

Annual Activity Report

Project Period:

October 2008 - September 2009

Project Title:

Access to Justice and Human Rights (phase ii)



Madaripur Legal Aid Association
New Town, Madaripur-7900.

Contents

Foreword	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Executive Summary	2
About The Project	6
Project Title	6
Project Goal	6
Project Objective	6
Justification.....	6
Activity Area.....	7
Stakeholders.....	8
Donors	8
Description of Activities	9
Output 1: Advocacy to ensure better access to justice for disadvantaged	9
a) Workshop for dissemination of study finding at District Level.....	9
b) Bi-Monthly News letter of MLAA.....	9
c) International Day Observation.....	9
d) Advocacy Workshop at District Level and Upazilla Level	9
e) Result Analysis of Output-1	10
Output 2: Increased capacity building of duty bearers to activate local level justice	11
a) Courtyard Meeting with household members on AC & VC & Mediation	11
b) CBO Formation at Ward & Union Level	11
c) Quarterly Coordination Meeting with Union CBO Members on AC & VC & Mediation	11
d) Union Level Meeting with CBO Members & Social Elites	12
e) Experience Sharing Meeting on AC & VC & Mediation with UP Representative & others.....	12
f) Street Drama & Campaigning on VC, AC and Mediation	12
g) Human Rights and Family law workshops for Madrasa Students	12
h) Booklet and Calendar on AC / VC and Mediation	13
i) Result Analysis of Output-2	13
Output 3: Access to formal and informal justice system increased	14
a) Disputes Resolution through Mediation	14
b) Dispute Resolution through VC Cases	16
c) Dispute Resolution through AC.....	18
d) Provide Court Case Support	19
e) Follow-up of Pending & Disposed Cases	21
f) Experience Sharing Meeting with Court Case Clients of MLAA	21
g) Meeting with Panel Lawyers & Advocates' Clerks	22
h) Medical Support & Collect of Cases Documents of MLAA Clients	22
i) Result Analysis of Output-3	22
Output 4: Institutional capacity of MLAA strengthened	25
a) Training for project staffs	25
b) Training for Stakeholders on VC, AC & Mediation.....	26
c) TOT on Human Rights & Family Law for Madrasha Teachers	26
d) Gender development Meeting, Workshops and Trainings	26
e) Training support for other organizations	26
f) Project Management Workshops	26
g) Monitoring and Evaluation.....	27
h) Result Analysis of Output-4	28
Impact Assessment	29
Planned results not achieved.....	31
Unplanned Achievement	31
Problems Faced	33
Suggested action to meet the problem	33
Conclusion	33
At a Glance: Target and Achievements	34
Table of Activity	36

Executive Summary

After 30 years in three southern districts of Bangladesh, Madaripur Legal Aid Association (MLAA) has become a household name in the region and a principal vanguard of development of a sustainable society based on justice and equal rights. MLAA as a reputed NGO has produced tangible improvement and promote access to justice to the poor people, especially woman-folk in the three districts – Madaripur, Shariatpur and Gopalganj. Begun life as a provider of legal aid assistance, the association transformed itself into a NGO of numerous activities relating to legal rights and human rights with greater emphasis on reformed pro-poor traditional local justice. Notably, the organization, since the mid 1980s, has gone to devote most of its resources and services to dispute resolution through mediation (Alternative Disputes Resolution-ADR) largely in the rural areas and thus has developed an updated and professional approach to mediation, an indigenous method of alternative dispute resolution. This method, popularly now known as the Madaripur Mediation Model (MMM), beyond Bangladesh has been customised to modify the traditional mediation by eliminating its shortcomings, excluding the domination and putting emphasis on broader participation of women in the mediation process.

In addition to free legal aid and mediation services to provide free and equal access to justice MLAA has gradually considered and extended into the following programs:

- Activate Union Parishad 's adjudicative system
- Capacity building of duty bearer through training and technical services
- Strengthen institutional capacity
- Advocacy, research and publication to ensure better access to justice.

As a previous partner of MLAA Banchte Shekha (BS) one of the well known organizations has received training from MLAA on mediation and has working experience of Mediation programme in southern west part of Bangladesh. MLAA has provided training and the technical support to about 125 local NGOs including Banchte Shekha (BS) on the issue of local justice systems and has got more than 13 partners in different parts of the country. MLAA has taken an initiative for expansion of its existing programme through local NGOs. As BS was the PNGO and also experience of implementation of human rights programme MLAA has decided to expand the programme in 32 Ups of Jessore and Magura district BS and BS has become a partner of our core program with a strategy that BS will implement the programme and MLAA would provide technical supports. So that MLAA have been working in 5 districts (Madaripur, Shariatpur, Gopalganj, Jessore and Magura).

This summary of the achievement of MLAA in this period (October 2008- September 2009) have been covering the whole scenario of the activities of 132 Union Parishad of 5 districts.

To ensure justice it is essential to bring the entire population within the access of justice which is not easy and has to face various problems in process. Considering these odds MLAA initiated advocacy activities through the component Advocacy to ensure better access to justice for disadvantaged to reform law and policy in formal and informal judicial system from the grassroots level to national policymaking level.

To remove the complexities of the traditional judicial system and to change the court environment MLAA had undertaken a study on procedural complicity on family laws

and dowry last year. This study has identified problems faced in the judicial procedures, limitations and various recommendations to reform relevant laws and procedure. MLAA organized 01 workshop in Shariatpur by inviting different strategic stakeholders from district for sharing the basic findings of the study.

As a primary step to reform the AC and the VC, the advocacy unit of the MLAA organized 5 meetings in 3 districts and 10 Upazilla workshops within the project area. These were the platforms for the concerned personnel to exchange their opinions where specific recommendations to reform the laws regulating the AC and the VC were introduced.

The Yugo Chetona MLAA's bi-monthly news letter also focuses different articles on laws and human rights with a view to influencing relevant stakeholders to create a positive change in the policy level.

MLAA observes different Human Rights days declared by UN to highlight the theme of different International Human Rights Instruments to disseminate the basic idea of human rights & women rights with the participation of different NGOs and educational institutions which is a part to bring them in a networking approach.

In fact, the advocacy unit has been working continuously to influence policymaking in a planned and organized manner.

To activate an effective and functional local level judicial system MLAA conducted different training for the UP representatives, activists and local elite, religious leaders, madrasa students and govt. officials, CBO meeting & courtyard meeting for household through the component 'Increased capacity building of duty bearers to activate local level justice'. Participants of these training, meeting and workshop are exchanging and sharing opinions and experiences, discussing various problems and strategies for the solution of the problems and have been inspiring for playing very active role to settle disputes locally. As a result the number of settled disputes by the Mediation, Village Court and the Arbitration Council has increased and the systems are becoming more acceptable for the people.

In addition to these, about 50% people of project area now has informed of the Village Court and the Arbitration Council due to conduct awareness and publicity campaign, such as, courtyard meetings and street dramas.

One important thing of this component is to organize workshops on 'Human Rights and Family Laws for madrasa teachers and students' which resulting that they are becoming aware on basic foundation of human rights as well as the existing legal system of local justice and correct interpretation of Muslim Law.

The component 'Access to formal and informal justice system increased' of MLAA is to create and to increase access to justice in formal and informal justice sector for the disadvantaged.

In formal justice system MLAA conducts court cases on behalf of the disadvantaged, marginalized, destitute and the poor people, especially women, children and the minority groups to secure their rights. In the reporting year a total of 1416 cases were conducted including 988 pending cases from the previous year. Among these cases, 393 were settled, only 13 of which went against the clients of the MLAA. The rest of the cases involved imprisonment, fine, compensation and recovery of title of lands. Many

clients have been able to establish their rights with awarded and recovered money and assets.

MLAA undertook field level follow-ups for 82 pending and settled cases to examine various issues, such as, difficulties faced by the clients at various levels of legal proceedings, implementation of the secured decrees, etc. Having considered these issues, the organization has taken steps to make the different phases of conduct of cases more practical and realistic.

In order to encourage the concerned personnel and create their empathy to the poor clients MLAA organised 5 meetings in three districts with concerned lawyers and their associates, judges and representatives of the law enforcing agencies in order to encourage them to be more compassionate to the poor clients and to secure legal redresses through litigation.

Strengthen the rule of law through increase the responsibility of local govt. is one of the prime objectives of MLAA to activate UP Judicial system. The Village Court and the Arbitration Council are within the legal jurisdiction of the Union Parishad (UP) for local settlement of disputes. In the reporting period 3288 cases have been settled by the Village Court of which 2125 cases parties got compensation and possession of land. The total value of compensation and recovered land is Taka 1,32,72,986.00. The Arbitration Council has resolved 1224 disputes of which 93% beneficiaries are women and in 124 resolved disputes applicants received Taka 2,81,650.00 as maintenance.

Through intervention of MLAA in UP judicial system the opportunity of the grass-root people have increased and about 50% people of project area are informed of the Village Court (VC) and the Arbitration Council (AC). Even the VC and the AC are becoming more and more effective in local settlement of disputes due to increased awareness of the elected representatives and the local people.

To modernize the traditional, oldest and the most widely accepted shalish system MLAA developed its own model of mediation, which is known as the 'Madaripur Mediation Model (MMM)'. Under this activity MLAA has resolved 8013 disputes. The beneficiaries of 2213 disputes settled by shalish have received financial benefit of Taka 7,52,56,543.00 and in 4072 disputes regarding family matter (51%) husband and wife continued their marriage life peacefully.

Through organizing training for CBO committees and held workshops special emphasis has been given on participation and empowerment of women, which is evident and has increased women's participation in committees and training workshops.

Institutional capacity building is a continuing process, which is achieved through enhancement of organizational skill and expertise to adapt changing needs of time and circumstances. The institutional capacity building component organized basic-refresher courses and training workshops to increase skills of the workforce at various levels of the organization. The rules and regulations of the organization have been amended to strengthen its infrastructure and also make the organization well-integrated.

To incorporate gender issues at the organizational and programmatic level the gender policy of MLAA has been practised among the activists of the organization at all levels. A team of CBO is developed through gender training to involve them to create awareness on gender issues among the mass. The aim of these activities is to increase the knowledge on gender issues for the secondary stakeholders of the project.

Continuous monitoring is essential to ensure transparency in the ongoing activities and for institutional capacity building. To meet this end, the monitoring cell has been brought within a standard monitoring system, which has a computerized monitoring system to collect and analyze data and information following various techniques for data collection, such as, FGD, open questionnaires, interviewing. The cell evaluates the progress of the on going activities and prepares issue-based reports with detail analysis of overall impacts which help to determine future plan. As a combined effect of all these efforts, the MLAA is now capable of meeting future challenges in the progressive and qualitative achievements of its goals.

About The Project

Project Title

Access to Justice and Human Rights (Phase ii)

Project Goal

A society where disadvantaged and marginalized people (especially women) have access to justice.

Project Objective

Increase access to justice to empower disadvantaged people, particularly women.

Justification

The aim of the project is 'A society where disadvantaged and marginalized people (especially women) have access to justice.' The main purpose of the project is to develop and support the major stakeholders and build constituencies to link micro issues with the macro level. To achieve the above objectives MLAA will give particular focus on creating accountability and transparency within the formal and informal judicial systems. Most strategic focus will be in strengthening the UP judicial system activating Village Court (VC) and Arbitration Council (AC), which is an initiative to promote justice at the grass root level.

The previous phase project was implemented in a situation, where the formal legal systems were urban based, gender biased and time consuming and expensive. On the other hand, the poor, illiterate and disadvantaged people, particularly those who were living in the rural areas, were suffering injustice in silence. The project identified the dormant judicial system under the local government and the informal mediation process as an alternative, sustainable and cost effective approach to cover the huge requirement of legal assistance among the disadvantaged people, particularly women.

Lessons have been learnt from the previous years that the UP Representatives are highly involved in various activities and still giving less time in the AC/VC activities. Support and initiatives of local administration is a fundamental requirement to make effective local judicial systems. In formal judicial system most of the poor people are denied to get justice and also environment of the court is not in favour of the poor, particularly of the women.

MLAA's refined and modified Salish, which is known as the Madaripur Mediation Model (MMM) with the assistance of Community Based Organizations (CBOs). It (CBO) operates like traditional salish but includes skilled mediators with training on civil law and mediation procedures and helps in establishing the rights of the disadvantaged people, particularly women to ensure peaceful settlement of dispute at local level.

Based on the learning of the project, focus is given on promoting justice at grass root level through strengthening and activating Village Court and Arbitration Council within the Union Parishad. On the other hand, in comparison with the formal judicial system, mediation can address different compoundable disputes locally involving minimum cost and can provide maximum satisfaction to the disputing parties.

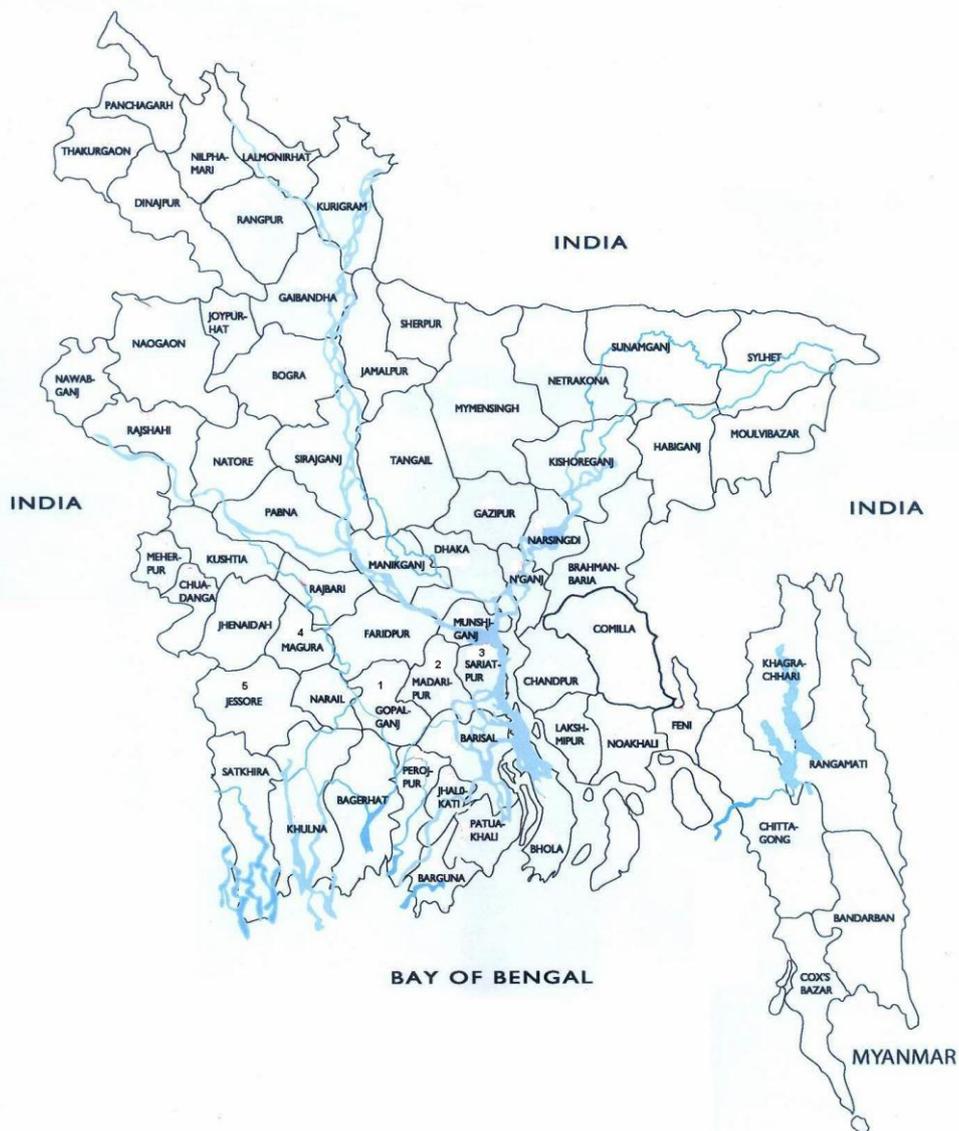
During the first phase of the project, MLAA carried out the mentioned activities for creating a solid foundation to accelerate the endeavour to institute changing context in

the project areas, where access to justice would be established for the disadvantaged people of the community. In the current phase of the project, MLLA will focus on progression and succession of project towards establishing the legal rights of the target communities to make a positive change in the legal situation and the justice system in the project areas and beyond.

Activity Area

Districts : 5 (Madaripur, Gopalganj, Shariatpur, Jessore & Magura)
 Upazilas : 20 (all Upazilas of Madaripur, Gopalganj, Shariatpur districts and 3 UZs of Jessore & 2 UZs of Magura district)
 Unions : 223
 Area : 4743 sq. km
 Households : 811,412
 Population : 41,37,132 (male 50.4%, female 49.6%)

1. Gopalganj, 2. Madaripur, 3. Shariatpur, 4. Magura, & 5. Jessore



Stakeholders

Primary stakeholders include the disadvantaged rural people, the poor, particularly women and children. Secondary stakeholders are UP representatives (chairmen and members), village leaders, panel lawyers and their associates, journalists, government officials and NGO activists.

Donors

In the reported year, MLAA activities were funded by;

HRGG-PSU, DANIDA, Dhaka
Christian Aid, UK

Description of Activity

Output 1: Advocacy to ensure better access to justice for disadvantaged

To establish justice and to make it more accessible to the ordinary people, it is necessary to take reformative measure to remove the legal and procedural shortcomings of the informal and formal justice. The advocacy unit of MLAA has been working continuously to influence policymaking in a planned and organized manner. With a view to influencing relevant stakeholders to create a positive change in the policy level and for wide dissemination on the issue of the local justice system MLAA performed following activities:

a) Workshop for dissemination of study finding at district level

MLAA organized 01 workshop in Shariatpur by inviting different strategic stakeholders from districts for sharing the basic findings of the study conducted on two major topics for promoting advocacy and policy issues. Through this activity MLAA gathered opinions of the key stakeholders regarding the findings of the research for strengthening advocacy efforts. Total 40 participants attended the workshops, among them 3 were female and 37 were male.

b) Bi-monthly news letter of MLAA

The Yugo Chetona is the bi-monthly newsletter of the MLAA. In the reported period it published 5 issues and total 7500 copies of this newsletter were printed. Yugo Chetona contains case studies, essays and articles on human rights and legal issues and activities of the MLAA.

c) International day observation.

MLAA observes the different Human Rights days declared by UN to highlight the theme of different International Human Rights Instruments to disseminate the basic idea of human rights & women rights

Observation of human rights day: MLAA organized rally, drawing competition, poster display, drama show and meeting on the issue of Human Rights. Banchte Shekha (BS), Jessore as a partner organization of MLAA also observe the International Human Rights day through organized different events. Out of total 156 participations 89 were female students and 67 male students and 16 teachers also attended from 10 educational institutions.

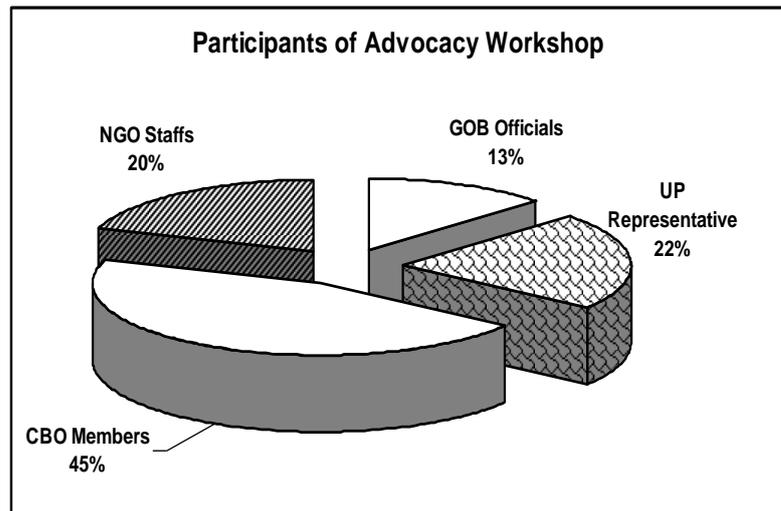
Observation of women's day: MLAA & BS organized rally, poetry recitation, drawing competition, poster display, drama show and round table meeting on the issue of women rights for observing the International Women Rights Day. Total 391 persons attended the events, among them 272 were female and 119 were male.

d) Advocacy workshop at district level and Upazilla level

The objective of this workshop is to create awareness and motivate government officials, Union Parishad representatives, and other influential people in order to ensure effective functioning of the Village Court and Arbitration Council. These workshops are a part of an initiative to enhance active co-operation among the UP, local administration

and so that they all can play a concerted and effective role in activating the VC and the AC.

During the project period partner organization BS organized 03 district workshop and 10 Upazilla workshops for secondary stakeholders of this project. A total number of 848 participants attended in these workshops. Among them 185 were female & 663 were male.



Result Analysis of Output-1

- Identified problems on procedural complicacies and uncongenial environment of court have been discussed

District level workshop in Shariatpur with different stakeholders was a forum to share the basic findings of the study on procedural complicacies and uncongenial environment of court. MLAA gathered opinions of the key stakeholders regarding the findings of the study for strengthening advocacy efforts and to remove these problems it needs continuous advocacy by concerned people which MLAA has been doing.

- Initiative has been taken for policy advocacy and lobbying through publication

MLAA's publications (including the Yugo Chetona, the bi-monthly newsletter of the MLAA) are an initiative to widely disseminate different articles on laws and human rights. These publications are a continuous process to influence relevant stakeholders to create an atmosphere in policy advocacy and lobbying.

- Observation of HR Days has been building networking among the local institutions

Observation of different human rights days declared by UN is being highlighting the theme of different international human rights instruments among the different NGO activists and students. Participation in these events is a forum to disseminate the basic idea of human rights & women rights and has been creating an avenue to bring different NGOs and educational institutions in a networking approach which strengthens them to act against HR violations.

- Action has been outlined for overcome the identified problems in VC & AC.

The workshop at district and upazilla level on VC & AC are a part of an initiative to enhance active co-operation among the UP, local administration so that they can play a concerted and effective role in activating the VC and the AC.

The participants in advocacy workshops expressed their concerns on various legal, procedural and infrastructure limitations of AC/VC. Even various problems in the

implementation of AC, VC activities have been identified in these workshops and action to resolve them has been outlined.

Output 2: Increased capacity building of duty bearers to activate local level justice

To activate an effective and functional local level judicial system MLAA conducted different training for the UP representatives, activists' local elite, religious leaders, madrasa students and govt. officials, CBO meeting & courtyard meeting through the component. A brief description of the activities undertaken by this component is given below:

a) Courtyard meeting with household members on AC & VC & Mediation

The aim of the courtyard meeting is to spread awareness and help the grassroots people, especially for rural women on legal issues, as awareness is the prerequisite for making any activities more fruitful and effective. Through the meetings participants are encouraged to know about and use the Mediation, Village Court and Arbitration Council for easy and effective conflict resolution.

MLAA facilitated 4648 courtyard meetings with the participants of 63974 household members. Among them 54231 (84.78%) were female and 9743 (15.22%) were male.

b) CBO formation at ward & union level

There are two fold of CBO committees, ward level CBO and central level CBO. Ward CBO meeting is held in 3 wards in every month in every union. In Jessore & Magura as expanded working area of MLAA, BS formed Community Based Organization (CBOs) in new 32 Unions from the rural civil society Members of the community such as UP representatives, teachers, women health workers, religious leaders, social activists, NGO workers, women group leaders and other social leaders from the respective wards & unions.

In the reporting period, Ward CBO conducted 1154 meetings, where 14634 members (5421 female and 9213 male) were participated. 22.44% ward CBO meeting chaired by the women CBO members.

c) Quarterly Coordination Meeting with Union CBO Members on AC & VC & Mediation

Union CBO Members assisted MLAA to share their experiences and overall existing condition of their respective union and also share their opinion during the period of mediation sessions, particularly to discuss on the related laws, process and mechanisms for resolving the disputes and to further monitor the status of the "agreement of the parties" for ensuring effective mediation. Quarterly meeting with Central CBOs are held once in every three months in every union.

In the reporting period, MLAA facilitated 452 central CBO meetings, where 5362 members participated. Among them 38.32% were female and 61.68% were male. Among the total 452 CBO meetings, 159 (35.17) meetings were chaired by the women CBO members.

d) Union level meeting with CBO members & social elites

The Union meeting comprises of CBO Members, social elites and local influential people who discuss the legal procedures of the Village Court, Arbitration Council & Mediation. The main objective of this is to increase awareness and motivation for making the local justice systems effective. Main information of VC & AC laws, necessity of mediation, family laws, role and duties of CBOs were the main focus in the workshops.

During October 2008 to September 2009, MLAA facilitated 127 Union level meetings at the field level. A total of 5018 participants attended these meetings, among them 1888 (37.62%) were female & 3130 (62.38%) were male.

e) Experience sharing meeting on AC & VC & Mediation with UP representative & others

The objective of this meeting is to motivate all the elected representatives and staffs of the Union Parishad in making the Union Parishad justice system more active to make sure that upcoming conflicts are resolved effectively. To enhance the effectiveness of the AC/VC activities, two important issues were considered in these meetings; firstly, various problems were faced in the AC/VC activities and secondly, steps were taken to resolve them. In the meeting the participants discussed various issues on AC/VC & Mediation.

From October 2008 to September 2009, with the help of MLAA, The Union Parishad organized this meeting in their own venue to motivate them about VC, AC & Mediation. In the reporting period 122 meetings were organized, a total number of 2197 participants attended these meetings. Among them 318 (14.47%) were female & 1879 (85.53%) were male. The UP Chairman was present in 113 Meetings.

f) Street drama & campaigning on VC, AC and Mediation

These events conducted to inform the general public about the benefits of the local justice system like VC, AC & Mediation and to increase their awareness about legal issues. Even the drama shows and campaigning activities is an effective method to disseminate the information of AC & VC to the mass.

Each drama is 1 hour long and is held in a convenient open space in the Union. Once a year, a daylong campaign is conducted in each Union with the intention of increasing awareness about the Village Court, Arbitration Council & Mediation. The project arranged different awareness campaigns through rally, hand bill distribution, poster demonstration among the communities at Union level for dissemination of VC & AC concept. The project organized 58 street dramas and 33 Campaigning at union level to focus the activities of AC, VC & Mediation. Approximately 77213 persons from village community observed the drama shows and participated in the campaign.

g) Human rights and family law workshops for madrasa students

The main objective of this activity is to motivate the madrasa students in publicly countered radical narratives in the working area of MLAA. The project organized workshops on Human Rights and Family Laws for madrasa students in its working area for sharing the basic foundation of Human rights as well as the existing legal system of Local Justice and correct interpretation of Muslim Law.

In the reporting period MLAA facilitated 48 workshops for madrasa students in 5 districts of MLAA working area. A total number of 1924 students participated in the said workshops, among them female were 1111 (57.75%) and male were 813 (42.25). Among the participants, Dhakhil (SSC) students were 810, Alim (HSC) students were 832, Fazil (BA) students were 253 and rest 29 were from the class of Kamil (MA).

h) Booklet and calendar on AC / VC and Mediation

MLAA feels it very essential to disseminate information on VC & AC and encourage people for getting justice through VC & AC. Considering this MLAA has developed training and teaching materials for the people. A handbook on the Village Court, Mediation, Arbitration Council & Family Laws was published for Banchte Shekha-partner organization of MLAA. BS used this booklet as teaching material in trainings and workshops. MLAA also published an informative calendar on VC & Mediation for the community leaders.

Result Analysis of Output-2

- Mediation system became more acceptable and CBOs are well organized

CBO members are now organized and aware of their responsibilities and are assisting to settling disputes with enthusiasm. They are directly participating in *Shalish* session. In CBO meetings they have ample opportunity to share their views on importance of CBOs, their role in *Shalish* and various local problems. CBO members have enriched their knowledge and skill on *Shalish* processes and strategies through meetings, workshops and trainings.

Participation in the workshops and meetings has been creating opportunity to disseminate the concept of gender, sensitize the gender aspect and also changing the attitude of the participants, especially male CBO members of rural level.

- Women CBO members are found actively participating and women are empowered

Women CBO members are playing active roles in *Shalish*. In 8013 mediation session 38210 CBO members were participated. Among them 5986 (15.66%) were females. In 1309 (16.33%) settled disputes, woman CBO members presided over the mediation session.

Women CBOs of MLAA are trained on mediation process and have been assisting to implement MLAA's activities in rural level. Now in Village Court, parties nominated women as panel judge out of five members. During the current year party nominated 21.53% women represented as a panel of judges of VC.

Women also attend the trial session of village Court, arbitration council and also participate the mediation session. They also participate courtyard meeting (85%), Community Based Organization's (CBO) meeting (44%). In this process women express their opinion and their decision making power has been increasing.

Women CBO members are also organized and aware of their responsibilities. Women CBO members directly help to organized ward and union CBO meeting and most of them are playing active role in CBO meeting.

In 1154 ward CBO meetings, women CBO members presided over in 259 (22.44%) meetings. In 542 Central CBO meeting, women CBO members presided over in 159 (35.17%) meetings.

- Involvement of UPs in judiciary system has been increased:

UP representatives are involved for resolving VC & AC disputes having adequate knowledge (55%) and skill (40%).

Participation of the Chairmen and the secretaries in the UP follow-up meetings has increased. Among 122 meeting chairman were presided over in 113 meetings.

Union Parishad is conducting Village Court session minimum 1 day per week and Chairmen, members and Secretaries are providing more time. Procedural rules of VC & AC are being fully followed (in 40% case) by the UP Secretaries with the assistance of MLAA staffs.

In the reporting period UPs recovered an equivalent of Tk 1,35,54,636.00 as maintenance, compensation and value of land through VC & AC. The scopes and types of redresses are expanding. They include, among others, recovery of cash, compensation, recovery of title and possession of lands, restitution of marital rights and status, entitlement to dower, maintenance, divorce, etc.

Resolving disputes locally by UP judicial system are helping to maintain social harmony and peaceful coexistence putting an end to long or short run rivalry and enmity.

- Local administrations are becoming cooperative to make VC and AC effective

District and upazila level workshops conducted for government officials helped to increase their participation in VC/AC activities. The DC & UNOs now are interested to supervise VC activities at field levels and scrutinise documents. Some times DC, ADC and UNO often worked as a resource person in the trainings organized by the MLAA.

The UNOs also act as a certificate officer for implementing the judgement or decree of VC of different union parishad

- Awareness of rural people's on VC & AC has increased

Involvement of peoples in awareness rising activity (courtyard meeting, street drama, campaigning, union meeting, upazilla workshops) increased the awareness rate of the ordinary people about the VC and the AC. Total number of applicants in both the AC and the VC has increased considerably and around 50% of people of the working area are informed about UP judicial system.

Output 3: Access to formal and informal justice system increased

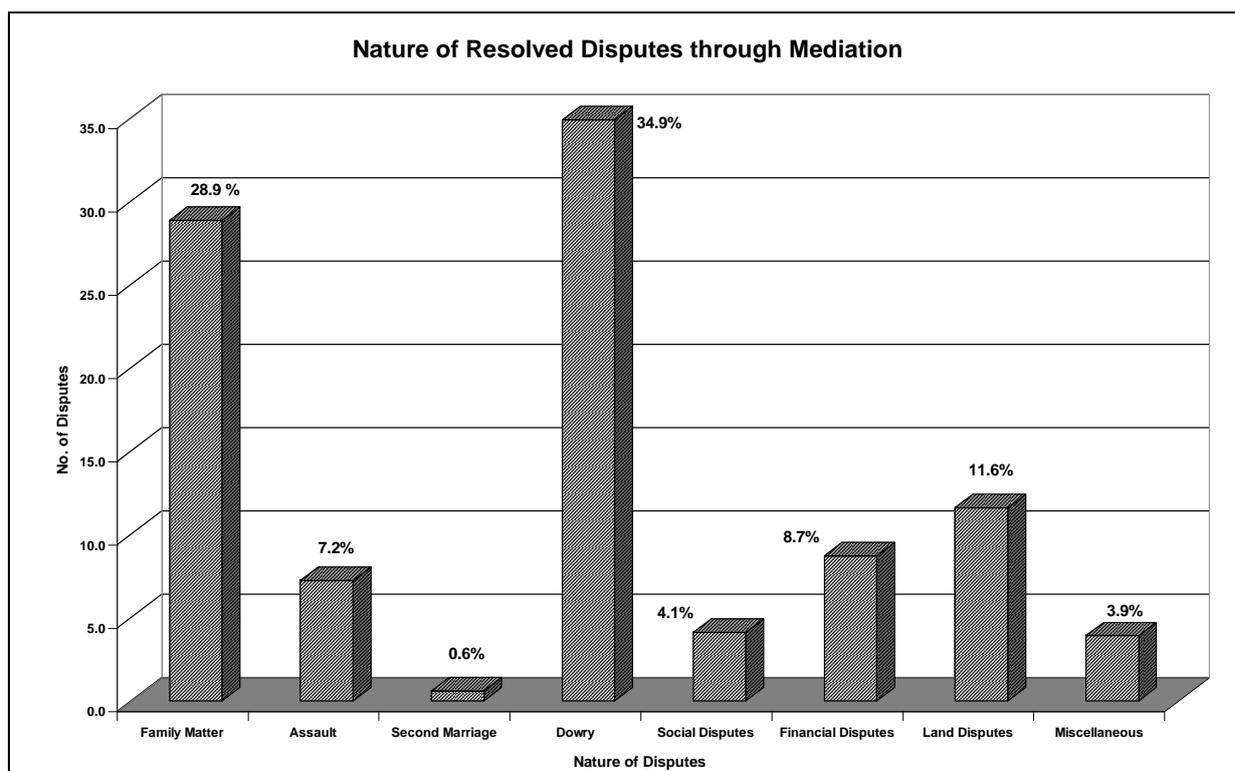
a) Disputes resolution through Mediation

The existing judicial system is hierarchical, gender biased, expensive, complex, time consuming and difficult for disadvantaged people for getting justice. In comparison with this formal judicial system mediation can address different compoundable disputes locally, involving minimum cost and time. Considering this MLAA developed modern and professional approach to traditional shalish which is known as Madaripur Mediation Model (MMM).

During the period of October 2008 to September 2009, the project handled 11136 applications including 1078 pending applications for resolution of disputes. With the active participation of the CBO members, 8013 disputes were resolved through *Shalish*, 1438 disputes were sent to district court for filing case and due to absence of the applicants and lack of documentary or oral evidence and 491 applications were rejected. Currently 1194 disputes are pending to be resolved.

Among the 8013 resolved disputes, 2315 were family matter, 579 were assault, 47 were second marriage, 2799 were dowry related, 331 community disputes, 699 financial disputes, 929 land disputes and 314 miscellaneous.

Among the resolved disputes by the help of members of CBOs through *Shalish*, the CBOs has recovered taka 7,52,56,543.00 for its beneficiaries in the period



Case Study of Mediation: After 12 years Shahnaj got her marriage registration and peaceful coexistence in the family.

Applicant: Shahnaj, daughter of Md. Suruj Jaman Laskar, village- Char Kumaria, under Vedorgonj Upazilla, Dist. Shariatpur.

Opponent: Abdur Rahman Rari, son of Sirajul Islam Rari of Mehendigonj Upazilla, Dist. Barisal.

Details: Shahnaj is the daughter of Md. Suruj Jaman Laskar, village- Char Kumaria, under Vedorgonj Upazilla, Dist. Shariatpur. Before 12 years Shahnaj got married with Abdur Rahman Rari, son of Sirajul Islam Rari of Mehendigonj Upazilla, Dist. Barisal. But the marriage did not register. The couple had been living together happily. By this time they became parent of two daughters, one 10 years old and other one 5 years

old. After birth of 2nd daughter Abdur Rahman Rari started misbehave with Shahnaj. On 23/8/09 Abdur Rahman Rari along with his wife came to father-in-law's house and demanded Tk.50,000/- as dowry from his father-in-law.

Shahnaj's father is a poor farmer and denied to pay the dowry money. In this situation, Abdur Rahman Rari left wife and kids in his father-in-law's house saying that "I will not bring you to my house and you are not my wife as we have no marriage registration. Shahnaj felt in a crucial situation and finding no any way she came to Madaripur Legal Aid Association's Vedorgonj Upazilla Branch office. She filed an application for peaceful settlement of the issue (reg. no. 182/5, date 28/1/09). The branch office then sent request letter to Abdur Rahman Rari for peaceful solution of the problem and fixed date for mediation on 8/2/09.

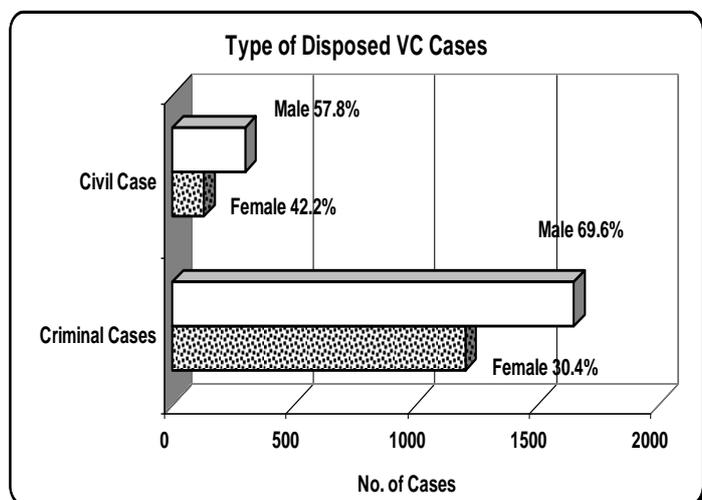
On 8/2/09 the applicant came but the opponent did not. The branch office then fixed another date for mediation on 19/2/09 and requested Abdur Rahman Rari to appear and discusses the issue. In the fixed date both parties came with their mediators, the branch office also invited local CBO members. They altogether discuss the issue and came to a consensus that (1) The opponent will register the marriage (2) Abdur Rahman Rari and Shahnaj fixed Tk.2,20,000/- as dower money in Kabinnama (registration form) (3) The opponent will not demand dowry anymore (4) They will live together and Abdur Rahman Rari will give proper maintenance to Shahnaj and her daughters.

b) Dispute resolution through VC

MLAA has taken special initiative for promoting justice at grass-root level through strengthening and activating local govt. judiciary which empowering rural community to take decision on minor disputes at local level. MLAA provided technical assistance to the Union Parishad for activating village court. The project has provided one ADR Assistant to assist in Village Court and Arbitration Council activities in each UP.

During the project period 132 UPs received 3630 cases through village court. Including the pending 290 cases, the total number of cases stood 3920. Among them 3288 cases were disposed, 280 were rejected, case transfer to upper court was 03 and 349 cases are now under process.

Among the resolved cases, 2857 were Criminal (87%) and 431 were Civil (13%). The percentage of women applicants of VC were 1432 (39.4%) and men were 2198 (60.6%). The VC directly helped 6576 families through disposed of cases. The Village Court of deferent UPs recovered Tk. 13,272,986.00 as compensation through disposed of cases.



Case Study of Village Court-VC:

At last Momtaz Begum get back Tk.10, 000/= through VC

Applicant: Momtaz Begum (50) wife of late Anowar Mridha of Kedarpur Union under Shariatpur District.

Opponent: Abdul Hoque Mollah (60) son of Sikim Ali Mollah of Kedarpur Union under Shariatpur Dist.

Details of the dispute: When Anowar Mridha died he left behind his wife Momtaz Begum, 2 sons and 6 daughters. Momtaz Begum had to survive with hardship along with her kids. Momtaz Begum's husband maintained a petty cash book where he wrote that he lend Tk. 13,000/- to Abdul Hoque Mollah. Momtaz Begum asked Abdul Hoque Mollah to repay the money. But Abdul Hoque Mollah tried to escape telling that I will back the money tomorrow and so on. In this situation Momtaz Begum came to Kedarpur UP and filed a case bearing No. 14/08, date 5/5/08. After getting the application UP Chairman Imam Hossain Dewan accepted the application and gave summon to the opponent Abdul Hoque Mollah on 6/5/09 directing the party to appear before the Kedarpur UP office.

On 10th May'08 both parties appeared before the UP and the Chairman directed the parties to submit the names of their representatives on or before 17/5/08. The parties then submitted names of their representatives'. The representatives are (1) Jalal Dewar, UP Member, Ward No.2 & (2) Abul Dhali from applicant side. On behalf of opponent the representatives are (1) Babul Sikari, UP Member, Ward No.3 & (2) Abdul Hoque Khan. The village court form with the 4 members and Chairman of the UP on 17/5/08. On the same day Chairman of Village Courtr took the file of case and fixed date 20th May'08 for filing objection if any. Within 20th May'08 the opponent did not file any objection. On 21st May'08 the Chairman of the village court fixed date for hearing on 24th May'08. But in the fixed date opponent did not appear, so the Village Court Chairman fixed 31st May for hearing.

On the fixed date both parties came with their witnesses. In the hearing the court recorded the witnesses and came to a consensus and ordered for giving Tk. 10,000/= to the applicant before 30th June.

On 30th June the opponent deposited the money and applicant the money from Union parishad and loud her satisfaction over Village Court.

Rashida Khatun got her money back through VC

Applicant: Ms. Rashida Khatun, Husband Shukur Ali of village Bhabanipur of Dhakuria Union of Monirampur Upozilla of Jessore district

Opponent: Md. Noor Islam son of Moslem Sheikh of Bhabanipur of Monirampur Jessore.

Details of the dispute: Due to good relationship Noor Islam took Tk. 16000 from Rashida Khatun against the lease value of a land and she gave the money to him on faith but Noor Islam did not lease out the land to her. Understanding the clever act of

Noor Islam she did want to pay her money back. As a result their good relationship it broke down. Later having consultative discussions with the local people she planned to file up a case in the Village Court of Dhakuria Union Parishad.

Rashida Khatun arrived in the Village Court on 2 March 2009. She submitted an application of case against Noor Islam. On 3.3.09 the chairman issued summon to Noor Islam to appear before the court at 10.00 am. Summon was served by the chowkidar Md. Shahidul Islam. Both the parties and their nominated representatives were present in the Union Parishad on 9.3.09. The representatives are Alfaf Hossain, Ajibar Rahman, Kulsom Begum and Md. Rustom Ali. On 06.03.09, the Chairman of Dhakuria UP formed the VC of 5 members and all the documents were sent to the VC.

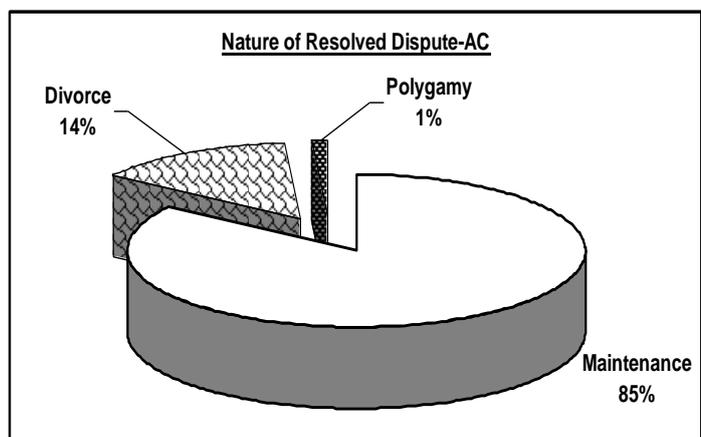
An invitation letter was served by the Chairman of the VC to the parties requesting them to present on 22. 03.09 for a hearing. On the day of hearing the opponent had no objection to it. This day of hearing the plaintiff and her parties and defendant and his parties gave their opinions before the court. Witnessing from parties, the court came to a conclusion that the defendant has taken Tk. 16000 and return it to plaintiff. The judgment was made on the highest majority of 5:0 ratios. On the Day of Judgment, the defendant pay Tk. 16000 in cash to the plaintiff and she took the money in full.

The applicant Rashida Khatun commented that VC has made it possible to get my money back with in a short time and cheaply otherwise I have to wait for a long time. On the other hand, the defendant opined the case has been resolved through the VC and made it easier and timely without affecting any one and saved us from unwanted harassment.

c) Dispute resolution through AC

The Union Parishad has the legal jurisdiction to resolve disputes of second marriage of the husband during the subsistence of first wife, divorce and maintenance by forming Arbitration Council under the Muslim Family Law Ordinance, 1961. The Union Organizer assisted to UP for resolving the disputes related with AC.

During the project period 132 UPs received 1777 applications regarding the jurisdiction of AC. Including the pending 165 applications, the total number of applications stood 1942. Among them 1224 disputes were resolved, 506 were rejected, 5 were sent for court case and 207 applications are now under process. During this period among the 1224 resolved disputes, 1038 disputes were maintenance (84.8%), 172 were divorce (14%) and other 14 (1.2%) were polygamy. Among resolved disputes of AC the percentage of female disputants was (93%).



In 124 (10.13%) resolved disputes the total amount of Tk. 2,81,650.00 was recovered by Arbitration Council (AC) of Union Parishad as maintenance. In 924 (75.50%) resolved disputes female applicants can restore their family ties with husbands. Other 176 (14.37%) disputes were settled amicably with the mutual understanding with the both parties.

Case Study of Arbitration Council-AC: Withdrawal of divorce set a very good instance to restore conjugal life of Suman Kha and Hajera Begum.

Applicant: Hajera Begum (24), daughter of Idris Mollah, village Purbakandi, UP-Dhanukathi under Upazilla- Damudya, Dist. Shariatpur.

Opponent: Suman Khan (30), Son of Salamat Kha, village Dasmontara, UP-Dhanukathi under Upazilla- Damudya, Dist. Shariatpur.

Details Story: Suman Khan (30), Son of Salamat Kha, village Dasmontara, UP-Dhanukathi under Upazilla- Damudya, Dist. Shariatpur. Suman Khan got married with Hajera Begum (24), daughter of Idris Mollah, village Purbakandi, UP- Dhanukathi under Upazilla- Damudya, Dist. Shariatpur on 21/4/05. Suman Khan took Tk. 30,000/- as loan from his father-in-law and did not back the money and for the cause of money they quarrel each other.

On 21/4/08 Suman Khan went to the nearest Nikah Reg. Office and issue divorce letter to Hajera. When Hajera got the divorce letter, she was carrying. After receiving divorce letter the Chairman of Union Parishad gave notice to the parties for resolving their disputes through arbitration and asked the parties to give their representatives name on 15/5/08. On 15/5/08 applicant gave Rafikul Islam as her representative. On the other hand opponent party gave the name Joynal Abedin as his representative. The Chairman of the UP by virtue of his post became the Chairman of the Arbitration Council. Then the Arbitration Council fixed date for hearing on 5/6/08.

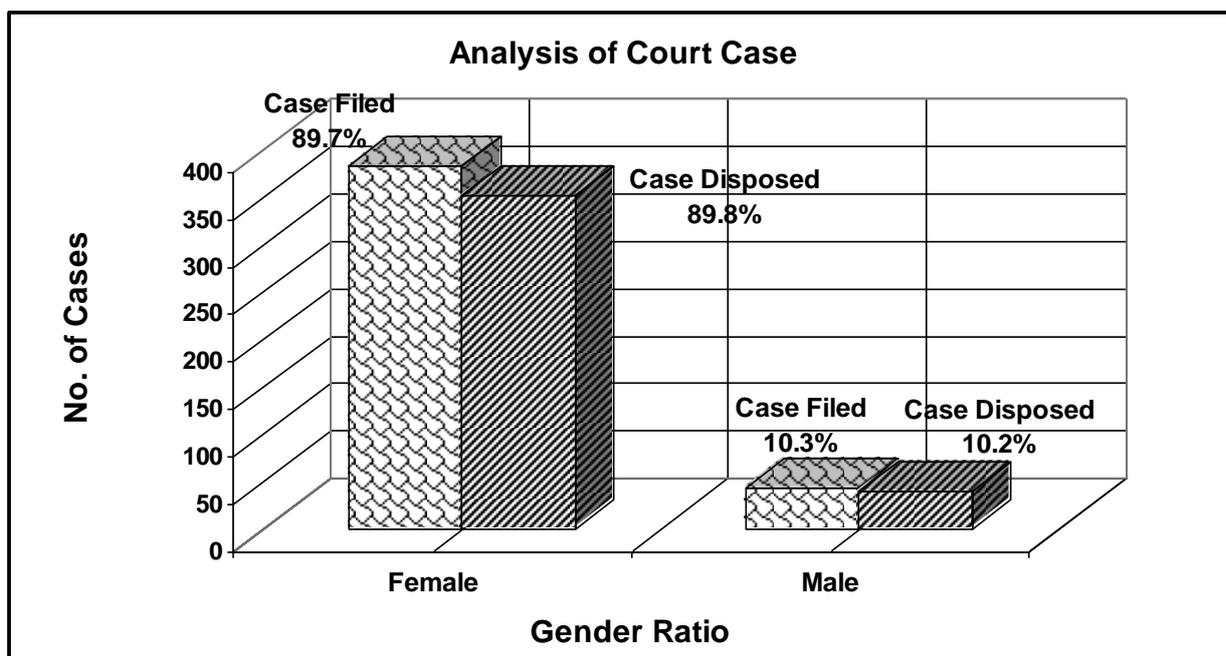
On the fixed date the Arbitration Council Chairan & Members with the help of disputing parties came to a solution that Suman Khan will withdraw his divorce letter and they will live together as couple.

d) Provide Court Case Support

Legal Aid service is the original program of MLAA which helps people, particularly women to establish their rights with positive impact of change their socio-economic status.

During the reporting period, 1416 cases were handled which included 428 newly filed cases and 988 pending cases from the previous year. Among them 393 cases were disposed and 1024 are now pending.

Among the filed cases, criminal cases were 71.03%, family cases were 21.73%, land cases were 2.80% and appeal cases were 4.44%. Among the disposed cases, criminal cases were 64.12%, family cases were 29.01%, land cases were 4.07% and appeal cases were 2.80%.



Immediate visualize result of Court Case:

- In criminal 32 Cases, 36 accused persons were accused to imprisonment for 175 years.
- In 25 criminal cases, the clients got decree as compensation of Tk. 1,95,84,000.00
- In 126 family cases Women Clients got decree of tk. 38,94,201.00 as maintenance and dower money from her husband.
- Regarding 3 family cases, 2 children were rescued and sent back to their mother.
- In 107 family cases, both parties are now continuing their marriage life together.

Case Study of Court Case: Farida Akhter finally succeeded by getting her legitimate demand of maintenance and dower money.

Applicant: Farida Akter (27) daughter of Fazlul Haque of village Tulashar under Sadar Upazila, Dist. Shariatpur.

Opponent: Azad Millah, son of Late Daliluddin Mollah, village- Domshar under same Upazilla & District

Details of the case: Farida Akter (27) daughter of Fazlul Haque of village Tulashar under Sadar Upazila, Dist. Shariatpur got married with Azad Millah, son of Late Daliluddin Mollah, village- Domshar under same Upazilla & District on 13/1/2000. Azad husband of Faridd Akter worked of a garment factory in Dhaka and his designation was Cutting Master. After marriage the couple passed two years and they have got a daughter, named Afroza. She is now 6 years old. It is the tragedy of the couple that Azad did not take easily as they have only a female child. After issuing female child Azad neglected his wife and most of the time he kept his wife to his father-in-law's house. Most of the time Azad spent in Dhaka and do not keep contact with his wife. Farida asked the reason of neglecting her Azad wants dowry Tk. 50,000/- . In this way Azad tried to escape and pressure on Farida for getting dowry

money. Find no other way on 26/5/08 Farida came to Madaripur Legal Aid Association, Shariat district office and filled-up an application vide Reg. No. 99/22. The Shariatpur district office of Madaripur Legal Aid Association then tried to resolve the dispute in a peaceful manner through mediation. MLAA invited the opponent party Azad Mollah fixing different dates i.e. 7/6/08, 21/6/08, 6/7/08, 26/7/08, 16/8/08, 23/8/08 & 30/8/08. But the opponent Azad Mollah appeared only two dates. Finally he left for Dhaka and did not contact with Farida Akter and Madaripur Legal Aid Association, Shariatpur district office.

Then with the wishes of Farida Akter on 9/9/08 Shariatpur district office filed a Case under dowry prohibition Act. Case No. 217/08, date 9/9/08. After filing case the learned court issued warrant and fixed next date on 19/10/08. By hearing issuance of warrant the opponent party Azad Mollah husband of Farida Akter rushed to Farida and locally mediated their dispute on 30/11/08 by paying Farida Akter Tk. 50,000/- (fifty thousand). When followed-up by the MLAA staff Farida Akter told that she fixed deposited the money with a Bank.

e) Follow-up of Pending & Disposed Cases

The objective of the follow-up is to check if the verdicts are implemented in the grassroots and how the plaintiff's social, family and economic life is affected afterwards. During the reporting period, 82 cases have been followed up this year which includes 45 (MLAA-30 & BS-15) pending cases and 37 (MLAA-30 & BS-7) disposed cases. Among the above cases 53 were criminal cases, 26 were family court cases, 02 were land cases and rest 1 was appeal case.

Finding of follow-up visits:

Pending cases:

The project staffs regularly follow up the ongoing cases of free legal aid project. During the reporting period the project followed up 45 pending cases. That included different types of cases, such as criminal, family and appeal cases. During the observation it revealed that, 90% clients of court cases knew the next date of his/her case. Only 10% could not remember next date of court case. Every client knew the name of advocate and clerk. The clients expressed that, the court officials demanded money sometimes.

Disposed cases:

During the reporting period, the project observed 37 cases among the disposed cases. That included different types of cases, such as criminal, family and land cases. During the observation it revealed that, among the disposed cases marriage continued in 19% cases. In others case were resolved through compromised at locally and both parties followed their agreement. The clients got money or compensation according to agreement of compromise. They now used their money in different income generating activities for their livelihood.

f) Experience sharing meeting with court case clients of MLAA

The goal of this activity was to exchange and share the ideas with MLAA clients. These meetings provide a good opportunity for the clients to exchange their views on their respective cases. A total of 13 meetings were organized in 13 Upazilla level offices, where 250 participants attended, among them 236 were female and 14 were male.

g) Meeting with panel lawyers & advocates' clerks

The Project conducted these meetings for motivating its panel lawyers and lawyers' clerk in providing to legal aid for the poor peoples. These meetings provide a good opportunity for the participants to exchange their views on legal aid and assistance. The MLAA perceives these meetings as a forum to encourage them to act in favour of the poor.

A total of 5 meetings were conducted, among these 2 were in Madaripur, 2 were in Shariatpur and 1 was in Gopalganj. A total no of 214 persons attended the said meetings, among 12 were female and 202 were male. 78 Lawyers and 136 lawyers' clerk have got the scope to participate the 5 meetings.

h) Medical support & collect of cases documents of MLAA clients

MLAA provided Tk. 1,29,996= for medical treatment cost for the poor clients in Madaripur, Shariatpur & Gopalganj Districts. For submitting the evidentiary document in court, especially in land cases, MLAA provided an amount of Tk. 23,978=for collecting the case documents.

Result Analysis of Output-3

- Formal Judicial system is accessible for the poor

Disadvantaged, marginalized, destitute and the poor people, especially women and children who are not able to secure their rights get a platform to address in the formal justice system to establish legal rights.

Including newly filed 428 cases total 1416 cases were handled and among them 393 cases were disposed and 1024 are now pending. Out of disposed 393 cases following results are awarded:

- In 32 cases 175 Years imprisonments of 36 accused Persons
- In 25 criminal case MLAA clients got decree as compensation of Taka 1,95,84,000.00
- In 126 families cases Women Clients got decree of Taka 38,94,201.00 as maintenance and dower money from her husband
- In 3 family cases 2 children rescued and sent them to their mother.
- In 23 cases 68 MLAA clients become free from charges
- In 9 Case MLAA help the opponent of the case and the judgment of cases come in favor of clients
- In 3 cases MLAA clients got bail from the court
- In 107 family cases husband and wife continued their marriage life through compromised.
- 1 case was sent back to UP for trial through Village court
- In 64 Cases both parties mutually Compromised their disputes locally by submitting their agreement

- Stakeholders are found sincere and sensitive to the problems

As a result of opinion sharing meetings in three districts, the lawyers and their clerks, judges and members of the law enforcing agencies are compassionate and

sensitive to the needs of the beneficiaries. They pledged to speed up actions like trail, issuing and execution of warrants, summoning, etc.

- Medical support & assistance to collect cases documents

The medical support for the victims who are tortured by the opponents is an immediate treatment for them and they are able to get evidentiary document for the case. MLAA's support to collect evidentiary document help poor clients to prove their rights in courts, especially in land cases.

- UP judiciary services has been increased:

The Village Court is becoming a useful bridge between informal and formal justice institution.

- UP representative have adequate knowledge (47%) and skill (23%) regarding VC & AC. So that they involved their time and synergy for resolving VC & AC disputes.
- In 124 (10.13%) resolved disputes the total amount of Tk. 2,81,650.00 was recovered by Arbitration Council (AC) of Union Parishad as maintenance.
- In 924 (75.50%) resolved disputes female applicants restored their family ties with husbands. Other 176 (14.37%) disputes were settled amicably with the mutual understanding with the both parties
- UPs help the rural poor for providing quick remedy through VC. In the reporting period UPs recovered an equivalent of Tk 1,32,72,986.00 as compensation and value of land.
- The VC directly helped 6576 families through disposed of cases. The Village Court of deferent UPs recovered Taka 1,32,72,986.00 as compensation through disposed of cases.
- The poor are utilizing resources saved in this way for the betterment of their well-being.
- Chairmen, secretaries and male and female elected members of the UP have shown more enthusiasm, expertise and willingness in resolving disputes through VC.

The scopes and types of redresses are expanding. They include, among others, recovery of cash, compensation, recovery of title and possession of lands, restitution of marital rights and status, entitlement to dower, maintenance, divorce, etc.

- Women's rights are protected through UP judicial system

The number of female applicants has increased significantly in both VC and AC. The number of settled disputes and cases has also increased.

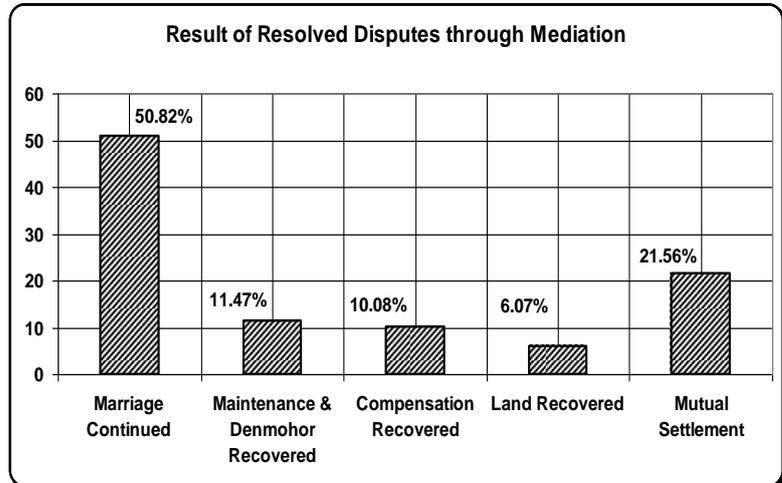
Recovery of dower, maintenance and marital rights and status has helped the women to empower themselves within the household. Now they are able to take their own decisions or share their views within the household along with their husbands.

- During the reporting period UPs recovered Tk. 2,81,650.00 as maintenance for the wives. UPs restored the family ties, so that wives are now jointly living with their husbands and children.

- In 75.49% disputes of AC, decisions prevented families from splitting up and helped women to reunite with their husbands and children.
- Effective protection and restitution of marital rights are giving the women social security and stability.

- MMM become more popular

MLAA's developed model on mediation, which is known as the 'Madaripur Mediation Model (MMM)' modernize the traditional mediation system and make it more participatory & pro-people. It operates like traditional Salish but includes skilled mediators with training on laws and mediation procedures and helping for establishing the rights of the disadvantaged people, particularly women to ensure peaceful settlement of dispute at local level.



MLAA has resolved 8013 disputes through mediation and people are not going to court with minor issues using the MMM.

- Decisions of Mediation session were effectively implemented

In 2040 settled disputes were followed up which revealed that 1937 decisions of resolutions (94.96%) were effectively implemented and 103 resolutions (5.04%) were not. This trend indicates the overall perpetuity of the resolutions.

- Family ties have been regained and continued through Mediation

MLAA resolved 4719 disputes related to family matter, second marriage and dowry with the active participation of CBO members. Among the resolved disputes, in 4072 disputes (50.82%) wives and husbands are continuing their family life amicably.

- Children have got their parents and back to family:

The CBO members of mediation project of MLAA mediated some disputes on guardianship and help applicants to get their children through mediation. The number of rescued children was 2.

- Land and money recovered through mediation by MLAA's intervention

Among the resolved disputes by the help of members of CBOs through *Shalish*, the CBOs has recovered taka 7,52,56,543.00 for its beneficiaries in the said period

Maintenance & Dower Recover	Compensation Recover	Money Recover instead of Land	Land Recover (6.07 acres) Value	Total Taka
25772010	13139128	2784000	33561405	7,52,56,543.00

Challenges in Implementing Village Court-VC:

- Still community is not fully aware of VC
- Most of the Ups have not sufficient infrastructure and logistic support to run the Village Court.
- Only one secretary is working in a UP who has to maintain all shorts of activities of UP, especially no any law clerk to conduct Village Court.
- UP chairs are busy with multifaceted activities, so gives less priority on VC
- UP representatives are not trained on VC and no govt. mechanism to train-up them.
- UP chair gives less time in VC and some are not stay in their area.
- Necessary forms and registers are not available
- There is a lacking of monitoring from Government side to oversee the activities of Village Court.
- Village court ordinance changed to Village Court Act 2006, but rules are remain unchanged
- Lack of clear direction for timing of VC session and no specific direction for sitting VC session per week
- Role of certificate officer is not clearly written in the law.
- UP does not make any budget provision for implementing VC
- Limitation in execution of VC decree by the Union Parishad
- Certificate officer has no interest to take case for execution of VC decree under PDR Act 1913
- There should be specific provisions to Certificate officer in execution of VC decree
- In absence of chairman who will take over the chair that is mentioned in the law, but the selection procedure is very lengthy and complex
- There should be specific provisions who will be chair of VC, in absence of chairman
- The Village court Act 2006 is not directed local administration to monitor VC activities.

Output 4: Institutional capacity of MLAA strengthened

Training & staff development

Institutional capacity building is a continuing process, which is achieved through enhancement of organizational skill and expertise to adapt changing needs of time and circumstances. MLAA has taken special programs and care to develop the institutional capacity of its staffs at all levels. Following are the detail activities implemented during the year of October 2008 to September 2009.

a) Training for project staffs

Staff training is vital for institutional development and also for the smooth implementation of the project. The aims of this activity are to improve the skill and capacity of the project staffs. During the reporting period the project organized 3 training courses for the project staffs, where 66 staffs were participated. Among them 18 were female and 48 were male.

b) Training for stakeholders on VC, AC & Mediation

The main objective of these activities is to equip the different stakeholder, such as elected representatives of UPs, CBO members and advanced women CBO members. The project organized different training courses for the said participants to enhance their skill, knowledge and capacity on local justice system, so that they can able to resolve conflicts effectively.

During the project period, MLAA & BS organized 48 trainings courses for secondary stakeholders. The duration of these courses were 3 days long. A total no. of 1265 participants attended in these trainings. Among them 568 were female and 697 were male. Out of total participants UP Representatives were 481, CBO members were 361 and advanced women CBO members were 423.

c) TOT on human rights & family law for madrasa teachers

The project organized these courses in accordance to wider dissemination of HR concept and introducing existing family laws among the religious leaders and Madrasa teacher in the working area. Through these training the participants become more aware about HR, family laws and local judicial system, so that they can involve themselves in disputes resolution process at local level.

During the reporting period MLAA organized 6 training courses, where 129 persons attended. Among the participants 23 were principal and vice principal of the respective Madrasa, 32 were professor, 66 were assistant teachers, 7 were superintendent and 1 were librarian.

d) Gender development Meeting, Workshops and Trainings

In the meantime the gender policy of MLAA has been scrutinized and incorporated gender issues in all level as well as program and management. The aim of these activities is to increase the knowledge on gender issues for the secondary stakeholders of the project.

During the reporting period MLAA organized 17 different events such as daylong workshops, 3 day long training courses and daylong workshops at field level. In these events total 381 persons attended the said events, among the participants 61 were MLAA staffs, 29 were female UP members, 226 were women CBO members and 65 were women leaders from the local community.

e) Training support for other organizations

From the very beginning MLAA has been organizing training on local justice system, human rights and fact finding, women's rights, child rights and family laws to enhance the skill and capacity of staff members of others NGO in Bangladesh.

In the reporting period MLAA organized 3 training courses covering issues relating to human rights, fact finding and local justice system (VC, AC & Mediation) for 62 NGO staffs from 37 NGOs from different part of Bangladesh. Among the total participants 20 were female and 42 were male.

f) Project management workshops

The main objective of this workshop is to prepare a yearly action & implementation plan for the project by the active participation of respective field level staffs. This meeting is

also a platform to sharing the field level experiences among the management and field level staffs. During the project period the project organized 2 workshops with 32 staffs.

g) Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring is a continuous process of measuring progress toward explicit shortcomings, intermediate and long term results. It is providing feedback to the program and management. On the other hand M&E cell evaluation activity is the assessment, of an on – going or completed project aims to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, effectiveness and impact.

Indicator Based Report

Indicator: BY 2010, frequency of violence against women (beating, divorce for dowry, sexual abuse and exploitation) has been reduced by 40%

Brief findings: As per study design and sampling interviewed 320 female of the MLAA working area have been interviewed. The findings show that 203 persons have no experience of torture for the cause of being women and the percentage is 63.6%. On the other hand the interviewed 117 female is tortured in any way and the percentage is 36.4% cause behind the torture among interviewed 117 are- demand of dowry 49 persons, family dispute 36 persons, Land 6 persons, polygamy 8, poverty 8 persons, unemployment 3 persons and others 7 persons. We know that in Bangladesh the overall picture of violence against women is high. The study result shows that it has been reduced in MLAA working area.

Indicator: BY 2010, 50% of the community people are informed about the local level justice system through drama, posters, leaflet and strikers.

Brief findings: In the study it has been found that in MLAA working area people heard about village court 48.8% and don't know 51.2%. Study findings shows that the percentage of the community people is informed about the local level justice system through drama, posters, leaflet and strikers. The following will is the details of the findings:

Through MLAA workers-24.5%, Courtyards meetings-10.6%, Street drama-3.6%, Workshop-3.6%, Leaflet-1.9%, Chairman-5.1%, General mass-2.5%, CBO member-10.1%, Campaign-2.1%, Chowkider-2.5%, and Don't know-33.6%.

On the other hand when asked to the people about Arbitration council work, they replied in the following way- yes 45%, No- 9.4% and don't know – 45.6%.

Indicator: By 2010, 50% CBO Members are capable to share their experiences with the social elites on AC & VC Union level meetings.

Brief findings: It has been seen in the study that the CBO members are capable to share their experiences with the social elites on AC & VC and their knowledge and skills has been developed. Study result shows that the topics discuss in the training & workshops has been clarified by the facilitators of the training and the interviewed female CBO members, 50Nos. & male CBO members, 74 have got clear understanding of the topics taught and the percentage is 69.4% and medium understanding of the topics taught and the percentage is 30.06%.

Indicator: By 2010, 40% of the Union Parishad Chairmen and at 4 Members of each UP are skilled on AC & VC and following the proper procedure and methods to resolve disputes

Brief findings: In the study it has been told by the UP representatives that methodological change has been took place and the percentage is 62.3 %, VC & AC maintains proper procedures 35.1% and only 2.6% think nothing changed. On the other hand UP Chairman have different experience they have told that methodological change has been took place and the percentage is 58.1%, VC & AC maintains proper procedures 41.1%.

Indicator: 50% case clients within the working areas are able to explain their role in the court after discussions of sharing meetings.

Brief finding: Free legal Aid program of MLAA conducted opinion meeting with running court case beneficiaries. M&E cell interviewed and assess the development about court cases beneficiaries with regards to their opinion in serving them and also problem facing to run the case, court environment. The assessment results show that after attending the opinion meeting 96.7% clients know about the next date of case and also 43.3% clients know about the action of the case.

Result Analysis of Output-4

- Expertise of the MLAA staffs has been developed

Different trainings undertaken by the human resource development division has increased the skill and expertise of the MLAA staffs. Each member of staff is working with efficiency and confidence in his/her own department.

Different NGOs from other parts of the country hired MLAA to receive training on human rights, local justice and legal aid. MLAA's expert trainers conducted and provided human rights, VC & Mediation training to 37 different NGOs.

The human resource division has been enhanced and as a direct consequence of this enhancement, specific rules and procedures are followed in defining strategies, planning and implementing activities.

- M & E cell has widened its activities effectively

The monitoring cell developed a standard monitoring system, following various techniques for data collection, such as, FGD, open questionnaires, interviewing for assessing the project outcome and impact. The strengthened monitoring cell is working with specific strategies to scrutinize the implementation of the main goals and objectives of the organization.

Impact assessment

It is difficult to assess multidimensional impact of the activities of a right-based organization on the target group as because a rights-based intervention has different types of impacts on the stakeholders, such as, economic, social, political and cultural. The economic impacts of the service recipients were discussed earlier. However socio-cultural impacts of the project is being discussing in following paragraphs, though it is no easy task. Obviously there are various indicators and applications of these indicators have not been formally used by the experts in the field of rights based intervention.

The advocacy unit identified the limitations of the VC and AC and identified the problems on procedural complicacies and uncongenial environment of court which are disseminated among the relevant authorities to remove these problems. MLAA's intervention in advocacy activities and awareness campaign has been creating impact in different policy levels. The relentless MLAA awareness campaign and advocacy along with other organizations saw an expansion of pecuniary jurisdiction of the village court. On the other hand, *Salish* is on its way to gain institutional form. The Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Act, 2003 is recognition for *Salish* at national level. By this amendment in the matter of civil disputes option for settling the same through mediation has been included.

MLAA is addressing mainly women's rights and gender equality issues in an effective manner. The project is addressing poverty reduction and empowerment of women, especially is reaching the poorest and most marginalised.

Attitude towards women in participation in the social activities is changed and women are aware of their rights. They can raise their voice to defend their rights. Women are allowed to express their rights and might, gender dignity upholds. One vital impact on the overall community attitude lies in the increasing participation of women in the local justice system. Strong and consistent participation of women in CBOs, in AC/VC related activities not only empowered them but also empowered the masses. Recruitment of female MLAA staff in field level, increasing number of women in the CBO, participation of women in mediation process and in UP judicial system tend to voice their opinions more openly gradually changing attitude of the society. Even women who are benefited by MLAA become self defendant and also feel that MLAA has made them consciences as a human being.

Family is the basic unit in our society. MLAA is supporting families to unite, preventing them from being split and thus protecting family to bring peace & harmony within the family members. In rural Bangladesh, protection of the women means protection of vulnerable members of the household.

The rights of women and children are violated mostly by the domestic violence. Due to MLAA's intervention conflict from domestic violence has decreased considerably. Even number of litigations in the court (of MLAA's working area) has decreased compared to previous years. Poor people, in particular women are now safe and secured as they can access justice at formal court. They are receiving their movable and immovable properties without cost. Dowry, divorce and polygamy are redressed.

Negative impact of litigation for minor disputes is being avoided and as a result social harmony remains undisturbed. Participatory role to solve the problems is ensured which

has enhanced confidence of the people and created a people's platform where *tout* and *fatwabaj* have lost ground for interfering in handling community disputes. Avoiding litigation before formal courts the rural people are utilizing resources and time saved in the way of betterment of their economic condition.

The project has had an immense impact at the grassroots level by activating the local level justice system, so relevant stakeholders are able to assist effectively the UP in conducting the local justice.

Before involved with MLAA the UP representatives and CBOs were unaware of the procedure and rarely used their entitled power and have views that govt. has only passed the legislation, but never taken any steps to provide the necessary training which MLAA has been providing. MLAA's effort inspired them it is their responsibility to ensure the longevity of the institutions, but MLAA's assistance is need in absence of future efforts taken by the Govt.

Various trainings and workshops empower CBO members and UP representatives to carry out their duties and obligations efficiently in local level judicial system. Awareness of rural people on local justice system has increased and as a result people now know where to go & how to address their legal problems. Upazila and district administration are cooperative towards UP judicial service.

Rural people, particularly the poor sections, prefer to appear before UP for getting legal redress on minor disputes at minimum efforts, time and expenses.

Salish has taken over *fatwabaji* deterring the local religious fundamentals. In fact, the MLAA has succeeded in penetrating the corrupt and imbalanced rural power dynamics through spontaneous participation of the rural people.

Resolving disputes in locally on mutual agreement and understanding helps to maintain social harmony and peaceful coexistence putting to an end to short or long run rivalry, enmity and misunderstanding.

Planned results not achieved

During the last reporting period (October 2008 to September 2009) also was a bridging year for MLAA. Because we expanded our project more 32 unions at Jessore and Magura districts and MLAA adopted Banchte Shekha-BS as an implementing partner under of the same project. During the project period the following activity were not achieved due to some reasons.

Output	Activity	Targets	Achievements	%
Output 1: Advocacy to ensure better access to justice for disadvantaged	Workshop on study findings at District Level	3 Workshops	1	33.33
		120 Persons	40	33.33
	Advocacy through publish article on VC/AC in print media	2 Articles	0	0.00
Output 2 : Increased capacity building of duty bearers to activate local level justice	Campaigning	48 Campaign	33	68.75
	Booklet	10000 Copies	5000	50.00
Output 3: Access to formal and informal justice system increased	Dispute Resolution through AC	2030 Disputes	1224	60.30
		Workshop & Meeting with Panel Lawyers	3 Workshops	2
			120 Persons	78
Output 4: Institutional capacity of MLAA strengthened	Basic & Refreshers training for UP rep. on AC, VC and Mediation.	63 Course	19	30.16
			1764 Persons	481

Reasons

- MLAA conducted one workshop in Shariatpur in the said reporting period and have a plan to conduct remaining two workshops in the following year.
- Due to delay of approval of the project some campaign program could not done in proper time. This activity was included as a target for BS - partner NGO of MLAA. At the same time the price of paper increase more than 50% in last year, so we could not published more that 5000 copies by the approved budget.
- The number of disputes under the jurisdiction of AC, polygamy and divorce has been decreasing due to awareness rising workshops.
- The election of Union Parishad was due in last year, but due to delay of UP election. MLAA did not conduct any training for UP representative (Chairman, male members and women members) and decided to conduct the said training with newly elected UP representatives in the following year.

Unplanned achievement

MLAA has formed CBOs in its project area with the participation of community people from deferent segment of the society. The CBO members conduct and facilitate the mediation session, share information among the community members and play role to establish social justice. The ward level CBOs of MLAA resolved a considerable number of disputes voluntarily. MLAA's project proposal does not include monthly meeting of ward CBOs and workshops for CBO members of Upazilla. But considering the project need MLAA assisted CBOs to conduct meeting at ward level and also at upazilla level.

During the reporting period CBOs conducted 2866 meetings at ward level and 12 day-long workshops at upazilla level.

a) Ward CBO meeting

The main function of the CBO members are to conduct and facilitate the mediation session, share information among the community members and play role to establish social justice. In the reporting period members of Ward CBO conducted 2866 meetings, where 30913 members (13793 female and 17120 male) were participated. 51.63% ward CBO meeting chaired by the women CBO members.

Districts	No of Meeting	Meeting Presided By		Participants		
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Total
Madaripur	1577	770	807	7767	9652	17419
Shariatpur	936	509	427	4421	5403	9824
Gopalganj	353	208	145	1605	2065	3670
Total	2866	1487	1379	13793	17120	30913
%		51.88%	48.11%	44.60%	55.40%	

b) Workshop for upazilla CBO members on VC, AC & Mediation

During the reporting period MLAA conducted 12 upazilla level workshops, where 454 members (148 female and 306 male) were participated. After attended the above workshops the participants become more skilled to conduct and facilitate the mediation session.

Districts	No of Meeting	Participants		
		Female	Male	Total
Madaripur	3	38	73	111
Shariatpur	5	86	105	191
Gopalganj	4	24	128	152
Total	12	148	306	454

c) Inquiry of court cases

MLAA has a well reputation to judicial authorities as a legal aid and human rights organization. So the local district court, particularly the Chief Judicial Magistrate Court engaged MLAA to conduct inquiry of relevant cases. In the reporting period a total of 15 cases were sent to MLAA for fact finding of the cases. MLAA inquired the cases and submitted report to the court authority in proper manner.

d) Training for MLAA staff

To strengthen institutional capacity and human resources and to improve the effectiveness of the organization MLAA staffs were participated in 4 courses in different countries.

Name of Staff	Training Topic	Date & Venue	Organized by
Subrata Kumer Das	International Training Program on Human Rights	14 June-04 July 2009, Montreal, Canada.	EQUITAS-Canada & CIDA
Jinat Naznin	Human Rights & Peace	7-21 November 2008, kathmondu, Nepal	South Asian Human Rights Forum
Md. Moniruzzaman	Training on 'Working with Multi stakeholder Dialogues'	4-8 May 2009, Cape Town, South Africa	Collective Leadership Institute, Potsdam, Germany.
Khan Md. Shahid	Training on 'Working with Multi stakeholder	8-12 September 2009, Seam Rep, Combodia	Collective Leadership Institute, Potsdam,

	Dialogues'		Germany.
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Problems faced

Following problems were faced at different stages to perform the activities as per action plan.

- Due to the lengthy process of the existing laws, Complex legal framework and overall absence of congenial court environment for the poor and women in particular delayed in disposing cases.
- UP representatives are not so much committed to perform their duties in local justice system.
- Lack of monitoring from Government side to oversee the activities of village Court.
- Elected representatives of the local govt. should be given manpower and financial incentives to participate in local justice.
- Need a structural systems & procedures for better working relationship between GO & NGOs.
- Lack of awareness about essential laws and human rights in general
- A long time is needed to see the reflection of local level advocacy at the national level.

Suggested action to meet the problems

- More initiatives to be taken to reform laws in order to make legal system less costly and easily accessible.
- Training facilities needed to be increased for UP representatives on local justice.
- People's awareness on laws and human rights to be increased in rural society
- Sensitizing the people and public representatives for ensuring implementation of function of Village Court and Arbitration Council.
- Build of networking with civil society members, CBOs and law enforcing agencies.

Conclusion

Madaripur Legal Aid Association is dedicated to its endeavour in empowering the disadvantaged people including women folk in making the justice system (formal & informal) easily accessible. MLAA has undertaken multifaceted remarkable activities to make a society governed by rule of law and human rights.

During this reporting period MLAA has taken some affirmative steps to strengthen its on going programs to fulfilment of its main objective to enhance 'Access to justice and human rights' to reach the vision 'build a just society'. MLAA also has given attention to improve the quality of program addressing the emerging issues of human, women and legal rights to create more sustainable benefits for the stakeholders.

At a Glance: Target and Achievements

Output 1: Advocacy to ensure better access to justice for disadvantaged

SN	Activity	Targets	Total Achievements	%
1	Workshop for dissemination of study finding at District Level	3 Workshops	1	33.33
		120 Persons	40	33.33
2	Advocacy through publish article on VC/AC in print media	2 Articles	0	0.00
3	Bi-Monthly News letter	6 Issues	5	83.33
4	International Day Observation	6 Events	3	50.00
5	Advocacy Workshop at District Level	1 Workshops	3	300.00
		40 Persons	207	517.50
6	Advocacy Workshop at Upazilla Level	8 Workshops	10	125.00
		320 Persons	641	200.31

Output 2 : Increased capacity building of duty bearers to activate local level justice

SN	Activity	Targets	Total Achievements	%
1	Courtyard Meeting with household members on AC & VC & Mediation	4666 Meeting	4648	99.61
		55992 Parsons	63974	114.26
2	Ward CBO Meeting VC, AC & Mediation	1066 Meeting	1154	108.26
		12792 Parsons	14634	114.40
3	Quarterly Coordination Meeting with Union CBO Members on AC & VC & Mediation.	512 Meeting	452	88.28
		6144 Parsons	5362	87.27
4	Union Level Meeting with CBO Members & Social Elites, on AC & VC & Mediation.	134 Meeting	127	94.78
		5360 Parsons	5018	93.62
5	Experience Sharing Meeting on AC & VC & Mediation with UP Representative & others	131 Meeting	122	93.13
		2620 Persons	2197	83.85
6	Street Drama on VC, AC and Mediation	62 Drama	58	93.55
7	Campaigning on VC, AC and Mediation	48 Campaigning	33	68.75
8	Develop Posters on AC and VC	15000 Posters	15000	100.00
9	Human Rights and Family law workshops for Madrasa Students	48 Workshops	48	100.00
		1920 Persons	1924	100.21
10	Booklet on AC / VC and Mediation	10000 Copies	5000	50.00

Output 3: Access to formal and informal justice system increased

SN	Activity	Targets	Total Achievements	%
1	Dispute Resolution through VC Cases	4132 Cases	3288	79.57
2	Dispute Resolution through AC	2030 Disputes	1224	60.30
3	Disputes Resolution through Mediation	8060 Disputes	8013	99.42
4	Provide Court Case Support	498 Cases	428	85.94
5	Follow-up of Pending Cases	34 Cases	45	132.35
6	Follow-up Disposed Cases	34 Cases	37	108.82
7	Experience Sharing Meeting with court Case Clients	15 Meetings	13	86.67
		300 Persons	250	83.33
8	Workshop & Meeting with Panel Lawyers	3 Workshops	2	66.67
		120 Persons	78	65.00
9	Workshop & Meeting with Advocates' Clerks	3 Workshops	3	100.00
		120 Persons	136	113.33
10	Medical Support to Case Clients	150 Persons	0	0.00
11	Support to Collect of Cases Documents	200 Persons	0	0.00

Output 4: Institutional capacity of MLAA strengthened

SN	Activity	Targets	Total Achievements	%
1	TOT for MLAA's Field level staff engaged in training activities	1 Course	1	100.00
		35 Staffs	25	71.43
2	Basic & Refreshers training on VC, AC, Mediation, laws & Docum. for Union Organizer of BS	2 Course	2	100.00
		40 Persons	41	102.50
3	Basic & Refreshers training for UP rep. on AC, VC and Mediation.	63 Course	19	30.16
		1764 Persons	481	27.27
4	Basic & Refreshers Training for Central CBO Members on VC, AC, Mediation & Law	15 Course	13	86.67
		420 Persons	361	85.95
5	TOT on Human Rights & Family Law for Madrasha Teachers	05 Courses	6	120.00
		125 Persons	129	103.20
6	Meeting with gender task force	3 Meetings	3	100.00
7	Gender development training for women CBO Members & Women UP Representatives	4 Course	4	100.00
		100 Persons	98	98.00
8	Gender dev. workshop for women CBO members and women leaders	10 Workshops	10	100.00
		250 Persons	222	88.80
9	Training on AC, VC & MMM for NGO activist	1 Course	1	100.00
		25 Persons	24	96.00
10	Training on Human Rights for NGO activist	1 Course	1	100.00
		25 Persons	20	80.00
11	Training on Fact finding on Human Right Violations for NGO activist	1 Course	1	100.00
		25 Persons	18	72.00
12	Training for Advance women CBO Members on AC, VC & MMM	15 Course	16	106.67
		420 Persons	423	100.71
13	Prepared indicator based report	6 Reports	6	100.00
14	Strengthen project management workshop	2 Workshops	2	100.00
		48 Persons	32	66.67

Table of Activity

Output 1: Advocacy to ensure better access to justice for disadvantaged

a) Workshop for dissemination of study finding at district level

Description	Participants			GOB officials			Civil society					
	Female	Male	Total	Judges	Police Officers	Others Govt Officials	Lawyers	Lawyer's Clerk	People's Represent.	Journalists \ Media	NGO Workers	Total
10 Sept. 09 at Shariatpur office	3	37	40	8	2	8	11	2	5	2	2	40

b) Bi-monthly news letter of MLAA

Issues	Publishing time	No of copies
October-December 2008	December 2008	1500
January-February 2009	February 2009	1500
March-April 2009	April 2009	1500
May-June 2009	June 2009	1500
July-August 2009	August 2009	1500
Total	5 Issues	7500

c) International day observation

S/L No	Event	Venue	Date	Activity organized	Participants		
					Female	Male	Total
1)	International Human Rights Day	MLAA	10 December 2008	Rally, drawing competition, poster display, drama show and meeting	89	67	156
2)	International Women Rights Day	BS	08 March 2009	Rally, Discussion Meeting	216	31	247
3)	International Women Rights Day	MLAA	08 March 2009	Rally, poetry recitation, drawing competition, poster display, drama show and round table meeting	56	88	144
Total					361	186	547

d) District and upazilla advocacy workshop

Events	No. of Events	Female	Male	Total	GOB Officials	UP Represen.	CBO Members	NGO Staffs	Total
District Level	3	36	171	207	30	51	77	49	207
Upazilla Level	10	149	492	641	81	134	307	119	641
Total	13	185	663	848	111	185	384	168	848

Output 2: Increased capacity building of duty bearers to activate local level justice

a) Courtyard meeting with household members

District	No of unions	No of meeting	Participants		
			Male	Female	Total
Madaripur	48	1961	4040	21938	25978
Shariatpur	37	1110	2220	12356	14576
Gopalganj	15	482	1454	5471	6925
Jessore	19	643	1013	9399	10412
Magura	13	452	1016	5067	6083
Total	132	4648	9743	54231	63974
%			15.22%	84.78%	100

b) Monthly ward CBO meeting

Districts	No of meeting	Meeting presided by		Participants		
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Total
Jessore	676	103	573	3011	5677	8688
Magura	478	156	322	2410	3536	5946
Total	1154	259	895	5421	9213	14634
%		22.44	77.56	37%	63%	100

c) Quarterly coordination meeting with union / central CBO members

Districts	No of Meeting	Meeting presided by		Participants		
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Total
Madaripur	177	67	110	799	1249	2048
Shariatpur	108	48	60	479	709	1188
Gopalganj	42	20	22	196	268	464
Jessore	75	11	64	323	671	994
Magura	50	13	37	258	410	668
Total	452	159	293	2055	3307	5362
%		35.17	64.83	38.32	61.68	

Nature of participants of central CBO meetings													
Chairman	Secretary	Female Member	Male Member	Teachers	Social Workers	Businessman	Farmer	Service Holders	Religious Leaders	Other NGO Staffs	Housewives	Student	Total
87	34	369	319	571	625	1011	773	336	53	198	960	26	5362

d) Union level meeting with CBO members & social elites

Districts	No of Meeting	Participants		
		Female	Male	Total
Madaripur	47	816	1020	1836
Shariatpur	31	541	685	1226
Gopalganj	12	217	259	476
Jessore	20	205	606	811
Magura	17	109	560	669

Total	127	1888	3130	5018
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Nature of participants / Union level meetings																
Chairman	Secretary	Female Member	Male Member	Marriage Registers	Teachers	Social Workers	Businessman	Farmer	Service Holders	Religious Leaders	Other NGO Staffs	Journalist/Media People	Housewives	Postal Workers	Student	Total
79	56	136	384	0	298	282	821	850	517	73	100	3	1346	11	62	5018

e) Experience sharing meeting on AC & VC & Mediation

Districts	No of Meeting	Participants			Nature of Participants						
		Female	Male	Total	UP Chair	UP Sec.	Female Member	Male Member	Choukider	Davaders	Total
Madaripur	45	100	708	808	42	39	100	280	312	35	808
Shariatpur	28	69	468	537	28	23	65	182	212	27	537
Gopalganj	12	25	193	218	11	12	25	75	88	7	218
Jessore	20	54	333	387	18	18	53	143	120	35	387
Magura	17	70	177	247	14	12	34	117	57	13	247
Total	122	318	1879	2197	113	104	277	797	789	117	2197

f) Street drama and Campaign on VC, AC and Mediation

Event Title	No. of events	Peoples involved in the events (approx)		
		Female	Male	Total
Street drama	58	24400	41000	65400
Campaign	33	4725	7088	11813
Total	91	29125	48088	77213

g) Human rights and family law workshops for madrasa students

Districts	No of Workshops	Participants			Class of Students				
		Male	Female	Total	SSC/ Dhakhil	HSC/ Alim	BA / Fazil	MA / Kamil	Total
Madaripur	16	285	355	640	452	105	83	0	640
Shariatpur	11	174	267	441	160	188	73	20	441
Gopalganj	9	141	219	360	137	205	18	0	360
Jessore	6	126	114	240	0	184	48	8	240
Magura	6	87	156	243	61	150	31	1	243
Total	48	813	1111	1924	810	832	253	29	1924

i) Poster & Booklet on AC, VC & Mediation

Name of Publication	Publishing time	No. of copies
Poster / Calendar	May 2009	15000 Copies
Booklet of AC, VC & Mediation	September 2009	5000 Copies

Output 3: Access to formal and informal justice system increased

a) Dispute resolution through VC

District	Previous		Case		Total		Case		Reject		Recom		Total		Present		Disposed	
	Pending		Received				Disposed				Case				Pending		Locally	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Madaripur	54	93	532	720	586	813	532	720	23	45	0	1	555	766	31	47	208	231
Shariatpur	37	44	418	488	455	532	398	440	31	53	0	0	429	493	26	39	183	177
Gopalganj	30	32	144	308	174	340	156	292	4	16	0	0	160	308	14	32	14	59
Jessore	0	0	170	497	170	497	123	364	15	47	0	2	138	413	32	84	13	37
Magura	0	0	168	185	168	185	127	136	29	17	0	0	156	153	12	32	14	22
Total	121	169	1432	2198	1553	2367	1336	1952	102	178	0	3	1438	2133	115	234	432	526
Grand	290		3630		3920		3288		280		3		3571		349		958	

Nature of disposed cases of VC

Districts	Criminal		Civil		Total	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Madaripur	503	659	29	61	532	720
Shariatpur	390	394	9	45	399	439
Gopalganj	149	258	6	35	155	293
Jessore	104	255	19	109	123	364
Magura	59	86	68	50	127	136
Total	1205	1652	131	300	1336	1952
Total	2857		431		3288	

Direct benefit through disposed cases of VC

Description	NOD	%	Amount in Tk.
Mutual Settlement	1163	35.37	-
Compensation Recovered	1263	38.41	5,855,018.00
Land Recovered (1037 Decimal)	160	4.87	2,963,175.00
Money Recovered	702	21.35	4,454,793.00
Total	3288	100	13,272,986.00

b) Dispute Resolution through AC

District	Previous		Application		Total		Dispute		Reject		Recom		Total		Present		Disposed	
	Pending		Received				Resolved				Case				Pending		Locally	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Madaripur	79	12	572	52	651	64	376	8	232	50	3	0	611	58	40	6	112	4
Shariatpur	36	8	376	54	412	62	307	16	87	33	0	0	394	49	18	13	96	7
Gopalganj	26	4	243	11	269	15	204	0	35	11	1	0	240	11	29	4	27	0
Jessore	0	0	214	85	214	85	149	42	20	23	0	0	169	65	45	20	7	2
Magura	0	0	131	39	131	39	102	20	7	8	1	0	110	28	21	11	14	3
Total	141	24	1536	241	1677	265	1138	86	381	125	5	0	1524	211	153	54	256	16
Grand	165		1777		1942		1224		506		5		1735		207		272	

Nature-wise resolved disputes of AC

District	Nature of disputes resolution of AC			
	Maintenance	Divorce	Polygamy	Total
Madaripur (4 Upazilla)	363	18	3	384
Shariatpur (6 Upazilla)	294	25	4	323
Gopalganj (2 Upazilla)	203	1	0	204
Jessore (3 Upazilla)	89	98	4	191
Magura (2 Upazilla)	89	30	3	122
Total 5 District / 17 Upazilla	1038	172	14	1224

Direct benefit through disputes resolved of AC

Result of disputes	No. of disputes	%	Amount in Tk
Marriage Continued	924	75.49	-
Maintenance Provided	124	10.13	281,650.00
Mutual Settlement	61	4.98	-
Divorce Executed	115	9.40	-
Total	1224	100.00	281,650.00

c) Dispute resolution through Mediation

District	Previous Pending		Application Received		Total		Mediation Done		Reject		Recom. Case		Total		Present Pending		Disposed Locally	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Madaripur	275	227	2415	1526	2690	1753	1947	1182	40	4	421	363	2408	1549	282	204	194	98
Shariatpur	195	107	1655	972	1850	1079	1364	815	132	0	201	157	1697	972	153	107	311	222
Gopalganj	152	76	1095	478	1247	554	756	413	148	6	191	75	1095	494	152	60	207	61
Jessore	27	7	576	613	603	620	462	471	36	62	14	2	512	535	91	85	2	4
Magura	10	2	428	300	438	302	361	242	34	29	14	0	409	271	29	31	5	8
Total	659	419	6169	3889	6828	4308	4890	3123	390	101	841	597	6121	3821	707	487	719	393
Grand	1078		10058		11136		8013		491		1438		9942		1194		1112	

Nature-wise resolved disputes of AC

District	Family Matter		Assault		Second Marriage		Dowry		Social Disputes		Financial Matter		Land Disputes		Misc.		Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Madaripur	352	467	116	63	3	0	1236	0	45	63	74	175	88	348	33	66	1947	1182
Shariatpur	377	391	65	57	6	0	781	0	33	45	50	112	34	172	18	38	1364	815
Gopalganj	178	127	50	63	2	0	449	0	10	20	24	85	15	73	28	45	756	413
Jessore	121	130	35	61	21	2	194	0	21	43	17	98	14	108	39	29	462	471
Magura	108	64	48	21	12	1	138	1	15	36	12	52	17	60	11	7	361	242
Total	1136	1179	314	265	44	3	2798	1	124	207	177	522	168	761	129	185	4890	3123
Total	2315		579		47		2799		331		699		929		314		8013	

Direct benefit of resolved disputes through Mediation

Result of Disputes	Disputes resolved	%	Amount in Taka
Marriage Continued	4072	50.82	X
Recovered of Maintenance & Denmohor / Divorce Executed	919	11.47	25,735,810.00
Child Rescued (49 Children) & Maintenance for children	0	-	36,200.00
Compensation Recovered	808	10.08	13,139,128.00
Land Recovered (9379 decimal)	410	6.07	33,561,405.00
Money Recover in replace of Land (1179 Decimal)	76		2,784,000.00
Mutual Settlement	1728	21.56	X
Total	8013	100	75,256,543.00

d) Provide court case support

Districts	Previous Pending	Case Filed	Total Case Handled	Court Verdict		Reject	Compr-omised	Total	Present Pending
				Favour	Against				
Madaripur	522	173	695	71	9	19	94	193	502
Shariatpur	212	92	304	18	0	11	52	81	223
Gopalganj	254	116	370	31	4	20	57	112	258
Jessore	0	22	22	1	0	0	0	1	21
Magura	0	25	25	2	0	0	3	5	20
MLAA	988	381	1369	120	13	50	203	386	983
BS	0	47	47	3	0	0	4	7	41
Total	988	428	1416	123	13	50	207	393	1024

Nature-wise disposed cases

Type	Cases filed				Cases disposed			
	Female	Male	Total	%	Female	Male	Total	%
Criminal	276	28	304	71.03	224	28	252	64.12
Family	93	0	93	21.73	114	0	114	29.01
Land	3	9	12	2.80	7	9	16	4.07
Appeals	12	7	19	4.44	8	3	11	2.80
Total	384	44	428	100	353	40	393	100

Direct benefit of disposed cases

Result of cases	No.	Description of result
Imprisonments	32	175 Years imprisonments of 36 accused Persons
Compensation	25	MLAA clients got decree as compensation of Tk. 1,95,84,000.00
Maintenance/Dower	126	Women Clients got decree of tk. 3894201.00 as maintenance and dower money from her husband
Child Rescued	3	2 mother get back her children
Clients Free	23	68 Persons become free from charges
Verdict in favors	9	MLAA help the opponent of the case and the judgment of cases come in favor of clients
Bail Approved	3	Bail approved in 3 persons
Marriage Continued	107	Marriage continued through compromised
Transfer. to VC	1	01 Appeal case transfer to VC from Court
Mutual Compromised	64	In 66 Case both parties mutually settled their disputes locally by submitting their agreement
Total	393	

e) Follow-up of pending cases & disposed cases

Nature of Cases	Disposed Case			Pending Cases			Total Cases		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Criminal	22	0	22	30	1	31	52	1	53
Family	13	0	13	13	0	13	26	0	26
Land	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2
Appeals	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
Total	36	1	37	43	2	45	79	3	82

f) Experience sharing meeting with court case clients

Thana	No of meeting	Participants		
		Female	Male	Total
Madaripur	4	66	7	73
Shariatpur	5	94	4	98
Gopalgonj	4	76	3	79
Total	13	236	14	250

g) Meeting with panel lawyers and advocates' clerks

Events	No of meeting	Participants	Participants		
			Female	Male	Total
Meeting with Panel Lawyers (Madaripur & Shariatpur)	2	Panel Lawyers	6	72	78
Meeting with Advocates' Clerks (Madaripur, Shariatpur & Gopalgonj)	3	Advocates' Clerks	6	130	136
Total	5		12	202	214

i) Medical support & collect of cases documents of MLAA clients

Activity	No. of Client Received Support	Amount Provided
Medical Support		
Collection for Case Document		
Total		

Output 4: Strengthened institutional capacity

Training & staff development

a) Training for project staffs

Training Title	No. of Courses	Participants			Level of Staffs					Total
		Female	Male	Total	Union Worker	Supervisor	Asstt. Coordinator	Coordinator	Director	
Training of Trainers	01	5	20	25	3	19	3	0	0	25
Local Justice system (VC, AC & Mediation)	02	13	28	41	32	2	2	3	2	41
Total	3	18	48	66	35	21	5	3	2	66

b) Training for stakeholders on VC, AC & Mediation

Venue	Courses	Participants			UP Repres.	CBO Member	Women CBO	Total
		Female	Male	Total				
Madaripur	8	8	182	190	190	0	0	190
Jessore	11	67	224	291	291	0	0	291
Jessore	13	70	291	361	0	361	0	361
Madaripur	10	255	0	255	0	0	255	255
Jessore	6	168	0	168	0	0	168	168
Total	48	568	697	1265	481	361	423	1265

c) TOT on human rights & family law for madrasha teachers

Venue	No of Courses	Participants			Nature of Participants					Total
		Female	Male	Total	Principal & Vice Pr.	Professor	Asstt. Teacher	Superint -endent	Librarian	
MLAA	4	0	78	78	15	16	39	7	1	78
BS	2	0	51	51	8	16	27	0	0	51
Total	6	0	129	129	23	32	66	7	1	129

d) Gender development meeting, workshops and trainings

Events	No	Participants			MLAA Staffs	Female Member	Women CBO	Women Leader	Total
		Female	Male	Total					
Meeting with Gender Task Force	3	61	0	61	61	0	0	0	61
Gender Dev. Training	4	98	0	98	0	29	69	0	98
Gender Dev. Workshop	10	222	0	222	0	0	157	65	222
Total	17	381	0	381	61	29	226	65	381

e) Training for other NGOs

Training Title	NGOs	Participants			ED	Sr. Staffs	Mid Level	Sup. Level	Field Level	Total
		Female	Male	Total						
Human Rights	12	5	15	20	3	7	6	1	3	20
Fact Finding on HR Violations	13	6	12	18	2	4	7	2	3	18
Local Justice System (VC, AC & Mediation)	12	9	15	24	4	5	4	9	2	24
Total Courses : 3	37	20	42	62	9	16	17	12	8	62

f) Project management workshops

Venue	No. of Events	Participants			Level of Staffs				Total
		Female	Male	Total	Supervisor	Coordinator	Senior Coordinator	Director	
MLAA	1	0	18	18	15	2	1	0	18
BS	1	3	11	14	2	7	4	1	14
Total	2	3	29	32	17	9	5	1	32

Summary

After 30 years in three southern districts of Bangladesh, Madaripur Legal Aid Association (MLAA) has become a household name in the region and a principal vanguard of development of a sustainable society based on justice and equal rights. MLAA as a reputed NGO has produced tangible improvement and promote access to justice to the poor people, especially woman-folk in the three districts – Madaripur, Shariatpur and Gopalganj. Begun life as a provider of legal aid assistance, the association transformed itself into a NGO of numerous activities relating to legal rights and human rights with greater emphasis on dispute resolution through mediation and activating Union Parishad 's adjudicative system to make the legal services easily accessible.

MLAA has provided training and the technical support to about 125 local NGOs on the issue of local justice systems and has got more than 13 partners in different parts of the country. MLAA has taken an initiative for expansion of its existing programme in 32 UPs of Jessore and Magura districts. Banchte Shekha (BS) was the previous partner of MLAA and also experience of implementation of local justice programme. So MLAA included Banchte Shekha (BS) as a partner in the core program and have been working in 5 districts (Madaripur, Shariatpur, Gopalganj, Jessore and Magura).

This summary of the achievement of MLAA have been covering the whole scenario of the activities of 132 Union Parishad of 5 districts for the period of October 2009 to September 2009.

MLAA initiated advocacy activities to ensure better access to justice for disadvantaged to reform law and policy in formal and informal judicial system from the grassroots level to national policymaking level. MLAA had undertaken a study on procedural complicity on family laws and dowry last year. 1(one) workshop was arranged in Shariatpur by inviting different strategic stakeholders from district for sharing the basic findings of the study. MLAA organized 5 meetings in 3 districts and 10 Upazilla workshops within the project area as a primary step to reform the AC and the VC. These were the platforms to exchange opinions and initiate recommendations to reform the laws of the AC and the VC.

The Yugo Chetona MLAA's bi-monthly news letter also focuses different articles on laws and human rights with a view to influencing relevant stakeholders to create a positive change in the policy level. In the reported period MLAA published 5 issues and total 7500 copies of this newsletter. MLAA observes different Human Rights days declared by UN with the participation of different NGOs and educational institutions which is a part to bring them in a networking approach.

To activate an effective and functional local level judicial system MLAA conducted different training for the UP representatives, activists and local elite, religious leaders, madrasa students, govt. officials, CBO members and household. MLAA facilitated 4648 courtyard meetings, 1154 ward CBO meetings, 452 central CBO meetings, 127 Union level meetings, 122 experience sharing meetings with UP representatives, 58 street dramas and 33 Campaigning at union level, 48 workshops for madrasa students in 5 districts. About 93109 persons were participated in the said events.

The Free Legal Assistance program of MLAA conducts court cases on behalf of the disadvantaged, marginalized, destitute and the poor people, especially women, children

and the minority groups to secure their rights. In the reporting year a total of 1416 cases were conducted including 988 pending cases from the previous year. Among these cases, 393 were settled, only 13 of which went against the clients of the MLAA.

MLAA undertook field level follow-ups for 82 pending and settled cases to identify different problems faced by the clients and to take steps to conduct the cases more practical and realistic manner. To encourage the concerned personnel and create their empathy to the poor clients MLAA organised 5 meetings in three districts with concerned lawyers and their associates, judges and representatives of the law enforcing agencies.

Under UP judicial system program 3288 cases have been settled by the Village Court of which 2125 cases parties got compensation and possession of land. The total value of compensation and recovered land is Taka 1,32,72,986.00. The Arbitration Council has resolved 1224 disputes of which 93% beneficiaries are women and in 124 resolved disputes applicants received Taka 2,81,650.00 as maintenance.

MLAA facilitated to resolve 8013 disputes through mediation. The beneficiaries of 2213 disputes settled by mediation have received financial benefit of Taka 7,52,56,543.00 and in 4072 disputes regarding family matter (51%) husband and wife continued their marriage life peacefully.

MLAA organized 5 different training and workshops to increase skills of the workforce at various levels of the organization. To incorporate gender issues at the organizational and programmatic level the gender policy of MLAA has been practised among the activists of the organization at all levels. To create awareness on gender issues among the staff and stakeholders 17 different training and workshops were arranged.

Continuous monitoring is essential to ensure transparency in the ongoing activities and for institutional capacity building. To meet this end, the monitoring cell has been improved within a standard monitoring system.

As a combined effect of all these efforts, the MLAA is now capable of meeting future challenges in the progressive and qualitative achievements of its goals.