On 14 September 2017, the Roundtable Discussion was organized by Bandhu Social Welfare Society (Bandhu) at Conference Room, Prothom Alo, CA Bhaban, 100 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka. It was a joint initiative with the Daily Prothom Alo under the title “Recognition of Third Gender: Obstacles & Way Forward” to pursue and speed up the process of addressing human rights issues of Third Gender community at the policy making level.

A total of 55 eminent guests representing NHRC, Social Welfare Department, Media personnel, Professors, Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Journalists, Govt. Health Sectors, NGOs, INGOs, CBOs, and educational Institutes attended. Mr. Shale Ahmed, Executive Director, and Md. Fosilul Ahsan Director-Program, Bandhu Social Welfare Society (Bandhu) and Community representatives also participated to the forum.

The objective of the event was to create awareness about ‘Third Gender’ among Civil Society to bring ‘Hijra Community People’ into mainstream population. Mr. Abdul Kaum, Associate Editor, Prothom Alo welcomed the distinguished guests and shared the objectives to the forum.

Anisul Islam Hero, Chairman, Bandhu Social Welfare Society, gave a brief description about the activities of Bandhu Social Welfare Society including 1, 3, 5, 13, 16, 17 goals of SDG. He focused on the employment of Hijra community people.

A participatory open discussion was moderated by Mr. Abdul Kaum, Associate Editor, Prothom Alo after the demonstration of documentary film “Will This Change”.

The major recommendations of the discussion are:

- Mr. Kazi Reazul Hoque, Chairman of National Human Rights Commission spoke about the legislation of Anti-discriminating Law, employment & inherent culture of Hijra people. He committed to create job opportunity for Hijra Community people and also recommended Social Welfare Department to come forward for Hijra Community.

- Robayet Ferdous, Associate Professor of the Mass Communication and Journalism Department of Dhaka University, He accentuated constitutional recognition, quota system in job sector, reserved seats for Hijra Community in the Parliament for bringing Third Gender People into mainstream.
• Khandakar Rakibur Rahman, Director General of the NGO Affairs Bureau Bangladesh committed to review this issue in family life, be positive about them in personal life and provide a friendly working environment for his staffs.

• Abdul Baten, Joint Commissioner of the Detectives Branch (DB) of Police and Tarit Kumar Saha, Assistant Director AIDs/STD Programme, Health Department and A.S.M. Amanullah, Professor, Department of Social Science, Dhaka University all are emphasized on legislation & changing attitude towards Hijra Community people to bring them into mainstream.

• Sharmoela Rasool, Chief Technical Officer, UNDP, focused on steps adopted by the Government to minimize discrimination and demonstrated a research result conducted in Bangladesh where 36% of the victims responded about family detachment, 43% respondents replied about their inhibited movement by family & 40.54% spoke about being victimized by family.

• Ezazul Islam Chowdhury, Senior Programme Manager of ICDDR’B said to provide training to doctors about dealing with Hijra people for better health care at public health facilities.

• AKM Nur-un-Nabi, Professor, Department of Population Science, Dhaka University, accentuated on creating special platform, bringing gaps of Parliamentary Recognition of Third Gender into limelight, receiving education & making project for eliminating poverty.

• Mehtab Khanam, Professor of Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology, Dhaka University underlined the requirement of disseminate clear concept about Hijra people among the general population. So primary school level should be the platform for changing attitude to achieve desired goal.

• Gazi Mohammad Nurul Kabir, Director General of Social Welfare Department, spoke about adult allowance of tk. 600 which are being disbursed among 2500 Hijra who are above 50 years, sub-scholarship which are being received by 1350 Hijra, supply of livelihood training & allocation of tk. 10000 as capital which are being allocated for 50 Hijra in 8 districts, establishment of industries through land requisition in 12 districts.

• Artist Sadia Islam Mou emphasized on ensuring conducive environment for basic education and provision at educational institution. She spoke about inherent talent of Hijra people.

• Shammi Hijra emphasized on legislation regarding property and spoke about being victimized during receiving medical treatment because of ignorance of medical officers about Hijra community.

• Anuri Hijra asked about the lacking in legislation for Hijra community. Solution was asked for the discrimination faced in government medical.

• Chaity Hijra spoke about the problem faced while showing NID Card because card image didn’t match with current face image. She claimed for quota system & name changing opportunities in higher education. She demanded job opportunities also.