NEGOTIATING GENDER JUSTICE, CONTESTING DISCRIMINATION

MAPPING STRATEGIES THAT INTERSECT CULTURE, WOMEN AND HUMAN RIGHTS

PARTNERS FOR LAW IN DEVELOPMENT
Partners for Law in Development (PLD) - is a legal resource group working in the fields of social justice and women's rights in India. Founded in 1998, the organization locates women's rights as integral to its work on social justice, engaging with it in contexts of family, sexuality, culture, caste, conflict and development. We believe that social justice goals are best shaped by human rights and the Constitutional guarantees that establish the framework for realization of the rights of the marginalized and the disadvantaged. We promote and facilitate application of rights through capacity and perspective development programmes, production of knowledge resources, and advocacy.

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This report is almost entirely based on interviews and discussions during field visits, presentations at conferences, and observation of activities. The number of activists, organisations, lawyers, local leaders and community women who extended their time, shared their work, goals, challenges and related concerns are far too many for a paragraph to hold. The appendix contains the list of names of people with location/country/organisation references and despite endeavors at being comprehensive, it misses many who participated in small group discussions. To each of these persons, mentioned and those inadvertently missed out, we owe a debt of gratitude. Indeed, without their enthusiastic engagement with the subject and the patience with our demands, travel delays, last minute appointments, the field work, and consequently this report, could not have been possible. It would be terribly amiss to not mention that on one occasion in Arunachal, local activists convened a meeting twice to make up for the breakdown of phone network and delays of long road journeys. It would also be partial to not mention the festivities in Arunachal, gifts of books and quantities of written materials in Dhaka, home cooked meals everywhere, and in Indonesia, a spread of specially prepared vegetarian food in most organisations visited, that defined the generosity this project benefitted from.

The logistics and coordination at the country level was vital to accomplishing the field work and meeting the large number of people we did in the limited time available. For this invaluable assistance, our heartfelt gratitude to Kamala Chandrakirana and the Komnas Perampuan team in Indonesia; to Sara Hossain and the Ain O Salish team in Bangladesh; and Sapana Malla Pradhan in Nepal. In India – we are grateful to Sharifa Khannum and the STEPS team for their hospitality and support in Puddukkottai; Jarjum Ete for amazing coordination across districts in Arunachal. Thanks are due to ASHA, the organization in Ranchi for providing local support to the one day consultation on tribal customary law, to Hasina Khan of Awaz e Niswan and Noorjehan of WRAG in Mumbai, for getting together their entire teams, coincidentally just when both organisations were shifting office premises. Mention must also be made of Jaya Jha, the
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As this report is largely based on discussions and field observations, some errors are very likely. We apologise in advance for the mistakes in the reporting of events, details, and would welcome corrections and feedback from the readers. Another inevitable outcome of a report based on discussions is the likelihood of perspectives and understandings differing from those of the authors of the work in the field, or the communities they work with. The perspectives of this report are PLD’s alone, and may sometimes not correspond with the self description of the respondents/source of information. These variations in understandings are part of the diversity of our positions, and a reflection of the partial nature of this inquiry, that makes this documentation merely a work-in-progress.

Madhu Mehra
Executive Director
Abbreviations

ADR: Alternative Dispute Resolution
ANBTI: Aliansi Nasional Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, Indonesia
APWWS: Arunachal Pradesh Women’s Welfare Society
ASHA: Association for Social and Human Awareness, Ranchi
ASK: Ain O Shalish Kendra, Bangladesh
BMMA: Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan, India
BRAC: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CA: Constituent Assembly
CBO: Community Based Organisation
CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979
CPN (M): Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
CSDS: Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi
CSS: Chotanagpur Sanskritik Sangh, Ranchi
CWDS: Centre for Women’s Development Studies, New Delhi
DC: District Collector
FWLD: Forum for Women, Law and Development, Nepal
HRLS: Human Rights and Legal Aid Services, Bangladesh
KP: Komnas Perampuan, Indonesia
LACC: Legal Aid and Consultancy Centre
LBH APIK: Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia
MAP: Manavadhikar Aiyathi Porishad, Bangladesh
MNS: Mananvadhikar Nari Samaj, Bangladesh
MWRN: Muslim Women’s Rights Network, India
MSP: Manav Adhikar Sangrashan Porishad, Bangladesh
NEFA: North East Frontier Agency
NGO: Non Government Organisation
NU: Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia
OBC: Other Backward Class
PBB: The Crescent Star Party, Indonesia
PKS: The Prosperous Justice Party, Indonesia
PPP: The United Development Party, Indonesia
PLD: Partners for Law in Development, New Delhi
POTA: Prevention of Terrorist Activities Act 2002
PRIP: Private Rural Initiatives Program, Bangladesh
PW: People’s War
PWDVA: Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005
RIB: Research Initiative Bangladesh
SARA: Social Association for Rural Advancement, Bangladesh
SC: Scheduled Caste
SHG: Self Help Group
ST: Scheduled Tribe
UCC: Uniform Civil Code
WHR: Women for Human Rights, Nepal
WOREC: Women’s Rehabilitation Centre, Nepal
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