Minimizing Stigma of Gender Diverse People
Effective Social Behavior Change Communication with Stakeholders

A Study Report by
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BANDHU SOCIAL WELFARE SOCIETY (BANDHU)
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We are thankful to Bandhu Social Welfare Society (Bandhu) for selecting us to conduct this research titled “Minimizing Stigma of Gender Diverse People: Effective Social Behavior Change Communication with Stakeholders”. The assignment created a unique opportunity for us to capture certain insights of development issues, normative factors and challenges that the development agencies and actors may find useful in gradually minimizing the stigma assigned to the Gender Diverse People (GDP) in Bangladesh.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bandhu</td>
<td>Bandhu Social Welfare Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCC</td>
<td>Behavior Change Communication</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organization</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gender Diverse People</td>
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<td>HCF</td>
<td>Healthcare Facility</td>
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<td>Hijra</td>
<td>Transgender people</td>
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<td>HRO</td>
<td>Human Rights Organization</td>
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<td>KII</td>
<td>Key Informant Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEC</td>
<td>Information, Education and Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBTI</td>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex</td>
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<td>RGDP</td>
<td>Rights of the Gender Diverse People</td>
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<td>SBCC</td>
<td>Social Behavior Change Communication</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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Executive Summary

Bandhu Social Welfare Society (Bandhu), a human rights organization working in Bangladesh to promote and protect the rights of the Gender Diverse People (GDP), commissioned a small-scale research titled “Minimizing Stigma of Gender Diverse People: Effective Social Behavior Change Communication with Stakeholders” to follow up on a previous study on the effectiveness of the IEC materials developed and used by the organization. However, taking into consideration the successes the SBCC (Social Behavior Change Communication) models in other sectors, this study seeks to understand the normative factors stigmatizing the gender diverse people, and identify the guiding actions to minimize the stigma of the GDP.

The objective of the study is to understand the effectiveness of the SBCC with the stakeholders for minimizing the social stigmatization of the GDP in Bangladesh. The specific objectives of the study are: (i) To identify the societal, cultural (contextual) and normative factors of the stigmas against the gender diverse people; (ii) To develop an understanding of the relevant stakeholders’ attitudes to and perceptions of the life, livelihood, culture and stigma toward the GDP; and To examine the usefulness of the existing IEC/BCC materials developed and used by the organization; and (iv) To identify the gaps and recommend a need-responsive, effective SBCC model including the IEC materials to positively influence the behavior of the stakeholders.

The review of the scholarly articles and studies on stigma, deviance and labeling identifies a lack of understanding of the social stigma of the gender diverse people and the underlying factors causing the stigmatization of the GDP in the context of Bangladesh. Hence, it is imperative for the study to capture the qualitative snapshots of stigma, and then to examine the effectiveness of the IEC/BCC materials in minimizing stigma of the GDP in Bangladesh.

Given the research objectives and scope of work, the consultants have followed a participatory approach and adopted the qualitative method, and collected qualitative data from a variety of stakeholders in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Sylhet cities, and also the project staff through meeting, Key Informant Interview (KII), Focus Group Discussion (FGD), observation, and validation workshop aided by checklists.

The study has found that a variety of popular words are used in the communities to identify the gender diverse people as “kalanikita” (stigmatized), “achhut” (untouchable), “kharap manush” (bad people), “kulangar”, “hatobhaga” (ill-fated or unlucky), “abanchhita” (unwanted), “apod” (burden), “unacceptable”, “asprishya (untouchable)”, “ghrinno (despicable)”, “ashuva (evil)”, “harmful”, “unwelcome”, and “undesirable”. The community people believe that the hijras (transgender), gays and lesbians are born because of the sinful acts of their parents. The GDP are ignored, undermined, harassed, scorned, teased and mocked in the communities often because of “different bodies” and “different behavior” that shock the traditional perceptions, norms, rules and values. The GDP have argued that they suddenly encounter irresistible biological and behavioral changes that cause discrimination while the family and community members find these physical and behavioral changes “abnormal”, “demonic”, “unexpected”, and therefore, “shocking”. As the family members do not accept the GDP for their behavior being different and activities debatable, and do not allow them to attend any family events, the GDP get treated as the aliens in their families and communities and experience an acute identity crisis. In this process, the GDP have earned “badnam” (bad name) and received a variety of negative “khetabs” (labels) due to their “abnormal” behavior creating adverse impacts on their socioeconomic life while the terms used to categorize them as “transgender”, “gay” or “transsexual” have made them the objects of popular scorn, contempt and ridicule. As the families cannot accept them as the “woman in the body of a man or the man in the body of a woman”, they break ties with their families, seek the shelter of their gurumas,
and live in harmony with them. Since they cannot behave “normally” with other members, they experience verbal abuse, humiliation and even physical assault not only at home but also in academic institutions, workplaces and transports. They do not get equal/equitable access to the public services as per the laws of the land, and consequently experience severe economic hardship which compels them to employ coercive and offensive techniques sometimes for their survival. The religious leaders perceive that religions have deep influence on the social behavior of community people. While religion does not accept any other gender identities than the traditional male and female categories of gender the elites remain active to maintain the religious norms, rules and instructions. According to them, the transgender people are expelled only when their families consider them “burden” on the ground of their economic insecurity.

Regarding the uses of the IEC/BCC materials, the study has found that the project has designed and developed a good number of IEC/BCC materials for primary, secondary and tertiary levels of audiences with well articulated messages relating to health, human rights and social inclusion for the GDP and the influential people. It is found that most of the respondents are aware of the rights of the GDP and able to articulate their rights. However, most of them have reported that the attitude of their family members, members of the extended of the families and other community people to the GDP is still “negative”.

The findings indicate that the stigma of the GDP remains rooted deeper in the soil of the social and cultural institutions constructing a variety of “tokmas” (labels) to enforce the social marginalization and exclusion of the GDP. The labels are linked to social and religious beliefs, taboos and prejudices embedded in the social values and norms. The stigma of the GDP is maintained through the social construction of badnam (bad name), negative images, meanings and connotations to limit the rights of the GDP to freedom and participation and eventually to enforce the social rejection of the GDP. Data also indicates that the family and community behavior of ignoring, neglecting, deriding, marginalizing and excluding a “deviant” member is a patterned response to the institutionalized cultural conformity and sustainability. The findings also indicate the social, cultural and political failure to recognize the WHO-defined diversity of the “gender identity” and “gender expression” of the people living with their differences in the mainstream society.

Given the analyses of the systemic factors causing and maintaining the stigmatization of the GDP, the findings relating to the uses of the IEC/BCC materials indicate the development of a significant level of knowledge among the GDP and their families, communities and service-providing agencies. However, the study does not find the expected level of behavior changes among the stakeholders as it appears that the materials do not address the social norms and factors that influence the social behavior.

Based on the findings and their analyses, the study team recommends the following measures:

- Develop a detailed SBC strategy and action plan;
- Develop the Key Messages for Behavior Change;
- Adapt the Recommended Model of Social and Behavior Change;
- Develop SBCC Monitoring Framework based on the strategy;
- Develop an advocacy plan to influence the access of the GDP to all basic services without any obstacle; and
- Undertake a comprehensive study to broaden the understanding of how the social stigma is working for the gender diverse people to stay isolated from the mainstream community, and revise the SBC strategy accordingly.
1.0 Introduction

This section introduces the study. Bandhu Social Welfare Society (Bandhu) commissioned a small-scale research titled “Minimizing Stigma of Gender Diverse People: Effective Social Behavior Change Communication with Stakeholders” to follow up on a previous study conducted in 2018 to assess the effectiveness of the IEC materials developed and used by the organization. Taking into consideration the successes the SBCC (Social Behavior Change Communication) models have achieved in other sectors, particularly in addressing critical social, sexual and health issues, however, the study seeks to understand the normative factors stigmatizing the gender diverse people, examine the uses of the existing communication materials, and recommend a set of guiding actions to minimize the stigma of the GDP.

1.1 Study Background

Bandhu, a human rights organization working for quite some time in Bangladesh to promote and protect the rights of the Gender Diverse People (GDP), is currently implementing a project titled “Rights for Gender Diverse Population (RGDP)” funded by USAID for a period of 15 June 2018—14 June 2021 to protect the rights of the GDP and mitigate the discriminations against them. Addressing the key themes of (gender) equality and non-discrimination (dignity), the efforts made so far by the project to reach the goal are focused on strengthening the network through the building of knowledge and capacity among stakeholders including the legal aid organizations/forums, elected bodies, journalists, university students, social elites, CSOs, CBOs, religious groups, etc. The results of those efforts have now encouraged Bandhu to expand its operational space and accommodate other important stakeholders to influence a transformational change in the lives of the GDP through stakeholder awareness and behavioral change. Taking into account this key component of behavioral change, Bandhu developed a variety of Information, Education and Communication (IEC)/Behavior Change Communication (BCC) materials and commissioned a study in 2018 to assess the effectiveness of the materials and also to identify the future needs. Based on the study recommendations, the organization further developed a new set of BCC materials and used them in the field. Alongside this activity, Bandhu undertakes this follow-up study to understand the stakeholders’ perceptions of the life and livelihoods, culture and stigma of the GDP; and to identify a guideline to formulate an SBCC strategy and tools in protecting the rights of the GDP, and use them effectively in communicating with the stakeholders with an aim to minimize the stigmatization of the gender diverse people.

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of the study is to understand the effectiveness of the Social Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) with the stakeholders for minimizing the social stigmatization of the Gender Diverse Population (GDP) in Bangladesh.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify the societal, cultural (contextual) and normative factors of the stigmas (exercise of judgments, choices, practices and sanctions) against the gender diverse people;
• To develop an understanding of the relevant stakeholders’ attitudes to and perceptions of the life, livelihood, culture and stigma toward the GDP;
• To examine the usefulness of the existing IEC/BCC materials developed and used by the organization to communicate with the stakeholders and remove the barriers to the advancement of the GDP; and
• To identify the gaps and recommend a need-responsive, effective SBCC model including the IEC materials to positively influence the behavior of the stakeholders.

1.4 Scope of Work/Specific Tasks
In order to achieve the research objective(s), the study team has accomplished the following tasks as per the ToR:

• To attend the entrance meeting with Bandhu senior management and project staff;
• To develop tools and instruments for data collection;
• To share the tools with the project management and finalize them incorporating the comments from project staff;
• To review all related project documents, ie project proposal, reports and monitoring data;
• To review all IEC/BCC materials;
• To meet and discuss with communities for whom the IEC/BCC materials have been developed;
• To meet and discuss with project staff—especially who use the materials;
• To discuss with relevant stakeholders and Bandhu management, and analyze the data;
• To analyze the data which will be collected though desk review, key informant interviews, interviews and focus group discussions;
• To prepare draft research report and share it with project management for feedback; and
• To address the comments and feedback and submit the final report to Bandhu.
2.0 Literature Review

This section provides a modest review of relevant literature, made available so far within the study period, to develop a conceptual background of the study.

Studies have detected that Hijras or “Third Gender Population” played important roles in the royal courts of the Islamic world, particularly in the Ottoman Empires, during the Mughal rule in India, and in British India where the landlords used to employ the hijras to provide musical entertainment and male sexual services. In Bangladesh, the scenario appears different due to the influence of the prevalent religious dogmas and beliefs dictating a conservative attitude towards the practices of homosexuality being considered a “heinous sin” in the eye of the Islamic ideology and a deviant behavior in the cultural context of the country. As the same sex relationships are not considered “normal” in broader social framework, the people with different sexual orientations are “labeled as either a sinner or a sick person”. Due to a lack of the state recognition of sexual minorities in the country, the LGBTQ+ community and the citizens conforming to sexual minority community are sanctioned and even reported killed in some cases. Moreover, the country’s Penal Code 1860, Section 377 prohibits any unnatural sexual intercourse (homosexuality) being a criminal offence punishable with life imprisonment or ten years imprisonment along with fine. This particular section causes a lot of commotion subjecting the LGBTQ+ people to police harassment even if there is no infringement of the law by the GDP and even though the Constitution of Bangladesh confers equal rights and dignity to all citizens including the gender diverse community. Further, the personal laws which are governed by the religions—Islam, Hinduism and Christianity—restrict the access of the LGBTQ+ community to their property rights due to the prevalent notion of male and female gender identities which cannot be changed in fear of blasphemy. Given the stated social, cultural and legal backdrop, the society appears to indulge in community intolerance and backlash due to its exercise of stigmatized judgment against the LGBTQ+ minority for its deviant identity and behavior. Hence, it remains a formidable challenge for the society to change its traditional mindset.

The study on “Deviant Bodies, Stigmatized Identities, and Racist Acts: Examining the experiences of African-American gamers in Xbox Live, New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia” by K. L. Gray (2012) discusses the sociological theories and empirical studies where stigma is defined as a sign or a mark that designates the bearer as “spoiled” and, therefore, as valued less than “normal” people (Goffman 1963). The stigmatized individuals are perceived as individuals who fail to conform to normative standards in society due to their deviant identity and behavior. The deviant identity is the result of formal or informal social sanction linked to the performance identified as deviant behavior. Deviance is mostly a social construct while the deviant behaviors are agreed upon in most real-world settings. In the broad sense, deviance is a term that refers to behavior that does not conform to socially accepted norms established by rules. Hence, the stigmatized individuals are considered deviant social creatures rather than legitimate participants. Alternatively, the deviant individuals will be stigmatized only when their deviance is associated with a negative attribute that “discredits the bearer” (Dovidio et al. 2000). In the context of the study, Gray argues that the minorities are constructed as deviant bodies as they fail to conform to the default norm. The four factors that influence and determine whether the stigmatized individuals will elicit negative social sanctions are: (i) visibility of the deviant attributes; (ii) the social context where the social
actors are immersed in; (iii) presence of the deviant body disrupting the normal process of social interactions; and (iv) the decoding capacity of the audience.

The Sociology of Deviance (in "21st Century Sociology") is the study of the social forces and processes involved in the formulation of such evaluative standards, violations of those standards, and reactions to such violations. According to Jensen (2007), the sociologists have chosen the concept of “deviance to encompass a variety of forms of human conduct defined or reacted as wrong, bad, immoral, illegal, or worthy of condemnation or punishment. According to the study “causal” theories assume that there are real, observable variations in conduct that violate discernable shared norms that can be explained by measurable features of society, groups, and/or people. However, a popular perspective on deviance for the last 30–40 years focuses on the construction and application of deviant labels and their consequences for those so labeled. This perspective has been called “labeling theory,” “constructionist theory,” and “interactionist theory” (Jensen 2009).

According to Valerie Jenness & Gilbert Geis, the sociologists who study deviant sexuality have documented the plethora of ways in which sex, sexuality, and sexual desire are social products. They have pointed out that it is not the behavior but the process that regards the person and the behavior as deviant. The individuals who initiate the labeling must convince others that affixing a derogatory designation onto individuals who behave in a certain manner is desirable. This means that the label must satisfy the needs of those who affix it. The scholars also argue that the judgments of sexual deviance can be the weapons employed by those trying to see that others following the different paths are defamed. In short, the term “sexual deviance” can be narrowed by use of a yardstick that declares deviant as anything not done by most other persons (Jenness & Geis 2007).

Howard Becker has pointed out that deviance is rather a consequence of the application to an “offender” by others in control of rules and sanctions. Therefore, the ultimate measurement of whether a person or an act is deviant depends on how others of power and influence define the act. The social acts and actors violating the norms of society can be termed “rule-breaking behavior” and “rule breakers,” respectively. However, the terms “deviant behavior” and “deviant” will be reserved for acts and actors labeled as such by a social audience (Becker 1973).

John Kitsuse (1962), a noted sociologist of deviance, has it made clear that it is the response of the conventional and conforming members of the society who identify and interpret behavior as deviant that sociologically transforms the rule-breaking behavior into deviance and the persons who break rules or norms into deviants (Kitsuse 1962). However, sociologist Paul Tappan argues, “It is unwise for the social scientist ever to forget that all standards of social normation are relative, impermanent, and variable” (Tappan 1947: 101).

Antonio Ludici & Massimo Verdecchia in “Homophobic Labeling in the Process of Identity Construction” (2015) refer to Lemert (1967) and Goffman (2010) who suggest that an individual who does not comply with the rules and the related social control may induce the processes of stigmatization, which is defined as “a process that leads to publicly label people as morally inferior, using negative labels, brands, […] or information publicly widespread” (Lemert 1972, p. 91 tr. it.; Goode 2004). The labeling produces multiple effects, such as a downgrading of status (Moses 2010), the transition from a person with his/her own biography to a generalizable “type” (Iudici and Faccio 2013; ludici et al. 2014; Koken 2012).
David M. Frost (2011) in a study on “Social Stigma and its Consequences for the Socially Stigmatized” provides a holistic perspective of the perpetration and experience of social stigma. Social stigma is the foundation for stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. Stigma, stereotypes, and prejudice are partially nested within one another. Stigma further results in structural inequalities that prevent stigmatized groups from full participation in society. All elements of the perpetration of, experience of, and response to stigma are embedded within the ways societies are structured. Structural manifestations of stigma shape the life opportunities of stigmatized individuals (for better or worse), even in the absence of others who are prejudiced or act in discriminatory ways towards them. The experiences of stigma for stigmatized groups and individuals can be usefully framed in terms of stigma-related stress. Stigma-related stress exists as acute and chronic discrimination, expectations of rejection, management and concealment of stigma, and internalized stigma. Stigma-related stress is a negative force in the lives of stigmatized groups and individuals, and can result in a number of negative mental health, physical health, performance, and relational outcomes while the responses to stigma take the form of coping, social support, and meaning-making processes.

Labeling theory provides a distinctively sociological approach that focuses on the role of social labeling in the development of crime and deviance. Once individuals have been labeled or defined as deviants, they often face new problems stemming from the reactions to negative stereotypes (stigma) attached to the deviant label (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1967). In the words of Lemert (1967), deviant behavior can become “means of defense, attack, or adaptation” (p. 17) to the problems created by deviant labeling. Labeling requires processes to influence deviant behavior. Deviant labels are associated with stigma, which means that the mainstream culture has attached specific, negative images or stereotypes to deviant labels (Link & Phelan, 2001). Hence, the members of the stigmatized groups may be more readily policed, sanctioned, and stigmatized. Minorities and impoverished individuals may be more vulnerable to informal labeling as well. The stigma attached to deviant labeling can stir up processes that can lead to exclusion from relationships with conventional others and from legitimate opportunities. Specifically, labeling may lead to social exclusion (Link, 1982). Also, stigmatized individuals may internalize their perception of their devaluated status, resulting in low self-worth (Kaplan & Johnson, 1991; Zhang, 2003 cited in Bernburg 2009).

The study on “Labeling Same-Sex Sexuality in a Tolerant Society That Values Normality: The Dutch Case” by Jantine van Lisdonk, Lorraine Nencel & Saskia Keuzenkamp informs that the predominantly homophobic societies of the western countries have been transformed into the ones with an increasing tolerance for homosexuality due to the increased legal and social acceptance and normalization of homosexuality. Normalization refers to “processes of social acceptance, so that LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) people are not seen as any different from anyone else” (Richardson & Monro, 2012 cited in Lisdonk et al, 2017). Thus same sex-attracted (SSA) people feel part of mainstream society due to this process of normalization. The study reveals that the participants de-emphasized their sexual identity, othered, and reinforced the hetero/homo binary. They preferred labels without connotations to gender expression. It discusses the findings against the backdrop of “Dutch tolerance,” which rests on an ideology of normality (Lisdonk, Nencel & Keuzenkamp 2017).

The study on “LGBT World Legal Wrap up Survey” reveals that Bangladesh is one of the countries prohibiting sexual relations between men, but do not prohibit such relations between the women, and that prohibit artificial insemination treatment for single women and women in a same sex relationship.
However, the country is not among those which allow sexual relations between persons of the same sex; which prohibit relations between persons of the same sex, both male and female; where sexual relations between persons of the same sex may be subject to death penalty; which include sexual orientation as a protected category in the constitution; which prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment; and which prohibit hate crimes propaganda or have penalty increasing laws for hate crimes based on sexual orientation (Ottosson, 2006).

In a study titled “Stigma towards Gender Diverse Population in Educational Institutions”, Inspira explores the barriers of the gender diverse people to access the educational services and acceptance in the academic institutions. While seeking to recognize the stigma towards gender diverse population in educational institutions, the study reveals that the educational environments are not free from Homophobia/Trans phobia as the gender diverse children often bullied by their classmates, friends and, even teachers and give up their education to escape their regular experiences of humiliations and assaults. The study while providing an account of discrimination and exclusion experienced by the gender diverse people at the personal, social and systemic levels argues that the stigma impacts them in a variety of ways. These include gender ambivalence, loneliness and depression at the individual level; rejection, verbal abuse, assault and forced migration in families; classroom bullying and teasing in academic environments; and public harassment and discrimination in workplaces, washrooms and transports. It also points out the definitional ambiguities and exclusion from the national policies at the systemic level, and lays an emphasis on formulating a comprehensive gender policy and code of conduct for all the educational institutions.

The study on “Political Economy Analysis for Gender Diverse Communities in Bangladesh (2019) reveals that the gender diverse people in Bangladesh are “the most vulnerable people” facing all kinds of harassment, stigma, discrimination, marginalization and exclusion, and living without social recognition, acceptance, respect and dignity. They do not find access to political participation and benefits due to a lack of “specific political identity”, office and position in the political parties even though the Hijra community people have been recognized as the “third gender”. While the “Hijras” visit the healthcare facilities (HCFs) for services their different sexual identity confuses the healthcare professionals. They experience discriminatory treatment and sexual harassments in academic institutions because of the disclosure of their sexual identity. They experience serious income hardship due to a lack of access to employment in the public and private sectors while the disclosure of gender and sexual orientation causes discrimination and harassment at the workplace and eventual loss of employment. Hence the study argues for constitutional amendment to recognize the GDP, formulation of a separate policy guideline, antidiscrimination law, incorporation of the GDP issue into the National Gender Policy, and elimination of stigma and discrimination, their active participation in the policy making, networks and political constituencies, and employment generation (Amanullah, Ahmed and Abir: 2019).

In the study report titled “Ensuring Legal Status of the Gender Diverse Population in Bangladesh: Defining Gender Terminologies”, Anjum et al (2020) provides an account of the definitions of the gender terms relating to the gender diverse people in addition to the ‘Third Gender’ purview recently acknowledged in the context of Bangladesh and also the existent barriers and social reactions to such definitions in the legal regime. The literature review of the study finds that homosexuality is a punishable offence due to the Section 377 of the Penal Code labeling the LGBTQ+ people as “deviant” in most Asian countries including Bangladesh and criminalizing their sexual intimacy. The study also finds that all the major religions in
Bangladesh do not approve of homosexuality and argues that any move of legal reforms supporting the cause of the gender diverse people may cause strong social reactions including a charge of blasphemy. However, the study reveals the varying notions and perceptions of people about the gender diverse people, and argues that their “ignorance and misconceptions” remains a barrier safeguarding different civil and political rights as well as the right to inheritance, guardianship and adoption. Hence, the study lays an emphasis on enacting a separate legislation for defining the different gender terminologies or amendment to include them in the existing legislations, and decriminalizing the different gender identities to ensure their safety, security and right to life.

The study titled “Gaps in the Election Process and Voter Rights of Third Gender Population in Bangladesh” (2019) analyzes the current socio-economic, legal and human rights situation of third gender population, underlying issues and gaps of the election process and their voter rights and suggest the feasible ways of minimizing the gaps. It finds that the recognition of the Hijra community as the “third gender” is yet to reflect any change in the behavior of the political actors and public service providers as they continue to be humiliated, abused and molested in the workplaces and polling booths. They do not think that they are able to contest the elections and participate in the political campaigns due to the Election Commission’s lack of “clear perception of the third-gender identity” causing its inaction relating to a separate voter list recognizing the different identity of the TGP, and also due to a lack of the social recognition of their deviant sexuality and identity. The authors of the study report argue that the factors that caused the failure to create a separate voter list for the TGP include “a lack of communication between government bodies, stand-alone government services and dearth of sensitization”. Hence, they report underscores the need for the complete definition of the TGP discourse and a discreet manual of the transgender population, formation of a ‘Hijra Welfare Board”, and particularly an Ant—Discriminatory Act to ensure that the GDP participate in the political or election process (Salahuddin, Amanullah & Ahmed: 2019).

The recent study titled “Ensuring Human Rights for the Gender Diverse Population in Bangladesh: The Protection Perspectives” makes an attempt to “clearly define gender terminologies” and to identify the existing barriers and social reactions to the definitions in the legal regime. It captures the various perceptions from people of different backgrounds and shows that sensibility of tolerance towards the gender diverse population is growing among the younger generation; however, the same sensibility is not reflected in the rest of the society. Hence, the study recommends the need for the proper recognition of the gender diverse population to concede their existence in the constitution and in relevant laws (Reza S., 2021).

A study titled “Assessment of Effectiveness of Information, Education and Communication Materials” was conducted for Bandhu to assess the effectivness of the IEC materials developed by the organization to make people aware and change their behavior by using the materials. It reveals that the materials created “great impacts” by raising the stakeholders’ awareness about their rights, and preventing HIV/AIDS. The messages delivered through the materials such as the brochures, booklets and leaflets were understandable to most of the project participants. However, the beneficiaries having low reading skills found difficulty understanding the messages conveyed by those materials while the majority staff involved in communicating the messages to the stakeholders lacked clear communication knowledge and skills in using the IEC materials following the BCC process. Hence, the study argues for revising the existing materials, developing dialogical and action-oriented audiovisual materials, formulating a strategic guideline/manual on BCC, and providing BCC training for staff (Kamal & Dawla, 2018).
Given the theoretical discussions of the scholarly articles and studies on stigma, deviance and labeling, none of the studies reviewed above so far provides any insights and analyses to deepen the understanding of the social stigma of the gender diverse people and the underlying social, cultural and economic factors causing the stigmatization of the GDP in the context of Bangladesh. The study conducted to assess the IEC materials as discussed above reveals that the materials developed and used so far by the organization do not appear to be focused on minimizing the prevalent forms of stigma as it has not been studied to show how it is working against the GDP. Hence, it is imperative to conduct a comprehensive study on stigma at first, and then to assess whether the IEC/BCC materials were well tailored to minimize stigma affecting the well-being of the gender diverse people in Bangladesh.
3.0 Methodology

3.1 Methodological Approach

Given the research objectives and scope of work, the consultants have followed a participatory approach and adopted the qualitative method including a set of interactive data collection tools that best suit the need for gathering data of relevance to the enquiry. The study has been conducted in close consultation and cooperation with Bandhu management.

3.2 Review of Literature

The team of consultants has undertaken a modest review of literature including similar studies available so far and project documents including the IEC/BCC materials as directed by the ToR. The review of the study reports has helped develop an understanding of the societal, cultural (contextual) and normative factors of the stigma (exercise of judgments, choices, practices and sanctions) of the gender diverse people as well as reassess the effectiveness of the IEC/BCC materials covered by the previous studies.

3.3 Inception/Entrance Meeting

Following the agreement with Bandhu, the team of consultants attended a kick-off meeting with the project team of Bandhu. The meeting helped the consultants to better understand the assignment, study objectives and scope of work and gain important insights. The meeting also created an opportunity for the study team to articulate the research objective and specific objectives to better address the research problem, and accommodate methodological coherence and modifications in order to deliver the research output within the scope of work and the stipulated timeframe.

3.4 Sampling People and Strategy

Considering the research objectives, Covid-19 pandemic situation, study locations, resource allocation and timeline, the team has followed the Purposive Sampling Strategy and collected data from the gender diverse people (GDP) and their parents, representatives from the legal aid organizations/forums, social elites, university students, media professionals and journalists, lawyers, watchdog members, youths/adolescents, and leaders of civil society organizations (CSOs), human rights organizations (HROs), community based organizations (CBOs) and religious groups and institutions in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Sylhet cities, and also Bandhu senior staff, and project staff. The study being qualitative does not consider the number of respondents for the size of the data; however, it continued to gather a rich set of qualitative data from the above-stated sample distributed across the four cities until it hit the saturation point.

3.5 Data Collection

The team of consultants has adopted the following techniques and tools and administered them following a detailed data collection plan in consultation with the client.
3.5.1 Data Collection Techniques and Tools

The techniques employed by the study team to gather data include Meeting, Key Informant Interview (KII), Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Observation, and Validation Workshop. These techniques have been aided by checklists prepared and pretested before their final administration in the field.

3.5.2 Field Researcher Recruitment and Training

Two educated and experienced field research assistants (FRAs) recruited and oriented by the team have assisted the researchers in collecting the data.

3.5.3 Interview with Project Staff

The study team has conducted interviews with all relevant project staff to crop up their experiential perceptions and insights regarding the uses of the IEC/BCC materials given their understanding of stigma.

3.5.4 Key Informant Interview (KII)

Key informant interviews (KIIs) have been conducted with the officials of the legal aid organizations/forums, elites, university teachers, parents of the GDP, CSO leaders/activists, media professionals and journalists, lawyers and watchdog members to gather their perceptions and notions about the stigmatized GDP, and feedback on the IEC/BCC materials as well as their suggestions for improving the materials.

3.5.5 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The consultants have facilitated the FGDs with community representatives, leaders/members of the community based organizations (CBO), university students, and youths/adolescents to collect data relating to their understanding of the stigma of the GDP, and also to obtain their feedbacks and suggestions on the materials.

3.5.6 Observation

During the data collection, the consultants have observed how effectively the materials are being used to communicate the intended messages to the people.

3.5.7 Data Quality and Reliability

To ensure the increase in data quality and reliability, the consultants have maintained the standards of respect to cultural sensitivity, privacy, time preference, and building trust with the respondents.

3.5.8 Consideration of Ethical and Corona Pandemic Issues

The respondents have been assured of the confidentiality of their identities and the data generated from them. The researchers have chosen not to tape the interviews. No coercive measure has been used during the data collection. Pseudonyms have been used in the report. Moreover, considering the health risks
associated with the Corona pandemic, the team has strictly followed the “No Harm Policy”, and opted for an online mode of data collection as and when necessary.

3.6 Data Management and Analysis

The data captured from the primary sources have been elaborated, checked and cleaned. They have also been coded, categorized and illustrated with quotes. The team has analyzed the findings to identify the communication gaps/barriers, challenges, recommendations and way forward, and draw inferences from the review of literature.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

The study remains limited to selective stakeholders relevant to the study. As it is not possible for the team of consultants to reach out to them due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the consultants have opted for the virtual mode of data collection in most of the cases which limited face-to-face interactions and consultations. The virtual interviews with the stakeholders have caused communication barriers and constraints to some extent that might have some impacts on the quality of the data presented in this report.
4.0 Findings

This section provides an account of the stakeholders’ varying perceptions relating to the stigma of the gender diverse people, and the effectiveness of the IEC/BCC materials in overcoming the stigmatization of the GDP. This section is divided into two sub-sections—the first describing the stakeholders’ perceptions about the stigma, while the second sharing the findings relating to the advocacy interventions and materials.

4.1 Understanding Stigma of Gender Diverse People

This sub-section narrates the findings, captured during the different stakeholders, to develop an understanding of the systemic factors contributing to the process of stigmatizing the gender diverse people.

4.1.1 Popular Notions about Gender Diverse People

The in-depth discussions with students, parents, lawyers, journalists, religious leaders, teachers, elites, community leaders, and public officials have captured a variety of popular words used in the communities to identify the gender diverse people. According to the respondents, “Hizra” means “kalonkita” (stigmatized), “achhut” (untouchable), and “kharap manush” (bad people). At home, they are regarded as “kulangar”, “hatobhaga” (ill-fated or unlucky), “abanchhita” (unwanted), “apod” (burden), “unacceptable”, and so on. The other tokmas (brand) mentioned by the religious leaders include “asprishya” (untouchable”), “ghrinno” (despicable), “ashuva” (evil), “harmful”, “unwelcome”, and “undesirable” that are used widely to identify and categorize the gender diverse people. The respondents have noted that with these “khetabs” (labels), the gender diverse people leave home to unburden their families (“apodmukta kore rekhe jay”).

4.1.2 The People Born Cursed

The FGDs and interviews have identified a popular belief that the gender diverse people are born cursed. According to the FGD participants, the community people believe that the hijras (transgender), gays and lesbians are born because their parents’ had “bad physical union” and because their parents had “sexual intercourse during a full moon”. Therefore, the birth of the transgender people is a sinful act of their parents. These people carry along the curse of being “abnormal” from the beginning of their lives to the end, and therefore, they struggle a lot to live in their families, rent an independent shelter in the communities, find a sustainable access to the academic institution, enjoy rights, services and entitlements, and get employed in the public and private institutions.

4.1.3 Different Body with Different Behavior

The gender diverse people (GDP) are perceived and considered “different” from the two common identities—male and female. Interviews and discussions with the key informants have found that the GDP are the “different” people with “different bodies” and “different behavior” that shock the traditional perceptions, norms, rules and values. Most of the key informants have argued that the society, families and fellows at school and workplace cannot put into a category the gender diverse people with different bodies and behavior. The family and community members unable to recognize the gender difference and
diversity object to the “strange” behavior of a woman in the body of a man. Thus, the gender diverse people become the strangers and victims of common fun and derision in their own families and communities. One respondent notes:

*During a field visit, while I was talking to a member of a “Hizra” community, I noticed that the people around were watching us differently. They were eying me curiously and suspiciously.*

During the FGDs, the participants have said that they are ignored, undermined, harassed, scorned, teased and mocked in the communities often because of their different identities, nature and behavior. They also have said that they face difficulties finding houses to hire for living because the owners avoid them due to personal dislike for their different sexual orientation and in fear of community criticism. The GDP note:

*Nobody accepts us because we are different. People look at us differently because we behave like the women. People call us half ladies. In fact, we are sexier than the normal men, so we tend to be intimate whenever we meet. Seeing this, people think we are bad and abnormal, so they mock and hate us. Now they make fun by calling us transgender, gay and transexual.*

### 4.1.4 Transformational Passion for Becoming the “Other”

While narrating the experiences of their physical and behavioral changes, most of the GDP participating in the FGDs have opined that their parents reared and raised them alike with other children in their families but at one stage of their growth, however, they encountered certain inevitable and irresistible transformational changes that developed gradually in them as they grew up. Along with their sudden biological and behavioral changes, they experienced discrimination as they have articulated below:

*We change because we are driven by our intrinsic passion for change. The desire transforms us. Men want to become women and the women to be the men. This is the basic instinct that changes our behavior.*

### 4.1.5 Response to “Abnormal” Passion and Behavior

Stating the grounds for the parental “discrimination” against their children of “different” bodies and behavior, the parents of the gender diverse boys have said during the key informant interviews that it is unacceptable to them that their sons dress like the girls, put on chemise, wear gold ornaments, stay at home, and cook meals instead of playing in the field and going to market. One key informant notes:

*Boys are born to be strong, energetic and outward. They must not stay home to cook meals. What answer do we give when our people ask about the strange behavior of these boys? We can’t show our faces to the community people and our relatives. We feel teased and ashamed.*

Similarly, the study has found few families where the girls behaved “abnormally” like the boys. The mothers while sharing their views during the interviews have argued that it is not normal that the girls dress and behave like the boys because everybody dislikes it, and the society does not tolerate the young girls moving and staying out of home willfully and mixing with boys freely. They have argued that they do not allow the boyish behavior of these girls in fear of the criticism of the neighbors, social elites, religious leaders, and the common people.
One mother notes:

**As a mother, I get hurt when people mock my daughter even in front of me. It’s very painful for us to keep a deviant child at home because she embarrasses the relatives and people visiting us. There are harder problems than this. If we keep them at home we won’t be able to get other children married. It will damage our reputation and social acceptance.**

The key informants have further argued that the family and community members find these physical and behavioral changes “demonic”, “unexpected”, and therefore, “shocking”.

### 4.1.6 Experience of Neglect and Humiliation

It is found from the FGDs that the gender diverse people experience harsh behavior of their parents and other members of their families. The family members do not accept the GDP for their behavior being different and activities debated, and do not allow them to attend any family events. One member of the Hizra community notes during an in-depth interview:

**I was most ignored, neglected and humiliated in my own family. My brothers are annoyed with me. They say that they will not be able to get married if the Hizra lives at home. My father used to beat me because I was different and asked me to change my behavior. But I always wanted to go out and stay with the men. What can I do? My hormone is different.**

While sharing the pains they experienced in the course of their family lives, the FGD participants (GDP) have said:

**“Nobody accepts that we are different but this is our destiny because God created us like this. We cannot go to any family event because of our womanish nature. We give them money from our income but cannot say anything when it comes to the making of family decisions. Relatives don’t like to visit our houses because we stay with our families.”**

### 4.1.7 Facing an Identity Crisis

The discussions and interviews reveal that the gender diverse people being treated as the aliens in families and communities experience an acute crisis relating to their sense of belonging. Acknowledging the problems associated with the gender differences, the police officers who attended the training workshops organized by Bandhu have informed that the people of the Hizra community, especially those from the lower income families, are not valued in the patriarchal society as they do not have the reproductive capacity. One officer notes:

**Once they visited my thana (police station) and said, “Sir, what shall we do? We are neither male nor female. Nobody accepts us. We have none in this world. Where shall we go?”**

### 4.1.8 Earning a Bad Name

Discussions and interviews with different stakeholders reveal that the gender diverse people have earned “badnam” (bad name) and received a variety of negative “khetabs” (labels) mostly in their families and communities due to their “abnormal” behavior that cause apobad and badnam (bad name) having adverse impacts on their socioeconomic life. It is also found that the terms used to identify and categorize
them as “transgender”, “gay” or “transsexual” have become the objects of popular scorn, contempt and ridicule as articulated below by the gender diverse people participating in the FGDs:

*We are the people of the third gender, so other people make fun of us. They hate us because they think we are abnormal. They call us transgender, gay, and transsexual, and make fun of us.*

The key informants have argued that the gender diverse people are “unacceptable” to the communities for their “bad” activities such as illicit sexual intercourse, and rent-seeking behavior that violate the social norms, values, principles and religious rules. They have also noted that people dislike them mostly because they (GDP) behave badly with the people, especially those who refuse to pay them the rent they demand. One member of a transgender (Hizra) community concludes:

*To change the behavior of other stakeholders, we have to change our own behavior. If we respect others we’ll get respect in return...We have been struggling for a long time to change the reality and also our destiny but we have not yet been successful in doing so. It does not mean we will not be able to do it. If we continue our efforts the change will definitely come. It will take time.*

4.1.9 Breaking Ties with Families and Aligning with Homogenous Community

During the interviews, the respondents have argued that the gender diverse people “cannot show faces to the community people because of the sex taboo”. The respondents have also argued that while the families cannot accept the “woman in the body of a man as well as the man in the body of a woman”, the gender diverse people break ties with their parents, siblings, and kiths and kins and find the new places that accommodate them with comfort. The GDP have opined that they break away from their families because they experience verbal abuse, humiliation and even physical assault as they cannot behave “normally” with other members. The key informants have reported that there is “no room for the Hizras in the society” as people do not like them to rent their rooms and houses to live in. Finding no secure places to live in, they seek the shelter of their gurumas, and live in harmony with them.

4.1.10 Abuse and Harassment in Academic Institutions, Workplaces and Transports

The FGDs with the GDP reveal that most of them were admitted to the schools but they could not study far because of the different identities developing in their bodies and minds. The FGD participants have said that while they were changing in terms of behavior it appeared abnormal to the other students and even the teachers who used to tease, humiliate and affront them publicly and privately. For these reasons, in many cases, they find it very hard to find access to higher education for their different identities. However, Sonali Rahman, a member of the gender diverse community, shares her different experience by saying:

*I am very lucky that I managed to pass the higher secondary education. While I went to a new college for admission, the principal refused to get me admitted. He said, “We can’t admit you because it will create a lot of problems. In the classroom, you won’t find a place to sit because others will not feel comfortable to share their seats with you.” However, I managed to get admitted later on with the help of my guruma.*
Contrary to this experience, the other participants of the FGDs have said that they were not able to exercise and enjoy their rights anywhere of the country, let alone their access to the schools and colleges. While sharing their experiences, most of them have expressed a common melancholic view as noted below:

*We do not get the opportunity of education at school even though we have the right to this service like food, clothes, shelter and treatment.*

Regarding the experience of discrimination and humiliation at workplace, most of the participants of the FGDs have informed that the employers usually consider that the gender diverse people are weaker than the “normal” professionals because of the GDP’s womanish nature and behavior, and therefore, offer them low-pay jobs. In support of this point of view, the most GDP participating in the FGDs have said, “We talk like the women. We walk like the women. For this reason, the employers do not like to offer us any jobs. Because of our nature, they think that we are weak.”

The FGDs reveal that the gender diverse people experience humiliation, abusive treatment and even physical assault in the transports including the bus and the train. The GDP have said that the bus staff and the passengers do not like them to get into the transports and take seats as other passengers do not feel comfortable. They have also said that seeing them in the train, the passengers express their annoyance.

### 4.1.11 Denial of Rights and Access

The gender diverse people do not get equal/equitable access to the public services they deserve as per the laws of the land. The key informants have reported that the government has not done much for these people compared to those of the mainstream society. The GDP do not receive the health services due from the public health institutions. They live with poverty as they do not find employments due to a lack of required education and skills while their property rights are not protected due to the legal complexity of the definition of their gender identity. Nonetheless, the majority participants have lamented that they are not treated well in receiving services:

*“We’re the citizens of the country. We were born equal in rights but because of our gestures we cannot enjoy the equal rights like others. They do not let us into the school. We do not get jobs and health services. It’s because people see/perceive us differently.”*  

Dipali Rahman, a member of the TG community, has said during an in-depth interview:

*Nobody shows respect to us. We are harassed and maltreated everywhere. Whenever we go to a police station to seek justice, the police officer says, “You have definitely misbehaved with them. What have you done to them? Tell me.” We return disappointed.*

It is found that the gender diverse people experience constrained access to the public and private services. The key respondents have informed that it is hard for the “Hizras” to live well as they experience humiliation in the clinics where the physicians ignore their case-specific service needs and treat them badly. They have also informed that the GDP experience discrimination in accessing employments, abuse in workplaces and transports, and assaults on the streets.

Acknowledging the problems associated with the gender differences, the police officers who attended the training workshops organized by Bandhu have argued that the people of the *Hizra* community suffer much
because they cannot live normally with their families. One officer argues that the diverse people are “not acceptable” because of their “illicit sexual behavior” between the same sexes, and also notes:

*We have said to them, if you don’t change your behavior you can’t come back to the mainstream society from the Guruma customs.*

However, while noting the progress, the participants of the FGDs have mentioned that the government published a gazette in 2013 recognizing the *Hizra* as the “Third Gender” beyond the existing male and female categories of gender, and that the government has decided to include the gender diverse people in the next population survey.

Nevertheless, few respondents have reported that they are still facing discrimination due to the negative attitude they perceive during their travel by the public transports. They have also mentioned that the police dealing with law and order are aware of the rights of the GDP but their behavior with the GDP has not changed much yet.

**4.1.12 Struggle for a Living**

It is found from the focus group discussions and interviews that the gender diverse people breaking away from their families encounter a new chapter of struggle for survival. The FGD participants and respondents have informed that the gender diverse people having different bodies and gender expression and with limited education, knowledge and skills find it very difficult to access the job market, and consequently experience severe economic hardship. While sharing the doleful experience of hardship in their “alien” communities, one participant of an FGD with the gender diverse people notes:

*I am a half-lady (as people call me). If I open a shop in the marketplace nobody will come to buy anything from my shop because I am neither a man nor a woman. So, I am not able to make my living in the marketplace.*

The interviews with the key informants reveal that the gender diverse people finding no other alternatives choose the unethical income options by exercising coercive and offensive behavior such as “*chandabazi* (rent-seeking)”, getting naked and market places, and abusing people in the public places. While narrating the acts of humiliation by a small group of *Hizra* people, one key respondent notes:

*One day, I was walking with a girl friend. Suddenly, few Hizra persons surrounded us and started making fun of me. They were mocking my body which irritated me and embarrassed my friend. While I requested them to leave us, they demanded 100 taka and said, “Give us the money, and we’ll leave you.” I found no option.*

The respondents have mentioned a few more coercive and offensive techniques employed by the gender diverse people to make their living. For examples, the gender diverse people collect money (“*chanda*”) from the ship-owners in the market, visit the marriage festivals and demand money, and get on board the transports such as train and bus, and raise money from the passengers. The respondents have noted that the rent-seeking behavior of the gender diverse people is often “embarrassing and annoying to some extent”.

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4.1.13 Controlling Social Behavior

The interviews and in-depth discussions with the religious leaders and academicians have identified certain religious perceptions, notions and practices relating to the gender diverse people. During the in-depth discussions, the Islamic academicians have reported that Islam believes in the equality of rights as it does not encourage discrimination against any persons irrespective of creed, class, culture, sex and gender. They have mentioned that according to the Islamic norms/rules, the children that behave like the girls will be considered girls, and the girls that behave like the boys will be treated as the boys. They have argued that the community cultures, decisions, practices and activities, relating to the issues of property inheritance, congregation and funeral in particular, will follow this normative observation.

The leaders of other religions perceive that religions have deep influence on the social behavior of people. One religious leader shares the following episode of the life of a transgender woman who says:

My brother was getting married. Before the marriage ceremony, he said to me, "Don't come to the event. If you come we'll be unhappy in our conjugal life." But I was born in a Muslim family, and I maintain my religious practices. Show me where the religion has forbidden me [Hizra] to attend the marriage ceremony.

The religious leaders have also mentioned a few exceptions in Hindu religion claiming that the families did not expel their members being “Hizra”. They have argued that transgender people are expelled only when their families consider them “burden” on the ground of their economic insecurity. They have also argued that the religious institutions regulate the society and the religious leaders dictate the social and political elites. They have argued that religion does not accept any other gender identities than the traditional male and female categories of gender.

The respondents have further argued that the social judgment and behavior against the gender diverse people are caused by the “polluted” social and political systems where the elites remain active to maintain the religious norms, rules and instructions.

It has been found that the families try to respect and retain the Hizra people who earn handsome income and ensure their personal as well as family well-being. The families exclude and banish those who become economic and social burden, meaning that economic insecurity remains a key factor the exclusion of the gender diverse people.

4.2 Advocacy Campaigns and Materials

This sub-section presents the findings relating to the advocacy campaign interventions and the communication (IEC/BCC) materials produced and used by the organization to support the campaign activities.

4.2.1 Campaign Strategies

The FGD participants and the respondents have informed that the campaign strategies found most useful in communicating with the stakeholders include:

- advocacy meetings;
- theater/street theater; and
- observance of World AIDS Day.
It appears from the discussions that the most appropriate medium of communication with other stakeholders such as the police, lawyers, UP chairman and member, and social elites is the advocacy meeting.

The imams of mosques have reported that they have learnt the “details about the gender diversity from the seminars and conferences organized by Bandhu” in addition to what they have learned from the teachings of Islam, especially the Holy Quran and the Hadiths. They have also informed that during the khutbah (preaching), they have shared the acquired learning with their “Muslim brothers” coming to the mosques to say prayer and “won huge appreciation” from those who listened to their preaching.

4.2.2 Campaign (IEC/BCC) Materials
The FGD participants have mentioned that Bandhu uses a variety of communication materials. However, the most used IEC/BCC materials are:

- “Sacheton o Sustha Thaki”;
- “Amio Jante Chai”;
- Flip charts;
- Condom Wheel;
- Booklet “Spandan”; and
- Ain o Alap.

The majority participants of the FGDs have ranked the existing IEC/BCC materials in the following order:

- “Amio Jante Chai”;
- “Sacheton o Sustha Thaki”;
- Spandan; and
- Ain o Alap.

They have informed that the materials were distributed among the stakeholders while they attended the advocacy meetings that take place twice a year, and recommended the flip charts and “Condom Wheel” should be updated. The SBCC materials suggested as “appropriate” by the FGD participants include:

- “Combined”, drama serial including characters representing all stakeholders;
- Video clips for TV, demonstration, on the AIDS day;
- Interpersonal communication (face to face); and
- Media: TV, YouTube. The best media of communication are TV channels and smart phone with internet connection and access to online social media services.

It is found from the discussions that Bandhu organized and facilitated training workshops and advocacy meetings for the public service officials including the police officers. During the interviews, the respondents have informed that they received from the organizer “a lot of materials” which helped them change their traditional notions about and negative attitude to the gender diverse people remarkably. One officer notes:

*It’s true that I can’t recollect the titles and contents of all the materials I received from Bandhu but I am sure I remember the key messages the materials conveyed to me. I keep it at the back of my mind while I work in my office and remain in the service due to this special category of our people.*
The imams have reported during the interviews that they received from Bandhu “a lot of learning materials” containing important information and knowledge to change the popular notions and perceptions of and the prevalent prejudices against the gender diverse people. They have also reported that the reading of those materials has developed in them a realization that the gender diverse people if given an equal opportunity can also contribute importantly to the society.

Regarding the media used to communicate the messages to the gender diverse people, the FGD participants have opined that they have received messages via the mobile phone messages, Facebook, Messenger, and leaflet. They have mentioned a problem, however, that many of those who have very low literacy skills were unable to read and understand the contents of the messages being written in English. However, they have also said, “We help those, who cannot read the materials, to understand the contents of the materials”.

Regarding the BCC materials it is found that Bandhu follows a multisectoral approach to behavior change of the primary target audience and other stakeholders related to providing services to Gender Diverse Population (GDP). The stakeholders are divided into two major categories—secondary audience and tertiary audience. From the FGDs and KII, it is found that the existing social stigma regarding the GDP has huge influence on the livelihoods, social life and dignity of the GDP in urban and rural areas in Bangladesh.

Following the assessment of IEC/BCC materials in 2018, Bandhu changed its approach from the IEC to the BCC with lot of modifications and produced new sets of IEC/BCC materials mostly for the primary target audience. However, the impact of COVID-19 pandemic has increased the use of online platforms for message dissemination as an alternative to the face-to-face interactions. Most of the IEC/BCC materials are found with a combination of pictures and key messages in action verbs that provide a clear understanding of the issues the users need to practice and promote. However, the existing IEC/BCC materials are being clustered from the audience point of view as illustrated below:

**BCC Materials and Activities Matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Who belong to this?</th>
<th>Main Materials Used</th>
<th>How were the Materials used?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Audience</td>
<td>Gender diverse population</td>
<td>বাংলাদেশের হিজড়া সমাজের অনুধান ও কর্মকান্ড</td>
<td>Shared in Education Session, Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>হিজড়া অভিজ্ঞতা</td>
<td>Shared in different knowledge-based sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors Helpline</td>
<td></td>
<td>Through online post COVID-19 session with doctor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Use Mask</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leaflet distribution through gender diverse population during COVID-19 session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What precaution should be taken when entering the house from outside in this COVID-19 pandemic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leaflet distribution through gender diverse population during COVID-19 session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold out (video materials)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Through online post and different education sessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Who belong to this?</td>
<td>Main Materials Used</td>
<td>How were the Materials used?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parody 01 (video materials)</td>
<td>Through online post and different education sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parody 02 (video materials)</td>
<td>Through online post and different education sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Audience</td>
<td>-Parents and other family members -Peers and friends</td>
<td>বাংলাদেশের হিজড়া সমাজঃ অনুষ্ঠান ও কর্মীয়</td>
<td>Shared in school sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>হিজড়া অভিজান</td>
<td>Distributed in different events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary level Audiences</td>
<td>-Community leaders -Community people -Institutions (schools, religious institutions, work places, market) -Service delivery institutions (hospital, restaurants -Law and order department -Courts - Others</td>
<td>Eid greetings</td>
<td>Through online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Research: Title of the Research: “Political Economy Analysis for Gender Diverse Communities in Bangladesh.”</td>
<td>Dissemination meeting with relevant multi-level stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Research on “Gaps in the Election Process and the Voter Rights of Third Gender Population in Bangladesh”</td>
<td>Recommendations of Research are being used in writing proposals for different projecton advocacy initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Research on Stigma towards Gender Diverse Population in Educational Institutions.</td>
<td>Recommendations of research are used in writing project proposals for advocacy initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Covid-19: Quick Survey for Community Response for TG and Hizra</td>
<td>Recommendations of research are used in writing different project proposals for advocacy initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>বাংলাদেশের হিজড়া সমাজঃ অনুষ্ঠান ও কর্মীয়</td>
<td>Distributed in different events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study findings show that the project has designed and developed a good number of IEC/BCC materials for primary, secondary and tertiary levels of audiences with well articulated messages relating to health, human rights and social inclusion for the GDP and the people who influence others in our society. The IEC/BCC materials are mostly clustered into three major mediums as below:

- Printing: it includes leaflets, posters, brochures and journals;
- Audio-visual (AV): it includes video films, video clips and audio materials; and
- Social Media: it includes Facebook, YouTube, Messenger, IMO, and WhatsApp.

From the FGDs with primary audience on the effectiveness of BCC/IEC materials, it is found that most of the respondents are aware of the rights of the GDP and able to articulate their rights. They have received necessary information regarding health, HIV and STD through leaflets and group discussion. Most of them have strongly opined that they found the group discussions very effective as those created an opportunity for them to ask questions and get clarifications. The leaflets and brochures helped them a lot to receive the key messages relating to their rights and health. However, most of them have reported that the
attitude of their family members, members of the extended of the families and other community people to the GDP is still “negative” though Bandhu has developed some IEC materials for the secondary and tertiary levels of the audience to change their mindset regarding the GDP.

**Effects of Materials on Family and Community Attitudes**

Bandhu has developed a number of IEC/BCC materials containing messages to make family and community members aware of the rights of the GDP. The main objective of developing these IEC materials is to address the social stigma that affects their (GDP’s) day-to-day life and enable them to exercise basic rights as the citizens of the country. A few parents have reported that they know the rights of the GDP as per the laws of the land, but it is difficult for them to exercise the rights because other people in the society do not accept them as the normal people. They also have reported that the parents want to keep them, but the other members of the family like sisters and brothers cannot accept them due to problems with their in-laws families. Thus, the parents feel helpless in keeping their sons or daughters (GDP) at home with them.

The IEC materials Bandhu has developed for the parents of GDP are simple and comprehensible to them and the extended family members. But the materials developed for the influential people of the community like elected members, school teachers, religious leaders, political leaders and others are mostly the IEC ones in nature.

**Tertiary Level Audience:** During the KIs with the key service providing departments like police, lawyer, doctors/nurses, it is found that they are well aware of the rights of the GDP. Few respondents have reported that police, medical service providers, now-a-day, listen to their problems which were rarely seen even five years back. However, the reality is different now. They are the government officials, government has recognized equal rights for the GDP, and therefore, the service providing agencies are bound to meet the requirements of GDP.

Most of the respondents (GDP) have reported that behavior of the people of service-providing agencies is not always supportive and generous though they provide services. The representatives of the service providing agencies (police, layer and medical professional) have opined that they received messages from seminars/workshops they attended. They have also appreciated the booklet, leaflets and journals Bandhu has published and distributed during these events.
5.0 Analysis

This section makes an attempt to analyze the findings relating to the varying perceptions, notions and judgments captured from the different stakeholders from different perspectives and contexts, considering that the organization will use the study output in developing an SBCC model that may contribute effectively to minimizing the impacts of the stigma on the gender diverse people.

With this goal and the objective taken into account, the study having captured the snapshots of the systemic factors contributing to the construction and maintenance of the stigma has detected few striking features, as presented in Section 4, indicating that the stigma assigned to the gender diverse people remains rooted deeper in the soil of the social and cultural institutions.

The study findings that the gender diverse people are stigmatized or the targets of social stigma align with Herek’s definition of stigma as “the negative regard, inferior status, and relative powerlessness that society collectively accords to people who possess a particular characteristic or belong to a particular group or category” (Herek, 2009; p. 441). The study supports the fact that the religious, social and political elites having the power of making judgment have attached the tokmas (labels) this group of people for their deviant bodies and deviant social behavior. The laws, social and public policies, religions, and other institutional structures are constructed in ways reflecting the negative meanings attached to the GDP, legitimizing their prevalent social stigma, and limiting their rights, freedom and participation in the social and public decision-making processes. Structural inequalities both stem from and perpetuate social stigma by reinforcing negative connotations of stigmatized groups via limiting their participation in society. Those who are allowed full participation in society become established as normal, and those who do not are othered and marginalized (Herek, 2007). Thus, stigma is perpetuated by those with power against others with less power (Link & Phelan, 2001).

Labeling plays critical roles in maintaining the social control exercised to restrict the access the “other” and even eliminate the differences in a closed social system. Hence, the social construction of badnam (“bad name” either earned by or created against the gender diverse people) through activities subversive of the norm of social rejection remains a crucial factor for the social maintenance of the stigma against the gender diverse people.

The popular perceptions indicate that the mainstream culture has constructed a variety of negative images to stigmatize the gender diverse people as the unholy creatures and stereotype them as the social strangers that deserve to be banished from the traditional social world. The negative social khetabs or labels (see section 4.1.1) assigned by the mainstream institutions are the deviant labels attached to the GDP having strong links to the traditional (mis)beliefs, taboos and prejudices as indicated by the cursed births of the GDP (see section 4.1.2). “Deviant labels, criminal labels in particular, are associated with stigma, which means that the mainstream culture has attached specific, negative images or stereotypes to deviant labels” (Link & Phelan 2001 cited in Bernburg 2009). Lemert (1967) argues that deviant behavior can become “means of defense, attack, or adaptation” to the problems created by deviant labeling. This relates to the coercive and offensive behavior exercised by the victims of stigma who are labeled as the
deviants (See section 4.1.12.). Stigmatization exacerbates the discrimination against the GDP, stereotyped as “bad”, which may “often entail the images of criminality” (badnam). The stigma thus attached to deviant labeling stir up the process of social exclusion and withdrawal from the conventional social relationships and from legitimate opportunities (See parental families and relatives in sections 4.1.5, 4.1.6) due to the anticipated rejection or devaluation by the mainstream, and construction of social networks (Link et al., 1989, p. 403 cited in Frost 2011).

The rejection of the stigmatized individuals and the internalization of their perception of their devaluated status result in low self-worth. Stigma further results in structural inequalities that prevent stigmatized groups from full participation in society. All elements of the perpetration and experience of, and response to stigma are embedded within the ways societies are structured. This expectation of rejection produces a cognitive burden that constitutes stigma-related stress (Frost 2011).

The data relating to the popular notions and beliefs that the gender diverse people are born cursed indicate the popular perceptions, misperceptions, beliefs, misbeliefs, taboos, superstitions and prejudices appear to be the cultural factors of the social control exercised to protect the elite-centered interest causing the eventual marginalization of those staying in unequal and weak power relations.

The study findings indicate that the popular perceptions, understanding and notion of their identities play critical roles in constructing the context-specific meanings relating to the institutional (familial, social and cultural) norms, attitudes and associated actions. It is important to note that institutions create meanings of social and political values to influence the community’s common choice, reactions and response to the different sections of people ie the GDP and maintain the social norms.

Data indicates that religion plays the powerful roles in dictating the social exclusion of those including the gender diverse people who do not conform to the norms. This means that the social exclusion of the GDP remains a systemic problem created and maintained by the religious and social institutions. The social discrimination against the GDP persists because of the religious sanctions against the different sexual orientation and cultures. Therefore, it is apparent that the discrimination against the “third gender” is the manifestation of the discriminatory social norms and values that undermine the potentials of developing cultural diversity, and indication of social injustice causing exclusion and marginalization.

The findings relating to the gradual behavioral change among the gender diverse people as they grow up indicate that the existing social engine rejects the differences (different gender identities and expressions) by enforcing its traditional beliefs, notions, judgment, and derision to maintain the discrimination against the gender diverse people, categorize them as the social strangers and subjugate them to the normative practices of social punishment such as marginalization, exclusion, expulsion and extermination. These practices are linked essentially to that of “malrecognition” which remains deeply embedded in the social construction of the cultural norms, rules and behavior that do not recognize and accept the diversity of any kind.

The “gender expression” of the deviant identities appears to be the manifestation of cultural nonconformity which is perceived to be derogatory, malevolent and malignant in the context of the mainstream culture. So, the exclusion of the GDP is a systemic reaction/response to the cultural assault of the “other” which ultimately causes alienation of the victims of the sanctions. Again, this remains manifest
in the clash of cultures among the “heterogeneous” groups struggling to assert supremacy to retain control over the territorial interests and resources. The struggle among the contested interests of the contentious cultures continues to force the “minority” groups such as the gender diverse people to acknowledge subordination to the mainstream culture.

Thus, the family and community behavior of ignoring, neglecting, deriding, marginalizing and excluding a “deviant” member is a patterned response to the institutionalized cultural conformity. The findings indicate the social, cultural and political failure to recognize the WHO-defined diversity of the “gender identity” and “gender expression” of the few people living with their differences in the mainstream society.

As shown by BCC Materials and Activities Matrix, most of the IEC/BCC materials are being used in the group sessions, seminars and workshops with the stakeholders and one-to-one counseling sessions with the GDP. The audio-visual and pictorial materials are also playing important roles in increasing the knowledge level of the primary, secondary and tertiary level audience about their rights. The findings relating to the uses of the IEC/BCC materials indicate the development of a significant level of knowledge among the GDP and their families, communities and service-providing agencies. Nonetheless, it appears that the translation of the acquired knowledge into practice lack the dialogical engagements at different levels.

However, taking into account the systemic factors causing and maintaining the stigmatization of the GDP, the study does not find the expected level of behavior changes among the stakeholders as it appears that the materials do not address the social norms and factors that influence the social behavior. Notably, human behavior is constructed in a social context and influenced by different factors in a society over the time. The shift in thinking about human behavior when supported by the society, culture and the target audience finds benefit in change. Simply, the dissemination of correct information via the IEC materials does not change behavior by itself because people construct the meanings of information based on their contexts in which they live.

It is to be noted that knowledge is not necessarily translated into action. Hence, the current challenge is to bring the target audiences from the “pre-contemplation” to the “contemplation” phase, assist them at the “preparation phase and then prepare for relapses once they are in the “action” phase.

**Key Determinant Factors of Social Stigma about GDP in Behavior Change**

As stigma is closely related to gender identity, sexuality, mis-interpretation of religious doctrines and culture, it appears that there are major obstacles to changing people’s behavior as noted below:

- Inadequate scientific knowledge about the GDP at individual, family and community levels;
- Lack of proper understanding about the universal and constitutional rights for all citizens of the country;
- Social beliefs and cultural practices; and
- Misinterpretation of religious doctrine.
6.0 Recommendations

1. Develop a detailed SBC strategy and action plan

The study team strongly recommends the development of an SBC Strategy for the GDP that will include identification of key barriers, expected behaviors of the GDP, parents, family and extended family members, communities and service outlets, key messages to change their behavior, and identify the existing communication network and channels/platforms. It is a research based consultative process to design a framework in which the role of each stakeholder will be clearly mentioned. Further analysis needs to be done to identify the root causes of the existing social stigma, develop right messages and proper channels/platforms for dissemination.

The use of the existing IEC/BCC materials should continue to reach out to the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of audience along with mass media campaign. The field staff should have adequate knowledge and skills to implement the SBC-related activities at different levels. The strategy should include the following steps.

**Conceptual Framework of SBC**

Behavior change of an individual cannot be happen and sustain by using a single source of communication. The communication with individuals by providing messages using the print and electronic media can help to enrich the knowledge only but may not be enough for ensuring practices in daily life unless the SBC framework is designed to address the key factors of the stigmas already identified. However, based on the study findings, analyses and the key barriers identified, the study team suggests the following conceptual framework of implementing SBC activities:

**SBCC is the strategic use of communication to promote positive health outcomes, based on proven theories and models of behavior change. SBCC employs a systematic process beginning with formative research and behavior analysis followed by communication planning, implementation, and monitoring & evaluation.**

Figure-1: Conceptual Framework of SBC Implementation
The SBC interventions are grounded on a number of different disciplines like Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) that include inter-personal communication (one-to-one counseling and group session), community engagement and capacity building of the service providers and related stakeholders within the community and outside. Experience has shown that high-quality SBC programming utilizing the multiple communication channels and/or non-communication-based approaches in a coordinated manner helps to achieve behavior change objectives. There are currently four identified High Impact Practices (HIPs) pertaining to the SBC: mass media, community engagement, interpersonal communication and digital approach of the SBC.

In this document, figure: 1 explains how Capacity Building, Communication for Behavior Change (IPC and mass media communication) and Community Mobilization/Engagement together will contribute to creating an enabling environment for the GDP and other community influential leaders for achieving desired change in behaviors.

Possible SBC Strategies and Activities

A. Capacity Building of Field Stakeholders: Design and facilitate training on SBC for the frontline staff who are directly facilitating the SBC-related activities with primary, secondary and tertiary level audiences. This will include the basic understanding of the SBC concept, facilitating communication for behavior change, community engagement and SBC monitoring.

B. Communication for Behavior Change: This includes both interpersonal (one-to-one and group communication) and mass communication to reach all three levels of audiences with specific message. For example:

- One-to-one discussion or counseling – use the existing flipchart, leaflet and manual; and
- Interactive Group Discussion/Communication with primary, secondary and tertiary level audience.

Mass Communication:

- Interactive Theatre at community level to address secondary level audience (community people and key persons of the community i.e. LGI representative, teacher, religious leaders, youth leaders).
- Video Film Show: Video film show at community level followed by discussion and actions to promote rights of GDP.
- TV Promotional: Prepare new TVCs to reach wider audience that includes family, community and policy level people for encouraging them to play their roles in favor of or protecting rights of GDP in their own families, communities and state.

C. Community and other Stakeholders Engagement: Under this, a number of initiatives can be taken to engage other stakeholders to create an enabling environment for the GDP in their community. The recommended interventions are:

- Organize a Community Sensitization Workshop with all stakeholders (community leaders, religious leaders, school teachers, GoB Service Providers) and help them to develop an action plan to support the GDP;
• Form a Community-level Watch Team as a technical unit in each working community to support the GDP, disseminate the SBC messages and take lead for changing people’s behavior towards the GDP. Also develop and share some success case studies/stories to protect the rights of the GDP in other parts of the country and abroad as well.

• Organize stakeholder orientation (low enforcement department, lawyers, doctors, teachers, religious leaders) – share some success case studies/stories to protect the rights of the GDP in other parts of the country and abroad as well.

The program staff should take lead to develop required guidelines and new communication materials to support the SBC interventions proposed. The study team proposes the following materials to reinforce the messages that are usually given to the primary, secondary and tertiary level audience and also to strengthen the existing SBC materials package and interventions:

• **Flash cards** – describing the issues that the GDP have been facing and their roles in mitigating those;

• **Success case stories** -that describe the roles of LGI and other stakeholders in supporting and creating enabling environment for the GDP;

• **Vide Film and TVCS** – for mass media campaign;

• **Messages** – for Social Media

2. **Develop the Key Messages for Behavior Change**

The study team recommends organizing and facilitating a message development workshop during the SBC strategy development to address the key psychosocial barriers including the social stigma and political influence. The following framework is suggested to develop key messages and behavior change objectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL No</th>
<th>Expected Behavior</th>
<th>Key Messages</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>For Whom</th>
<th>How to disseminate/ Media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 01    | Cooperative behavior of community leaders | They are also the children of families like ours. Your help can change their lives. | A set of flashcards     | Community leaders | Discussion with community leaders  Develop 10-12 flashcards showing a 0-1 year old child is growing up gradually with demonstrated differences in its lifestyle.  
Stay the differences between the boys and the girls are social construct.  
As we are willing to |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL No</th>
<th>Expected Behavior</th>
<th>Key Messages</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>For Whom</th>
<th>How to disseminate/Media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|       | The GDP are considered members of their families and treated alike. | Being born a hizra is not a curse. Their expectations may vary due to their biological changes which none can stop. | One-page leaflet containing scientific interpretations of specialists and celebrities | Community leaders | • Meeting with guardians  
• Meeting with community leaders  
• Read out the success case stories and facilitate identifying the reasons for successes.  
• Facilitate formulating implementing plans in respective families and communities. |
|       | Cooperative behavior of the officials serving different public and private institutions | They also can the national assets and resources if they are given the opportunity of living in an enabling environment. | Video film | Open to all | • Video screening and discussion at community level  
• The films may be shown in seminars, workshops and training sessions. |
|       | The service proving agencies and staff serve the GDP with care and sincerity. | They also are the citizens of the country and deserve an equal access to all opportunities and services. | TV promotional | Service providing people and agencies | • Publicity campaign through the public and private TV channels |

3. Adapt the Recommended Model of Social and Behavior Change

**Adapt the SEM Behavior Change Model in the Program**

The rural and urban people are connected with one another for many reasons including livelihood and other social relations. In a society of class distinctions, the poor people are usually influenced by classes of other people and institutions. Given this social reality of class distinctions, culture, social capital, structure, beliefs and practices, the study considers the Socio-Ecological Model (SEM) for behavior change the most suitable model.
The SBC guided by a Social-Ecological Model shows how behavior operates on and is influenced by the following five inter-connected levels:

- Individuals;
- Family and peer Networks;
- Communities;
- Organizations; and
- Policy Environment.

The study team strongly recommends adapting SEM model to include various stakeholders through media mix approach, and also recommends redesigning the existing model for adapting the SEM model.

The socio-ecological model for change is a tested model in the SBC which covers the entire society, touches the social issues and engages individuals, communities and other stakeholders (public, private and NGOs) for change. The individuals usually act in the context of families, communities, and countries. Their behaviors are influenced directly and indirectly by their social and economic groups, their physical environment, the market environment, and the public and private services and policies that guide them.

This model often used to illustrate aspects of context (see Figure 1) is viewed as one of the most relevant to nutrition SBCC. The model demonstrates how effective the SBC interventions can simultaneously facilitate change in the social, physical, market, and policy environments to enable the individuals to adopt and maintain the behaviors being promoted.

Therefore, the engagement of other family members (mother, father, elder brother, sister, and extended family members), community leaders, LGI representatives is very important to bring about changes at family and community levels. Thus, theSBC for the GDP would be a set of interventions that systematically combines the elements of interpersonal communication, social change and community mobilization activities, mass media, and advocacy to support individuals, families, communities, institutions, and countries in reducing barriers through adopting and maintaining new behaviors over the time.

4. Develop an SBCC Monitoring Framework based on the strategy

The field study has found that most of the primary and secondary audiences have received knowledge about the rights of GDP but a “Learning Action Plan” is essential to bring the knowledge to practice. Therefore, the study team recommends developing the SBC Monitoring Framework to track the changes at individual, family and community levels.
Focus attention on family, community and service points

To address the barriers at family, community and service points, the study team suggests developing new IEC/BCC materials to highlight a few key messages (after having barrier analysis) for the secondary level of audience.

The study also suggests designing some interventions to reach the following levels:

- Family session (an interactive discussion with family members); and
- Community session with influential persons in the community.

The genetic factors and rights of the GDP in other countries may be discussed in both the sessions by using leaflets and screening video films. Some success stories may also be shared in these discussions to make them understand and reinforce the messages they get from other sources.

Promote the mass media

To create a countrywide noise to promote the GDP’s rights, the study team recommends initiating a mass media campaign to reach all people in the society and reinforce the messages they receive from interpersonal communication. In this case, Bandhu may consider:

- developing promotional video films highlighting messages on community roles;
- establishing media partnership with TV channels; and
- establishing collaboration with District Information Office to disseminate messages through their ongoing film shows.

5. Develop an advocacy plan to influence the access of the GDP to all basic services without any obstacle

To ensure the access of the GDP to all basic services, a policy advocacy is highly recommended. To reach the policy level people and institutions, Bandhu should undertake the following initiatives to create a legal framework for the service delivery organizations:

- Review the existing health policy in the light of the GDP’s rights and share a draft policy guideline with the Ministry of Health and Family Affairs.
- Review the existing education policy in the light of the GDP’s rights and share a draft policy guideline with the Ministry of Education.
- Review the existing social safety net policy in the light of the GDP’s rights and share a draft policy guideline with the Ministry of Social Welfare.
- Review existing employment policy in the light of the GDP’s rights and share a draft policy guideline with the Ministry of Labour.

6. Undertake a comprehensive study to broaden the understanding of how the social stigma is working for the gender diverse people to stay isolated from the mainstream community, and revise the SBC strategy accordingly.
7.0 Challenges

From the study findings and analysis, it is apparent that there are challenges Bandhu is facing to tailor an SBCC model that may work efficiently to facilitate the transformational change among the stakeholders to ensure that the GDP enjoy equal rights and are treated with equal dignity.

- The most formidable challenge is overcoming the persistent stigma of *badnam* that remains embedded in the systemic norms, principles, and practices patterned in the social and/or cultural behavior.
- Those who have very low literacy skills are unable to read and understand the contents of the messages being written in English.
- Rankism remains predominantly an all-pervasive factor that causes the violation of dignity for all—the vulnerable and weak sections of people including the GDP in particular. So, overcoming rankism remains a major challenge facing the GDP and other stakeholders.
8.0 References


9.0 Annex

Key Informant Interview (KII)

Checklist

Participants: The KIIs will be conducted with the officials of the legal aid organizations/forums, elites, university teachers, CSO leaders/activists, media professionals and journalists, lawyers and watchdog members to gather their feedbacks on the IEC/BCC materials as well as their suggestions for improving the materials.

Major Points of Interview

1. Major social and cultural determinants affecting the GDP
   1.1 Problems experienced or faced by the GDP
   1.2 Institutional/systemic FACTORs (norms, beliefs, prejudices, taboos, practices, etc) creating, supporting and maintaining the problems
   1.3 Ranking of the factors

2. Bandhu’s (RGDP) communication interventions to change the stakeholders’ behaviour and overcome the problems
   2.1 What communication & advocacy interventions have been taken by the RGDP? (List down the answers.)
   2.2 How are they contributing to changing the patterned and embodied behaviour of the stakeholders at the (individual and) institutional level (familial, social, cultural, political, academic and service)?

3. Effectiveness & Ineffectiveness of the IEC/BCC materials developed and distributed by Bandhu
   3.1 Ask for a list of the materials used by the respondent.
   3.2 How effective? Reasons (Go one by one following the list from the respondent.)
   3.3 How ineffective? Reasons (Go one by one following the list from the respondent.)

4. Scope for INNOVATIONS
   4.1 How to improve the existing materials? Specify the rooms for change/improvement.
   4.2 What else are possible to tailor an appropriate SBCC approach to overcoming the stigmatization?

Note: Due to pandemic situation, the consultants may like to conduct the KIIs using virtual communication platforms such as, zoom or phone call or skype call based on availability and access.
FGD Checklist

Participants: Project Target Beneficiaries (community representatives, leaders/members of the community based organizations (CBOs), university students, and youths/adolescents.)

Number of Participants in one FGD: 7-10

Time: 1:30 Minutes
Venue: Any suitable place that participants prefer to sit and share their opinions comfortably.

Discussion Points:

1. Experience of abuse, discrimination, & Exclusion and Causal Factors
   1.1 Experience of abuse and discrimination at family level
   1.2 Experience of abuse and discrimination at social/community level
   1.3 Experience of abuse and discrimination in economic/private service institutions/agencies (eg market, credit, business opportunities. transports)
   1.4 Experience of abuse and discrimination in cultural institutions (eg mosques, temples, churches, clubs, CBO memberships, etc)
   1.5 Experience of abuse and discrimination in political institutions (eg political participation, election, voting,)
   1.6 Experience of abuse and discrimination in public service delivery institutions (security, protection, access to policy benefits, etc)

2. IEC/BCC materials contributing to their awareness of changes desired so far
   2.1 Awareness (knowledge and understanding) of the rights of the GDP
   2.2 What materials used to raise awareness (List down the materials)
   2.3 What changes made from using the materials
   2.4 Which materials are more useful and why?
   2.5 Which materials are less useful, and why?
   2.6 Rank the materials (contents, language, pictures, etc) used from the viewpoint of effectiveness & ineffectiveness
   2.7 To what extend are the existing IEC/BCC materials contributing to change others (family members, community people and other institutions) attitude towards the GDP. If they not working properly, why?

3. Other effective communication channels to reach and influence the non-GDP stakeholders

4. Other effective platforms existing in the community to disseminate messages among the GDP and other stakeholders

5. Recommendations for improving the SBCC approach and methodology

Note: At least two facilitators will be engaged in conducting FGDs with primary target audience to capture all key points of discussion.
Observation Checklist

Participants: Primary Target Audience

Issues/Actions to be Observed

The consultant will visit communities or office-based communication sessions facilitated by the field staff facilitates by using existing IEC/BCC materials. The following issues will be looked into during the observation:

- Engagement of the participants in discussion
- Using IEC/BCC materials and how these materials are shown to the participants.
- Materials creating or influencing participants' thinking process
- Field staff listening to participants’ opinion.
- Field staff skills in facilitation
- Using proper language
- Creating participatory environment
- Using right relevant materials
- Feedback mechanism in the sessions facilitated by the field staff
- Review of learning before concluding the session
- Doable action points generated at the end of the session
Interview Checklist

Relevant Staff of the Project (RGDP) Bandhu

Checklist

1. Understanding social stigma affecting the GDP
   1.1 Forms/types of stigma persisting in the familial, social/community, economic, cultural, political and service delivery institutions
   1.2 Problems/consequences of social stigma encountered and experienced by GDP
   1.3 Systemic factors causing the persistence of the problems
   1.4 Steps taken by the RGDP to influence changes in the stakeholder perceptions and behaviour

2. Advocacy & Communication measures adopted by the RGDP to influence stakeholder perceptions and behaviour
   2.1 IEC/BCC material development process
   2.2 Message development process and steps followed
   2.3 Specific materials/messages addressing specific social and cultural stigma
   2.4 Limitations/weaknesses of the materials developed and used to influence the stakeholder behaviour
   2.5 How easy and understandable are the IEC materials messages for mass awareness of the gender diverse issues?
   2.6 Monitoring and feedback mechanism used to assess the effectiveness of the IEC/BCC materials following the SBCC rules
   2.7 Initiatives taken to build capacity of field staff regarding implementation/uses of the IEC/BCC materials
   2.8 Do you think the existing IEC/BCC materials and the platforms are being used to disseminate messages are contributing to change people’s behaviour towards GDP? If YES, how, and if “NO”, why?

3. Room for INNOVATION and IMPROVEMENT

Note: If the country pandemic situation improves then the consultant will conduct this interview in person, if not then the researchers will opt for virtual communication approach such as phone, zoom or skype.