

BIWN organizes a press conference in Dhaka and shares the situation of violence against indigenous women reported in 2014

On 31st January 2015, Bangladesh Indigenous Womens Network (BIWN) organised a press conference to share the situation of violence against indigenous women in Bangladesh reported in 2014 at roundtable hall of Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Among others, the conference was attended by joint secretary of Bangladesh Mohila Porishod advocate Rakhidas Purakayastha, coordinator of Bangladesh Nari Pragoti Songha Dilara Rekha, Lecturer of Women and Gender Studies department of Dhaka University Sabiha Yesmin Rossy, Executive Director of Kapaeeng Foundation Pallab Chakma, indigenous rights activists Rakhi Mrong and leaders of BIWN. The press conference was moderated by Chanchana Chakma, member secretary of BIWN while the press statement was presented by Chaitali Tripura.

The press statement reads violence against indigenous women have increased in the recent year. In 2013 the number of violence against indigenous women was 45 among which 32 were in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and 16 were in the plain land and in 2014 the number of violence against indigenous women was reported 75. Among the total reported violence in 2014, 51 cases were in the CHT and 24 were in the plains, out of which 117 women have been sexually and physically abused. Among the total victim women, 21 have been raped or gang raped, 7 women have been killed after rape, 55 women were physically assaulted, 21 were attempted to rape, 2 were sexually harassed and 11 were kidnapped or attempted to kidnap.

In 2014, in comparison of 615 victims of attempt to rape and rape and gang rape in among from mainstream Bengali women reported by ASK and 83 victims among indigenous women reported by Kapaeeng Foundation, almost 12% victims of sexual violence in 2014 are among from indigenous peoples who possess around 2.0% population of total population of the country. On the contrary, 88% victims of sexual violence are among from mainstream Bengali people who possess 98.0% population of the country.

One of the key objective to commit sexual violence against indigenous women is to create terror among the indigenous population intrinsically linked to the sexual desire, creation of tension among the indigenous peoples in order to uproot them from their ancestral lands and ultimately to grab their lands illegally. The other reason behind causing the violence against indigenous women are – non-implementation of the CHT Accord, cultrue of impunity, political influence etc.

Addressing in the conference Rakhidas Purakayastha said, government should take immediate steps to end violence against indigenous women. As a citizen of the country indigenous women have the rights to have justice and they should demand the justice for all these violence occurred against them. Bangladesh Mohila Porishod will always be with the movement of indigenous women, she added.

Dhaka University teacher Sabiha Yesmin Rossy said, physical and mental rehabilitation is important for the survivors of violence. Therefore, government should take initiatives to rehabilitate the victim.

Dilara Rekha said, the figure that the BIWN presented today is very frustrating. Civil society and progressive groups of the country should stand strongly for ending culture of impunity. Therefore to improve current worried situation of indigenous women, BIWN forward the following recommendations to the pertinent authority of the State:

Take effective initiatives to stop violence against indigenous women and children

To punish the perpetrators of violence against indigenous women and children

To provide adequate legal aid, medical support, counseling and compensation to the victim.

To implement the UPR recommendations - elimination of violence against women and end culture of impunity that was promised by the government of Bangladesh during the 2nd circle of UPR in 2013.

To fully implement the CHT Accord giving priority to declare a time bound road map for proper and effective implementation and to amend the CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission Act based on the 13 point amendment proposals finalised by the CHT Regional Council and the CHT Affairs Ministry.

To form a separate land commission for the indigenous peoples of the plains to recover the dispossessed ancestral lands of the indigenous peoples.

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