newborns.

A.15 Quality training sessions are effective and necessary first steps

After the workshops held during 1995 to 1997 KF has reached the conclusion that, as a first measure, NEWM need to be gathered together initially at least at the district level to receive qualified training and to feel that they are important and part of a larger and coordinated movement. The NEWM's degree of unawareness of the nature, implications and technicalities of their public representation has proved to be so high (trainers invariably inquired workshop participants about their knowledge of each of the issues introduced and the answers were always overwhelmingly negative) as to make essential the involvement in the training of experts and qualified personnel.

Eventually KF intends to study the possibility of having selected members themselves assume the role of trainers of their women members thus allowing for the project to be self sustaining in the long run. In the event that KF succeeds in institutionalization to this training programme as a regular feature for the UP members, both men and women, a process which has already been initiated by the Foundation through the creation of its own in house training facilities, the training will still have to be primarily conducted by qualified personnel. The reason for this being that in order to acquire the leadership, organization and academically skills to train other Members, the selected members will have to be themselves the beneficiaries of further training and empowerment measures.

A.16 Recommendation made by the Participants

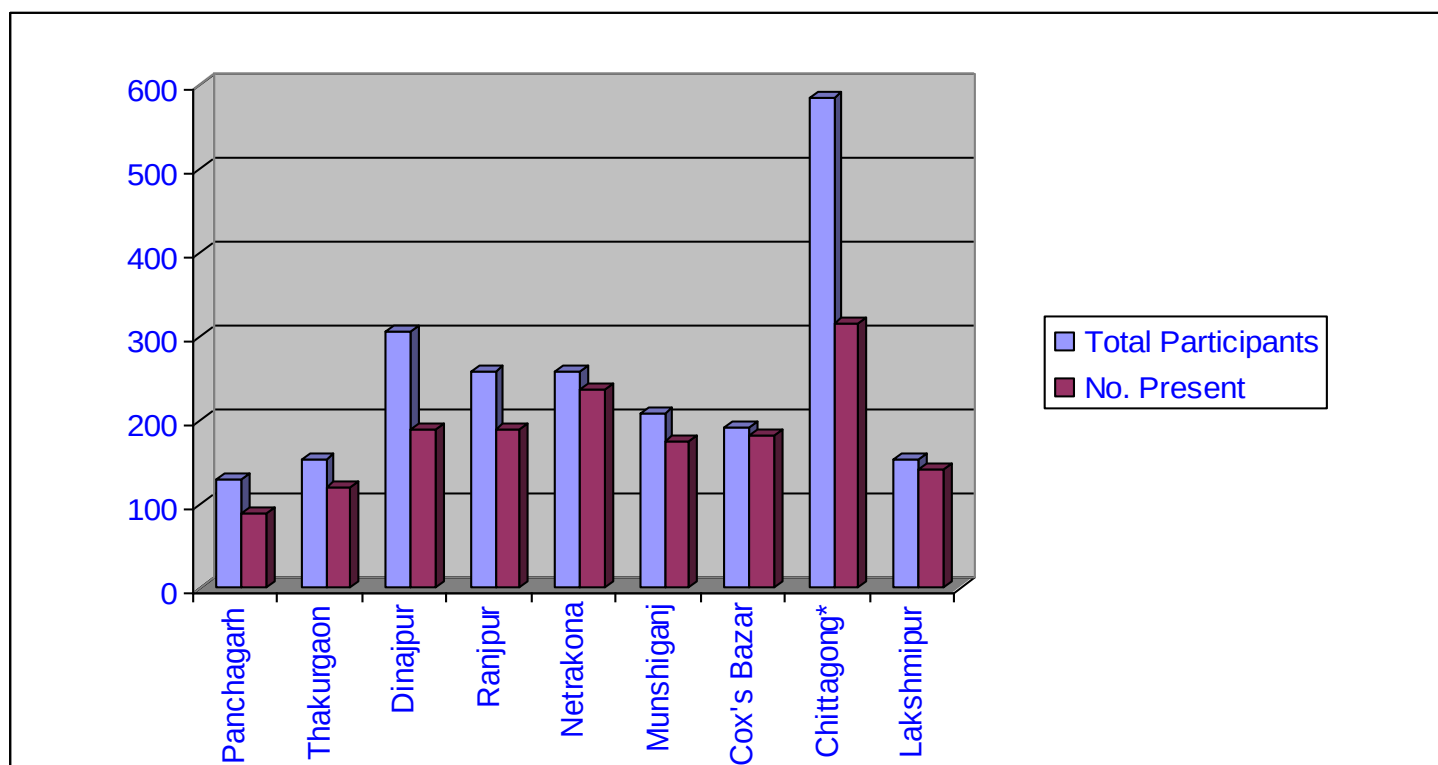
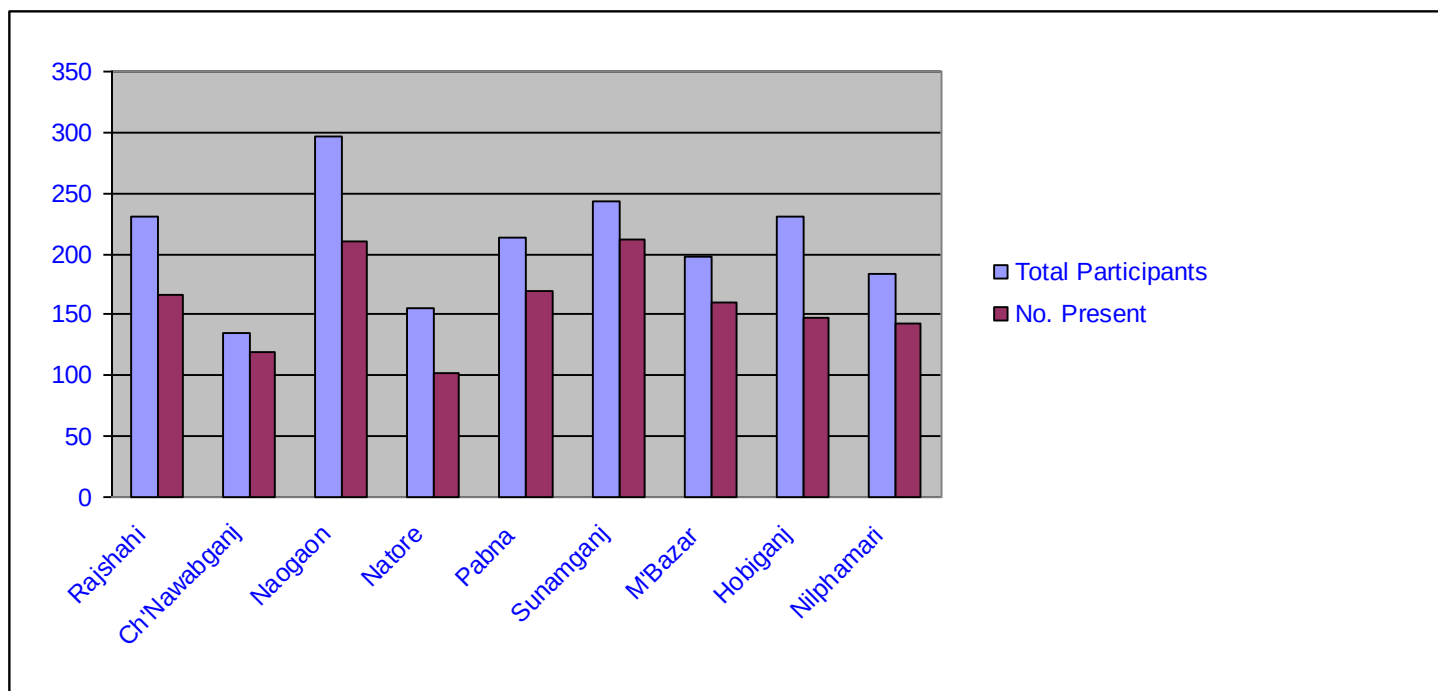
During the training two principal recommendation made by NEWM's participants in the one day workshops held during 1995 to 1998.

The recommendations are

- (i) For future organization of in-depth training programmes which will enable them to
 - Further their knowledge on Union Parishad management and development related issues.
 - Learn from one another across the country through the exchange of experiences occurred in the discharge of their duties
 - Develop future plans of action
- (ii) Men should be included in Future Training Sessions to "Build Partnerships" among all UP members because:

Women participants in the workshops often suggested the inclusion of the chairmen and other members from general seats thereof in future training sessions to train them on the status and rights of NEWM. NEWM felt that inclusion of the chairmen and other members is also essential to build the alliance and cooperative relationships among all members in order to secure the effective functioning of the Local Government

A.17 The following graphs show the % of participants present in the workshops



*Attendance in the Chittagong District Meeting may seem low but was over 50% in spite of an impromptu Hartal called on the day

B. In-depth Follow-up Training Programme

B.1 Introduction

Basic training programme being just the beginning, further action programmes are taken by Khan Foundation to allow a much faster and more equitable local level development. In this context Khan Foundation Organized in depth training programme which will enable NEWM to further their knowledge on Union Parishad management and development related issues learn from one another across the country through the exchange of experiences occurred in the discharge of their duties, develop future plans of action and have sufficient time to analyze and discuss in-depth relating to their work at the UPs. It should be noted here that one of the principal recommendation, made by newly elected women members participators in the one day workshops held by Khan Foundation, was the organization of in-depth training programme which will enable them to:

- Further their knowledge on Union Parishad management related issues.
- Learn from one another across the country through the exchange of experiences occurred in the discharge of their UP duties and Develop future plans of action

During the period November 1996 to December 1998 Khan Foundation continued with its in-depth follow-up training of 46 batches, which covered 2448 women members.

B.2 The Organization of the Training in Dhaka

- Full time involvement of participants.
- If the training would take place in avenue close to their homes the fulfillment of such duties would make very difficult their continued participation therein
- Cooperation and development of relationship among participants and interaction space for five days, which would not be possible would the programmes be conducted in their respective areas.
- Contacts by participants with representative from Governmental and Non-governmental organizations at the central level through meeting and visits organized as complementary activities organized as complementary activities during the course of the training programme.
- An exclusive opportunity for the participants to visit the national parliament and listen to the debates when the Parliament is in session.

The follow up in-depth training programme has already resulted in generally achieving the objectives of the programme mentioned earlier.

B.3 Methodology for Follow-up Training Programme

- Expectation card;
- Matrix Ranking;
- Formal Lecture;
- Flipchart;
- Role-play;
- Question & Answer;
- Brainstorming;
- Case Studies;
- Two way Communication;
- Hum and Buzz Group;
- To assist the analyses;
- To enable the participants to develop a common understanding of the issues under class;
- To assists all the participants to identify strategies relating to active participation of women in development activities in relation to local government structure and women related issue and
- To assist all the participants analyze the chosen strategies.

B.4 Materials for Follow-up

- Whiteboard;
- Flipchart;
- Whiteboard Marker
- Hand notes;
- Brochure;
- Flipchart;
- Overhead Projector.

B.5 Training Process Flow and Training Strategy

B.6 Participants' Introduction

Participants came from various Unions and to establish an informal atmosphere and reinforce the principles of participation, an icebreaker was conducted at the start of each training session. This is done so that they might get closed to each other very easily for the purpose of sharing each other's view. Here each participant got an opportunity to introduce herself to other participants and vis-a-vis. During "ice breaking" all participants were divided into several smaller groups.

B.7 Participants' Expectations

Khan Foundation's objective is to try its level best to solve the problems or to show the way to solving the problems of women members. At the same time participants also have some expectations from KF for their betterment. For this purpose the training facilitators try to find out participants expectations in a card distributed amongst them. These cards are then read out and posted on a board. After posting all the cards it gets a shape of expectation and problem tree. Then it is discussed with the participants whose problems from the tree can be tackled directly by Khan Foundation and these are then marked. During the training, possible approaches are identified to solve the various problems faced by the NEWMs in their respective environment vis-a-vis those faced by the women in general at the grassroots level. The identified approaches are put forward to participants in the related training sessions in order to assessing the appropriateness and anticipated effectiveness.

B.8 Formulation of Training Modules and Materials

B.9 Report on the Each Session of the Training Programme

In the session entitled "Evolution of the State & Government". The trainer discusses in brief the origin and elements of a modern state. Besides the different working mechanism of the government and Local Government system is also discussed in this session.

The women member feel proud when they knows that they are a active part of the state and Government mechanism and through this they feel more enthusiastic about their jobs. The objects of this session are as follows:

- To insure knowledge on civilization and
- To gives brief idea on genesis of State & Government.

Methods: Lecture, Discussion, Question & Answer.

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker & Flipchart.

In the session entitled "Local Government Ordinance 1983 & Local Govt. Structure, Function of Union Parishad, Role of UP Members". It is noted that the members did not know the actual responsibilities of Union Parishad even though they are working as UP members. With the Local Government Ordinance 1983 the trainer explains the Local Government Structure. The objects of this session are as follows:

- To explain the provision of the Ordinance;
- To define the objectives of decentralization;
- To analysis the function and the structure of Local Govt.;
- To explain the important functions of the UP and
- To identify the roles and responsibilities of the UP members.

Methods: Lecture, Discussion, Question & Answer.

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker & Flipchart.

In the session entitled "Administration of Union Parishad, Union Parishad Meeting Including Budget Meeting" it is found that the trainees are very interested, because they feel themselves more important to do these fobs. The objects of this session are as follows:

To know them about the work fields of administration

- To further active participation of the women members in the UP Meetings;
- To further awareness about the General Meeting and Budget Meeting and
- To empower the women members achieve their rights and raise their voices about their interest.

Methods: Lecture, Discussion, Question & Answer and Role-play.

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker & Flipchart.

In this session entitled "Child Rights, Trafficking" the most essential articles of the CRC are discussed. The prevailing situation of the situation of the child rights and relevant laws are also discussed in this session. They are given the knowledge of what they can do in this regard. The objects of this session are as follows:

- To identify the rights of the children and
- To identify the child trafficking fields.

Methods: Lecture, Discussion, Question & Answer.

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker, Flipchart & Poster.

In the session entitled "Village Court". The trainer explains structure of a village court and how a woman member can participate in the village court procedure.

It is very surprising that most of the members mistook the concept of the village court with the concept of so called "Shalish". The object of this session is as follows:

- Explain the working procedure of village court.

Methods: Lecture & Discussion,.

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker & Flipchart.

In the session entitled "Development Activities of Union Parishad, Role of GOB and NGOs. The trainer explains about what development activities should undertaken by the Union Parishad. At the same time what GOB and NGO's are doing for this purpose i.e. the development of the grassroots levels. The object of this session is as follows:

- How they involve themselves in development activities.

Methods: Lecture & Discussion.

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker & Flipchart.

In the session entitled "Primary Health Care and Reproductive Health Education". The trainer explains about health and how to take care of health. AIDS (HIV) is a major threat to health, this is also discussed in the session i.e. how the disease spreads and what are the precautions and protections against this disease.

The members seem very interested in this subject and talks of various problems. As special emphasis is given on child and mother's health, the women members want to know many things about the subject. The objects of this session are as follows:

- To give them brief idea about Primary Health Care;
- To give them brief idea about Immunization Programme and
- To give them brief idea about adolescent period.

Methods: Lecture, Discussion, Question & Answer.

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker, Flipchart & Poster.

In the session entitled "Income Generating Activities (IGA)". The trainer put efforts to make the women members understand the important of self-dependency. They are given the ideas of how can they work with the Government and Non-government Organization, particularly who are working with women development activities.

The women member believes the same with KF. They believe that finance, education and health are interrelated. So they gives more importance to income generation activities. The object of this session is as follows:

- To make them familiarize with income activities in rural areas.

Methods: Lecture, Discussion, Question & Answer.

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker & Flipchart.

In the session "Trinamul", the trainer explains the name at first. The name itself shows that the newsletter contains news for the grassroots people. Specially those who are representative them i.e. the UP members. The trainer also explains about the necessity to establish regular contact with women members through the newsletter. The objects of this session are as follows:

- Establishing a regular contact with women members and
- To give solution for the irregularity faced by the NEWM.

In the session entitled "Family Laws". The trainer explains about the personal laws of marriage, divorce, maintenance, polygamy etc. Women members are specially knocked about the laws relating dowry and domestic violence. The trainer gives emphasis mainly on "Muslim Family Laws Ordinance 1961". The object of this session is as follows:

- To explain family laws.

Methods: Lecture & Discussion.

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker & Flipchart.

In the session entitled "Safe Environment & Sustainable Development". The trainer explains the importance of safe environment. Each and every element of the environment must be kept safe, otherwise the natural equilibrium will be violated which will cost natural disaster. At the same time this violation and pollution will effect the health also. The protection and precaution are to be taken against environmental pollution is discuss. The objects of this session are as follows:

- Aware the people about ecological changes & damages caused by human being and how to avoid this and
- Aware people about the unplanned development activities are causing of environmental damage.

Methods: Lecture & Discussion,.

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker & Flipchart.

In the session entitles as "Violence against women (with CEDAW important convention)". The trainer focuses on the recent state of violence against women. Various news are read out from the newspapers to knock the mind of the members. Special laws relating to violence against women are discussed in brief. The object of this session is as follows:

- Explain women abuse and its prevention.

Methods: Lecture, Discussion, Question & Answer and Role-play.

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker, Flipchart, Paper Clipping & Poster.

In the session entitled "Effective Participation of Women in the democratic process & Direct Election (with Gram Parishad Bill 1997)". The objects of this session are as follows:

- To explain the importance of the direct representative and
- To emphasize the importance of democratization.

Methods: Lecture, Discussion, Question & Answer

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker, Flipchart, Paper Clipping & Poster.

In the session entitled "Forum for UP Women Members". The trainer explains the important of creating a forum for the UP women members. The objects of the forum are mainly the empowerment of women coordination among the UP women members and skill development. A forum is created with the combination of Thana Forum and Zilla Forum. The objects of this session are as follows:

- To give information relating the activities of the cell and
- Forma a Forum for the UP members.

Methods: Lecture & Discussion.

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker & Flipchart.

In the session entitled "Monitoring Cell". The trainer explains how the members can maintain a communication with each other, as well as with KF through this cell. The trainer also explains the working mechanism of such a cell.

Methods: Lecture & Discussion.

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker & Flipchart.

In the session "Legal Counseling" the trainer takes interview of the members who seeks any sort of legal relief. The basic thing what is done by KF is mainly giving legal literacy and legal counseling.

Methods: Lecture & Discussion.

Materials: Whiteboard, Marker & Flipchart.

Khan Foundation arranges "Education Visit" as a part of its training routine. Most of the members are coming in the capital city for the first time, the visit is arranged to provide them with the opportunity of visiting important education and historical places around the city i.e. National Museum, the University of Dhaka, National Memorial for the Martyrs at Saver.

B.10 Commitment of NEWMs in fulfilling their Responsibilities

BOX STORY 1

Importance of the Training Programme in the Eyes of Women Members

Ms Sajeda Akhter is a member of Rupsha (South) Union Parishad under Chandpur District. She did not know anything about her responsibility as a woman member in the UP, but said she is keen to learn about various duties and responsibilities of UP members. She became well informed regarding the training programmes of Khan Foundation from its quarterly newsletter "Trinamul" and was also aware of the In-depth Training Programme for UP Women Members organized by Khan Foundation in Dhaka. She became convinced that if she had an opportunity to participate the in-depth training workshop, it would help her a lot in discharging her duties as a UP member properly. Thus she was eagerly waiting her turn for an opportunity to participate in the KF in-depth Workshop. No sooner she received an invitation letter from KF to participate in a five day in-depth training programme in Dhaka, she knew that this was the moment of her lifetime. But as ill luck would have it, the dates of the training programme coincided with the advanced stage of her pregnancy and she was already nine months pregnant when she received the invitation. Obviously it was risky for her to take such a long journey from Chandpur to Dhaka at that late stage. She consulted her neighboring women regarding this situation and everyone advised her not to undertake the journey to participate in the workshop. But she was only too eager to participate in the workshop thinking that she may not get such an opportunity again. However, instead of communicating with the Khan Foundation she somehow convinced her husband that it would be still be worthwhile to go for the training and persuaded him to accompany her to Dhaka enabling her to participate in the KF workshop, totally unimpeded by the hazards of the road, not to mention availability of medicare and/or other health care services in case of any emergency. (Health insurance ? You must be joking, they never ever heard of it !!!) On the third day of the workshop, suddenly she started having her labour pain, immediately a doctor was called in by KF and by the grace of Almighty she safely delivered a **girl child** in the make-shift maternity in the in-house dormitory of Khan Foundation. This is just one example of the diverse and difficult encounters through which KHAN FOUNDATION has to go through in the course of the NEWM Programme and the **FOUNDATION members proudly say that they enjoy providing such additional critical services to its target group beneficiaries who have laid their faith in the FOUNDATION's Programme.**

As she could not indeed go through her entire training exercise, her only wish to KF as she left Dhaka was that she be given another opportunity to complete her training course of the KF workshops.

B.11 Names of Guests of Honour & Visitors to the In-depth Training Programme & Certificate Award Ceremonies

Name	Designation & Address
1. HE Mr David C Walker	High Commissioner, British High Commission Bangladesh
2 Ms Joslin Landell Mills	IMF, Dhaka, Bangladesh
3 Dr Aminur Rashid	Professor, University of Dhaka
4 Mr Akhter Hamid Siddique	Member of Parliament
5 HE Mr John Holzman	Ambassador for the USA in Bangladesh
6 HE Mr Nicholas Etheridge	High Commissioner for Canada in Bangladesh
7 Mr Robert Boggs	Director, Office of the South Asia Regional Affairs, Department of State, Washington DC, USA
8 Mr Nigel Thornton	First Secretary, British High Commission Dhaka
9 HE Mr DCB den Haas	Ambassador for the Netherlands in Bangladesh
10 Mr Jason Reynolds	First Secretary, Development Assistance, Australian High Commission in Bangladesh
11 Professor Mosharaff Hossain	Economist & Former Member of Planning Commission GOB
12 HE Ms Renee Veyret	Ambassador for France in Bangladesh
13 Ms Diana Lee Laughton	UNFPA, New York
14 Ms Asma Akhter	UNFPA, Dhaka, Bangladesh
15 Mr David Lockwood	Resident Representative, UNDP, Dhaka Bangladesh
16 Ms Annick Annyot	First Secretary, Canadian High Commission Bangladesh
17 Ms Mahmuda Bagum	AGM, Janata Bank, Rajerbagh Branch
18 Mr Amir Khasru Mahmud Chow.	Member of Parliament
19 Mr N A T Rouf	Managing Director, DHS Ltd.
20 HE Dr Nafis Sadik	Under Secretary General of the United Nation
21 HE Ms Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury	Honourable Minister for Environment & Forests Govt of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
22 Mr Quamrul Islam Siddique	Chief Engineer, LGED
23 Mr Tom Cowin	Director for Bangladesh, the British Council
24 HE Mr Sven Anders Johnson	Ambassador, Embassy of Sweden in Bangladesh
25 Mr S A Farooq	Senior Coordinator, UNICEF in Bangladesh
26 Mr Nurul Ameen	Asst. Representative, UNFPA in Bangladesh
27 Dr Saleemul Haque	Executive Director, BCAS
28 Ms Sheerin Zaman	Principal, Bangladesh Protibandi Foundation
29 Mr Akhter Hamid Siddique	Member of Parliament
30 Mr Pierre Landell-Mills	Chief of Mission, The World Bank Resident Mission, Bangladesh

B.12 Place and Dates of Workshops

Place: Khan Foundation Democracy Auditorium

Batch	Date
1 st	16-20 June 1997
2 nd	20-24 June 1997
3 rd	24-28 June 1997
4 th	06-10 September 1997
5 th	10-14 September 1997
6 th	14-18 September 1997
7 th	18-22 September 1997
8 th	22-26 September 1997
9 th	26-30 September 1997
10 th	01-05 October 1997
11 th	05-09 October 1997
12 th	11-15 October 1997
13 th	15-19 October 1997
14 th	19-23 October 1997
15 th	23-27 October 1997
16 th	27-31 October 1997
17 th	01-05 November 1997
18 th	05-09 November 1997
19 th	09-13 November 1997
20 th	13-17 November 1997
21 st	17-21 November 1997
22 nd	22-26 November 1997
23 rd	01-05 March 1998
24 th	08-12 March 1998
25 th	15-19 March 1998
26 th	19-23 March 1998
27 th	15-19 April 1998
28 th	19-23 April 1998
29 th	26-30 April 1998
30 th	02-06 April 1998
31 st	10-14 May 1998
32 nd	17-21 May 1998
33 rd	24-28 May 1998
34 th	30 May - 03 June 1998
35 th	07-11 June 1998
36 th	14-18 June 1998
37 th	20-24 June 1998
38 th	27 June - 01 July 1998
39 th	12-16 July 1998
40 th	19-23 July 1998
41 st	26-30 July 1998
42 nd	02-06 August 1998
43 rd	09-13 August 1998
44 th	16-20 August 1998
45 th	23-27 August 1998
46 th	30 August - 03 September 1998

B.13 Name of Districts and Numbers of Participants

Districts	Number of Participants
Barishal	90
Comilla	51
Feni	53
Brahmanbaria	27
Chandpur	149
Noakhali	47
Laxmipur	88
Rajbari	73
Faridpur	46
Mymensingh	139
Jamalpur	95
Sherpur	92
Kishorgonj	59
Tangail	89
Narayangonj	59
Manikgonj	64
Gazipur	53
Narshingdi	14
Netrokona	127
Munshiganj	112
Khulna	82
Narial	26
Jessore	58
Jhenaidah	67
Kushtia	106
Magura	13
Chuadanga	33
Meherpur	29
Rajshahi	140
Chapi-Nawabgaoj	39
Nagaon	45
Natore	67
Pabna	9
Dinajpur	61
Thakurgaon	6
Panchagarh	5
Sylhet	65
Sunamgonj	51
Moulvibazar	4
Hobigonj	15
Total	2448

B.14 Queries made by the women members who participated in In-depth Training Programme in Dhaka

Total no of participants : 2,448 women members

SL. No.	Expectation	Participants Quarries	Percentages
01.	Detail information related with the function of Union Parishad	2143	87.54
02.	Rules and procedure of Union Parishad	2085	85.17
03.	Information regarding Union Parishad Manual	1632	66.67
04.	Queries about Union Parishad Member's Honorarium	2448	100
05.	Role of the women members in UP	2362	96.49
06.	More knowledge on Village Court Laws	1983	81
07.	Most of the cases women members do not receive any notice to attend the monthly and special meeting of UP	2395	97.83
08.	Information of Family laws and what type of trials are held in Family Court	2105	85.99
09.	How do they can prevent dowry, women repression and polygamy	2212	90.35
10.	How do they can develop living standard of general people	1289	52.66
11.	How do they can connected themselves in various development work in UP	2387	97.51
12.	Chairmen and male members do not evaluate women members capability	2296	93.79
13.	Most of the cases Chairmen do not give them any works to do	2081	85
14.	Most of the times women members are not welcome in any project committee in the UP	2305	94.16
15.	They expect repeated invitation in similar training workshop	2409	98.41

C. Development of Monitoring Mechanism :

Monitoring Cell & Members' Forum

C.1 Introduction

The action undertaken in support of NEWM and their meaningful participation in Local Government need to be secured by the establishment of an effective monitoring mechanism. Such mechanism will act as a "watch dog" of the operation of the UP's and other relevant entities at the Thana and District Levels. It also provides NEWMs with a permanent instrument contain they can use to denounce irregularities or gender discriminating practices of their Union Parishad. Khan Foundation believes that it is important for NEWMs who participated in the workshops to organize themselves in order to continue to work for the effective and equitable functioning of the UP organization. This is vital because it has made them stronger and more capable in making decisions and finding out solutions to the problems encountered in the performance of their duties. It will also eliminate their sense of isolation and importance and provide them with an institutional framework which to advance common case for women, children and other disadvantaged groups. In this connection, the Foundation intends to create a network of NEWMs to promote and support women issues within the scope of the UP and beyond. All NEWMs are invited to become members of such network. The KF initially acted as the focal point of the network coordinating initiative and liaison with its members. At the same time it will also strongly encourage members of the network to assume responsibilities in the benefit of the entire group. In this connection, it first develops the list of Thana Representatives and District coordinator chosen by the network. These members are contacted by the section at the section at least once a month to report developments and coordinate activities. The monitoring Cell is run under the supervision of the Executive director of the Khan Foundation as well as lawyers and specialists.

C.2 Objectives of the Monitoring Cell

- To communicate with the women members of the UP through correspondences.
- To encourage women members of the UPs to report about the socio-economic status of women and children in their respective constituencies.
- To provide possible solutions relating to problems of the member's in the respective areas of women members in the UPs who will be in communication with KF through filled-up report sheet.
- To make regular contacts between the UP Chairmen, Deputy Commissioners, Thana Nirbahi Officers, Assistant Directors of LGED and Women Members of the Union Parishad
- To make aware the women members of the Union Parishad about their rights and responsibilities and about policies taken by Local Government Ministry.
- To provide solutions relating to legal problems faced by members of the Union Parishads as well as faced by other women of their respective areas.

- To make contacts, specially with those women members of the Union Parishads which are situated near the international borders to make them aware about the child and women trafficking.

C.3 Following corresponding have been carried out by the monitoring cell during 1997 to 1998

	Subject
•	Whether women members are interested to participate in the extended training workshops from June 1997 to December 1998
•	To get necessary information regarding child and women trafficking from the women members of the Chapai Nababgong which is situated at the borderline of Bangladesh and India.
•	To encourage women to contest for general seats
•	Requesting for sending name and addresses of newly elected members 1997 from Thana representative and District coordinator of developed forum.
•	Requesting for sending name and addresses of newly elected members 1997 from the participators District wide training programme
•	Thanking letters for confirming their participation in the extensive training programme
	Giving legal advised
	Letter to DC, TNO and Chairmen for help women members
•	Thanking letters for their participation in the District wide and extensive training programmes
•	Wishing them good luck in the election
•	Congratulate them for their reelected
•	Reply their problems letters
•	Miscellaneous

C.4 Correspondence received by KF from NEWMs

	Subject
•	Appreciating the training programme.
•	Complaining about discrimination take place everywhere in there respective areas and seeking suggestion for its prevention and seeking suggestion for its prevention.
•	Complaining about violence and trafficking against women and children and seeking suggestion for its prevention
•	Seeking legal counseling regarding family matters property matters etc.
•	Asking for legal counseling class during the training sessions
•	How do they prevent dowry, women repression and polygamy
•	Chairmen and male members do not give them any works
•	Regarding Union Parishad Honorarium
•	Chairmen and male members do not evaluate women members capability
•	Thanking letters

C.5 General Activities of the Coordinator and assistant Coordinator

- To make contact with women members of their respective areas.
- To take positive steps so that women members of the Union Parishad will be more active and responsible..
- To increase communication skill of women members through the exchange of opinion, report, on women & children related issues etc. among the women members of the Union Parishad.
- To take positive initiative for the empowerment of women.
- To act as a pressure group against different irregularities.
- To increase women's participation in the development activities so that women can be popular amongst the village people which will help them to contest in the Direct election.
- To inform the monitoring cell regarding minutes of their meeting.

C.6 Outcome of the Establishment of the Monitoring Cell

Attendance of large number of women members in the district wide and extended training programmes proved that monitoring cell has succeeded in encouraging their participation to seek redress against violence and other injustice to women. Members became aware about their roles and responsibility. Gender discrimination always visible in the grassroots level and Khan foundation through corresponding continuously trying to make them understood if women could achieve economic independence then such discrimination would have been remove from the grassroots level and it has been found that women members of different Union Parishad are encouraging general women of their respective areas for their economic independence. In this context, women members are giving opportunity to the local women to do labor work in the "Bastabyan Project" of the LGED.

Previously women members were reluctant to give information regarding violence and trafficking against women and children due to social programme on them. But when Khan Foundation immoral activities then people will lose their trust in public representative as well in democracy. It has now been found that women members start lodging a complaint with Deputy Commissioner or with "Nari Nirgatan Cell" (Cell to contain violence against women) against the persons who are involved in such immoral activities.

Union Parishad's election of 1997 proves our success as almost all the women members who had received our training most enthusiastically contested not only for reserved seats but also for general seats.

In the conclusion let us cite and example of a robust step taken by one of general women of Kishoregong Sadar after making contact with our monitoring cell.

A 32 year old women Khodeza Begum was involved in the development activities for long time and always protested against the corruption of some male members of the UP. For this

reason general citizen always encouraged her to participate as candidate either for a general seat or for reserved seats in the Union Parishad election 1997. But chairman and male members created obstacles so that Khodeza Begum dose not succeed to getting a nomination paper. Then one of the existing women members (who is our trainee advised her to contact the Khan Foundation regarding this problem. When she made contact with her to consult with Thana Nirbahi Officer and Deputy Commissioner regarding this problem. We also showed her ways she will make contact with above mention person. She made the contact procured the nomination paper, contested the election and finally got elected as women member from the reserved seat.

Thereof from the example it is clear that our monitoring cell is not only open for women members of LG but can open up for other women at grassroots level.

In this context Khan Foundation's goal is to expand the monitoring cell as independent monitoring and advocacy institution for distressed women at large.

C.7 Formation of District & Thana Coordinators of the Forum and their Activities

Generally there is one Thana and one District Coordinator in each Thana and District under consideration. Sometimes there are assistant Thana and District Coordinators for furtherance of work.

In the training class entitled "Forum" the trainer gathered all the women members of the one particular District and respective Thanas and then selected District and Thana Coordinators from amongst them with their consent. In the same way other District and Thana Coordinators have been selected. At the time of selecting District and Thana Coordinator following issues have been taken into account.

- Ability to work under pressure
- Smartness
- Level of Education
- Experience

The District Forum consist of one District Coordinator and several Thana Coordinators. The number of the Thana Coordinator depends upon number of Thanas under that District.

C.8 Objectives of the Forum

Once an irregularity is reported to the Division by a NEWM it will initiate a mechanism in order to redress the situation by taking one or more of the following actions:

- Direct contact with the Chairman of UP.
- Direct contact with the District Commissioner, Thana Nirbahi Officer, Assistant Director of LGED and Chairman of UP.

- Contact with the press and other media sources at the Local and National levels.
- Mobilization of the Network to call attention in their own communities on the irregularity reported and adopt "pressure strategies" to be developed at the Local and National Levels.

C.9 Composition of Thana Forum

The following Thana Forums have been composed during January - June 1998

Sonargaon, Munshiganj Sadar, Sirajdikhan, Tangibari, srinagar, Gajaria, Saturia, Singair, Manikganj Sadar, Jamalpur Sadar, Kasba, Akhaura, Banchharampur, Shahorasti, Chandpur Sadar, Motlob, Batiaghata, Dakip, Rupsha, Badolagachi, Shapahar, Jhikorgachha, Sharsha, Madarganj, Gournadi, Hijla, Banaripara, Bagmara, Lalpur, Godagari, Paba, Charghat, Mymensingh Sadar, Kanaighat, Baliakandi, Pangsha, Rajbari Sadar, Kotchandpur, Shanthia, Pirganj, Fulbari, Kaharol, Begumganj, Chatkhail, Laximipur Sadar, Raypur, Ramgoti, Mirpur, Meherpur Sadar, Gangni, Kendua, Atpara, Purbadhala, Sreepur, Hobiganj Sadar, Doearbazar, Bishwambharpur, Dirai, Bhaupur, Kishorganj Sadar, Faridpur Sadar, Sherpur Sadar, Feni Sadar.

C.10 Zilla Forum has been formed in the following Districts

1. Khulna, 2. Rajbari, 3. Jhebaidha, 4. Laximpur, 6. Meherpur, 7. Netrokona.

C.11 Legal Counseling

It is an undeniable fact that women have been working as partners of men in all spheres of life since time immemorial. Women's contribution towards the furtherance of progress of civilization can hardly be called into question. Yet although at long last there had been a growing realization in the world today that no real progress of mankind is possible without the involvement and participation of the women in the development process but in practice women have been deprived of their rights and opportunities in all spheres of life. It is indeed tragic that women at grassroots level are often victims of social violence and family system.

Violence against women is a global problem and it exists in Bangladesh as in any other countries of the world. The common dominating factors responsible for violence against women are their unequal status in the family and society and inadequate access to resources. Forms of violence against women can range from mental torture to physical one: rape, kidnapping, wife battering are some alarming forms of torture.

From the handfuls of letters and report sheet the Foundation received during the first six months of the year. It has been found that women from grassroots level are not at all aware about family laws. They are seeking from us a legal and human rights service which will be dedicated to creating of civic and human rights to build a democratic society. NEWMs asked us to respond in order to help them eliminate the above mentioned harmful traditional practices from the society. They urged us to reach the powerless, primarily the women through a legal aid programme. After considering their continuous pressure for introducing legal services, KF introduced a new session in the training entitled "Legal Counseling". This cell executed under the overall supervision of the Executive Director of Khan Foundation.

C.12 Objectives of the Legal Counseling

- To inform about their rights and to sensitize them about issues arising from the law.
- To develop and understanding in the working of the law and activating it to secure family and social justice.
- To ensure women's legal protection in order to determine the justice.
- To inform them about the current laws regarding family and other matters.

C.13 Methodology of the Legal Counseling

We gather information and facts through interviewing the clients. Then we applied the law to the facts obtained in order to give advice at the time of counseling. If women members asked counseling for a running case then we made contact with the lawyer who has been engaged for the case and we usually give advise after consulting with him or we asked our client to contact her lawyer personally and we assist them in making such contact. At times we also attempted to mediate disputes. In this context we record women members complaints personal data and types of assistance she seeks. After registering, we notified the other party in disputes and if other party responds then we call the both party for mediation where our lawyer would be present. In the "shalishi" (mediation) the lawyer would try to mediate and show various options to both parties.

It should be noted here UP women members not only discuss about their own problems but also discuss about the problems of their village women as their representative. Later on, Khan Foundation attempts contact with those village people directly.

C.14 Impact

Women from grassroots level are not at all aware about the laws relating to the women & children related issues. We are all equal in the eye of law and we all deserve justice. Awareness is required to secure human rights as well as legal rights. A large part of our society are deprived from legal protection due to lack of required awareness. Therefore they are victimized and subjected to domestic violence etc. And through the "legal counseling class" we are trying to bring awareness amongst the women members of the UP as they are representing the women of grassroots level.

Khan Foundation felt that legal education cannot be looked in isolation from its role, nor from its needs and objectives. It cannot also be free from the demands the society makes on it. Legal education need to be viewed as the total comments for a legal or demand the role of law in relation to the society and its development. Thus law, legal education and development are not only inter related with each other but have become an integrated concept for many developing society seeking to ameliorate the socio- economic condition of the people through democratic process. therefore, Khan Foundation has undertaken a class during the training entitled "Legal Counselling".

C.15 Legal Counselling for Women who are Non Members

BOX STORY 2

Empowerment of Women through Monitoring Cell & Legal Counseling

A 32 year old women Khodeza Begum was involved in the development activities for long time and always protested against the corruption of some male members of the UP. For this reason the villagers always encouraged her to participate as a candidate either for a general seat or for a reserved seat in the Union Parishad elections 1997. However, the chairmen and male members in her Union created obstacles so that Khodeza Begum does not succeed to getting a nomination paper in view of her strong opinions. Then one of the existing women members (who is our trainee) advised her to contact the Khan Foundation regarding this problem in the context of KF's Legal Counseling Programme. When she made contacts with us, we asked her to consult the thana Nirbahi Officer and Deputy commissioner regarding this problem. We also showed her ways as to how she would make contacts with above mentioned local Admin Officials. She was then able to get directly to them and procured the nomination paper, contested the election and finally got elected as women member from the reserved seat.

The example shows how the general members of women community can benefit from KHAN FOUNDATION's can benefit from its Monitoring Cell and Legal Counseling even though they may not be EWMs.

C.16 Future Plan of Khan Foundation Regarding Legal Counselling

Although we are providing legal counselling through one of the sessions during the training programme as well through the monitoring cell, we have a plan to open an independent cell for legal counselling as part of Khan Foundation's regular ongoing programmes. At present we are not able to provide any financial assistance if it is required to run a case but we are trying to provide legal protection to the women members whenever possible through voluntary services of our lawyers and through those women lawyers with whom the KF has informal contacts. The services may be extended to the needy in future in the event that the available funds allow us for such undertaking.

D. Publication of Quarterly Bulletin “Trinamul”

D.1 Introduction

Khan Foundation has been organizing a participatory training workshop for the Newly Elected Women Members (NEWM) of the UPs and the training entitled "Effective Involvement of Newly Elected Women Members in the Local Government Structure" with a view to strengthening the grassroots level democratic institution. During the training KF felt that Members were not quite aware about their roles and responsibilities as Women Members of the UP. KF also felt that in order to achieve effective participation of the Women Members in the Local Government Structure, it is important to make them conscious about their roles and responsibilities by having regular contact with them as well the need to be familiarized with their experiences and opinions. Trainees (women members) have also requested the KF to establish a regular contact mechanism with them. In this context, Khan Foundation is publishing a quarterly bulletin with the belief that the bulletin can become an effective source of information and communication, being an essential requirement for the empowerment of the individual members as well as for the strengthening of the democratic process. KF felt that publishing a Bulletin is a convenient, popular and important media for making contacts with 14,000 women members of the UP. We also have a class in the training programme entitled "Trinamul" (meaning "The Grassroots") to make the participants aware of the value and the strength of the print media in their search for self respect as well as in the process of their empowerment.

D.2 Objective achieved through the Publication of the Newsletter "Trinamul"

- Providing timely information about relevant issues of the UP;
- Increasing skill and awareness of the women members;
- Acting as an effective instrument for exchanging information, opinions, experiences and so on.
- Providing updated information related Union Parishad;
- Reporting on current issues relating democracy, voter education, women and children related issues etc. with color photograph for visual effects particularly for those who cannot read and write;
- Acting as a platform for the denouncement of irregularities in the operation of the UPs as reported by members of the NEWMs network.
- Reporting as Forum for exchange amongst the NEWMs;
- Promoting the development initiatives on women & children related issues;
- Disseminating the Programme related activities of the Khan Foundation.

The news letter has already gained strong support from not only the Women Members but from the other readers as well. We usually distribute the Newsletter individually to all the UP Chairmen of nearly 4500 UPs all over Bangladesh as well as to other relevant people in the field level in addition to around 14000 NEWMs. Distribution of 20,000 copies of each issue of "Trinamul" to every nook & corner of rural Bangladesh is a daunting task for the Foundation starting from compilation, editing, designing and printing of the each issue of the Newsletter, the massive task includes marking the 20,000 copies ready by addressing, folding, stamping then individually and finally making sure that the post office appropriately cancels the stamps in order to ensure their proper delivery.

D.3 Methodology of the Session of "Trinamul" during the Training Programme

In the class the trainer made a replica (mode) of the publication through the effective participation of the Women Members following manner:

During the class trainer asked the Members to submit brief articles and news relating to their Union Parishad, or to their success or to their women and children related issues in their respective area.

These items are collected, read out one by one and posted on the boards in the room. In this way a model of the publication or newsletter has been developed.

Through this model the trainer tries to express, as we became aware of the information of each others Union Parishad within a short time. So in same way, we can reach information's on different subjects to every corner of Bangladesh within short possible time by publishing the publication.

In the class the trainer also persuade them (women members) to contribute for publication by providing news concerning problems they face during discharging of their duties, report on the violence against women and children in their respective areas, information relating sources of trafficking (if the reporter is the member of the UPs which are situated on the border) etc.

The trainer also explains that KF has section in the newsletter called "Apnader Chithi Pelam" to provide solutions to those problems which they send us through correspondence. So following the above mentioned methodology, the trainer explains the essence and utility of the publication of such newsletter.

The newsletter has already gained strong support from not only the Women Members but from the other readers as well. We usually distribution the newsletter free of cost amongst all the UP Women Members and Chairmen to nearly 4500 UP's all over the Bangladesh as well as all District and Thana administration and other relevant people in the field level.

Distributing if 20,000 copies of each issue of "Trinamul" to every nook and corner of real Bangladesh is a daunting task for the Foundation starting from compilation editing designing and printing of the each issues of the newsletter, the massive task includes marking the 20,000 copies ready by addressing, folding, stamping then individually and finally making same that the post office appropriately cancels the stapes in order to ensure their proper delivering (A note off the record: one would be surprised to learn that the KF has to arrange

for canceling each of these 20,000 copies at the Post Office by our staff as the Post Office simply refuses to accept such "large number of copies" for posting at a time).

D.4 Positive responses from different sectors relating to Newsletter "Trinamul"

KF has received tremendous response from each corner of Bangladesh for "Trinamul". Such response is not only from women members of the UP but also from private and Government sectors. Renowned libraries as well from general citizens, even different organizations (who's names are not yet in the distribution list) are showing interest to be regular subscribe to such a newsletter. We have received most of the letters from those organizations which mainly work with grassroots people stating that "Trinamul" helps them to know about current position of the Union Parishad and women and children related issues. We have been receiving letters from women members to publish these in the "Trinamul". after reading out all the letters, the editorial board selects letters which are to be published in the Newsletter.

D.5 The Impact of the Newsletter "Trinamul" to its Readers

BOX STORY 3

Letter to the Editor

(from Shuchitra Rani Ghose, Lebutala, Jessore)

I can't tell you in words how many times read the "Trinamul" after I receive the quarterly copy. In particular, there has never been any mouthpiece for us in past like what we have now in Trinamul. Until now all the feelings and secrets wishes of the Women have gone to eternal rest along with them in the absence of a vehicle where they could be published. Today we have the opportunity to say it all. Women are so much so oppressed in our society that they never had the opportunity to express their minds.

I am a member of the UP since 1989. But I have never been given the chance to show my talents. I also heard that the government provides special benefits to women who are elected thrice to the UPs. I have already been elected thrice, yet I have received no special treatment in the UPs. As such we were never given any importance in the UP Meetings since we were so long members selected or elected through a small electoral college. In any case now I am a directly elected member and yet I was not given any authority until I went through the KHAN FOUNDATION Training Programme and demanded my rights in the UP Meetings.

I did not get any employment even though I passed my College Final in Science and obtained the Primary Teachers Training Certificate. Wherever I went for a job, some one asked for money. Where shall I get so much money for getting a job?

Although I am not sure how much direct help we can get from the KF in other respects, yet I can say that KHAN FOUNDATION has set our eyes open. For instance, in the past I was afraid to talk, but after I went through the Training programme, I am no longer afraid to speak out. Both men and women are equal citizens of the country and I want to work side by side with men with your help. Let us work a bright future for the country.

Unplanned/Unexpected Achievements

1. **H**usband and family members gradually encouraged the NEWMs to participate in KF workshops on more and more occasions which was not quite expected at the outset of the programme. As a matter of fact, it was initially apprehended that they may be obstructed by their husbands to come as far for the training programmes. The changing attitude of the menfolk in realizing the importance of the programme together with the women themselves is considered to be a real advancement in modulating the mindset of our rural population and a major achievement of our programme.
2. **D**istricts and Thana Administration have been most successfully liaised by the FOUNDATION to provide their all out support for the one-day outreach training programmes for the NEWM's. This has been made possible through the unique goodwill of the FOUNDATION already created all over the country and several occasions the FOUNDATION has been acclaimed for organizing this very useful programme which in the remark of many District Commissioners should have been the responsibility of the Government itself and congratulated the FOUNDATION on its ambitious and novel approach to the strengthening of the Local Government System in the country. As a consequence of this successful involvement of the District/Thana admin in the Programme, an obvious outcome has been the easy accessibility of the NEWMs to the highest tier of admin in the local levels on the one hand while on the other the Admin itself accorded appropriate importance to the women members parallel to their male counterparts.
3. **A** major impact of the well circulating newsletter has come in wake of the comments, observations and incidents reported by the NEWMs in one or other of the 4500 odd Unions and getting through to the rest of the country as printed materials in addition to dissemination of their own identity around the country. It has been reported by the NEWMs that "Trinamul" (the newsletter), in addition to the purposes for which it was initially started has acted as a watchdog in the rural society against any malpractice/injustice against women, children and other disadvantaged groups for fear that the offenders would be exposed around the country even though most such offenders are not worried as much about the legal actions (which are mostly utterly slow and ineffective), they had to be careful about the media publicity aspects. As a consequences many Chairmen and male members in the UP meetings and deliberations thought it wiser to accord appropriate importance and accommodation to the women members in the decision making as well as project implementation processes.
4. **O**ne other point we could not foresee before embarking on the project relates to the impact of the documentation prepared by the FOUNDATION for the purposes of the training. We were concerned about the lack of literacy amongst the participants and whether they would be able to make the best use of the training manuals. It was heartening to note that the participants not only made an effort to read the manual themselves and wherever necessary this being an impetus to learn as to how to read

and write themselves, but even took recourse to their children and others to read out the manual to them where they were absolutely unable to do it themselves. Furthermore their sincerity of their purpose to the training was demonstrated by the fact that they clung to the manual once they received it during the initial one-day training at the field level and brought them back to Dhaka along with them when they came down for the In-depth Follow-up Training Programmes at times more than a year after their initial training.

5.  One additional spin off of the programme has come in the context of the direct elections of the women members to the Union Parishads. While a major objective of our project was to lead to direct election of the EWMs, which has been successfully achieved through our advocacy, along with those of the others, the training programme has resulted in added awareness of the women members in establishing their accountability towards their constituents as their attention had been drawn during their Training Courses not only towards their duties and responsibilities but also to their credibility with the voters during the subsequent elections in faithfully discharging their duties to the UP as well as to their constituents.

Specific Recommendations

1. **C**overing of NEWMs around the Whole Country under the Training Programme
2. **F**urther Refresher Courses for the In-depth Training Programme
3. **S**trengthening of Monitoring Cell
4. **S**trengthening of Members Forum
5. **M**ore Frequent Issues of the Publication and Covering Wider Circulation

Conclusions

Khan Foundation designed this project on **"Effective Involvement of Newly Elected Women Members in the Local Government: A Participatory Approach"** as a unique combination of two burning issues in the country viz. Women and Local Government. It may also be mentioned here that the Foundation has been the pioneer in the country in this area of work and the major achievements of this project have been specifically noted in sections on the Project Summary and Unplanned/Unexpected Achievements of this report. The Foundation takes this opportunity to express its gratitude to the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bangladesh for very kindly appreciating this project and extending support to this programme which has already contributed significantly not only to the Empowerment of Women in the country but also to the process of strengthening of the Local Government System in the country bringing enormous benefit to the people of this country at large. Essentially this exercise has resulted on the one hand in improving the social conditions of the underprivileged and the disadvantaged in the country by involving the women population in the country in the development related decision making process and on the other, contributed to the sustenance of the democratic process in Bangladesh by way of strengthening the roots of democracy which the FOUNDATION believes lie in the local government infrastructure of our country. The Foundation's effort through this project has already been appreciated home and abroad and the project has been visited by most important personalities in this country as well as dignitaries from around the world including the Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, Dr Nafis Sadik. All these visitors, without any exception, have expressed their unqualified appreciation of the Foundation for carrying out such an arduous and painstaking task all around the grassroots level, at times in difficult socio-political conditions obtaining in the country as well as total support for this one programme, which many believe can change the face of this country, if pursued systematically and consistently. Appreciation has also come rather "remarkably" from the highest to the lowest tiers of the government officials at the local levels who have appreciably admitted that the FOUNDATION is rendering exemplary services to the country which should in fact have been provided by our government. The Foundation now believes that with the future expectation of a strong and meaningful local government system in the country, together with the effective involvement of women in the process, the Training Programme should be fully institutionalized and can in fact continue to be a permanent feature in the sustenance of the democratic process in the country. It is further gratifying to note here that at the initial stages of the design and formulation of the project lot of our contacts expressed their reservation regarding the success of the programme component in particular, related to the In-depth Training Workshops in Dhaka in that the women members could not be successfully mobilized at this level. At the end of this phase of the Project their apprehension has been proved wrong by the tremendous response we received from the target group to this component of the Programme (*op. cit.* Box Story 1) which confirmed the Foundation's point that it would be worthwhile to bring the local level NEWMs to the capital not just for the sake of providing good quality and international level facility centre for training but also for an appropriate exposure of the NEWMs, many of whom may not have left their village homes during the whole of their lifetime. In order to make this effort successful, the Foundation itself contributed to this project by providing a free in-house dormitory for the women participants coming from far away villages in the country and providing them an environment commensurate and congenial to an extensive and rigorous full time (nearly a) week-long training programme.

In this respect, it may be further mentioned that the FOUNDATION is one exceptional PVDO amongst the thousands of such organizations in the country who have been working towards setting up a permanent institution of its own by way of substantial infrastructural family contribution towards achieving the Foundation's future aims and objectives. At the same time, having made such contribution, the FOUNDATION now deems it appropriate to seek Institutional Support from the development companions in order to supplement its humble efforts in this challenging task, in addition to Programme Support for further expansion of this Project to its next phase.

Implementing the Project :

An Arduous Task under Difficult Socio-Political Conditions

BOX STORY 4

The Chittagong Episode

Women Members informed KF in our meetings physically by the letters, when they came in Dhaka for In-depth training, most of the participants gave answer to 5-6 questions in pre-test out of 27 and after completion of the training 75% the participant gave answered 21-23 in posttest out of 27.