

Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB) is a Not-for-Profit Organisation and was founded in 2002 by some prominent educators, social scientists and human rights activists to promote knowledge on poverty alleviation that is relevant, useful, innovative, participatory and action-oriented with a special focus on marginalised and socially excluded communities.

Objectives

RIB views poverty as a multidimensional process and recognises that the needs of poverty groups go beyond simple income generation, food and shelter, to areas such as equality, dignity, justice, human rights and good governance. RIB supports marginalised and minority groups who are unable to access basic services due to social discrimination and conduct people's research ("Gonogobeshona") on the development schemes that affects them most, in order to develop ownership and generate community mobilization and to achieve this objective along with Gonogobeshona RIB uses RTI as an important component.

RIB has been one of the front runners to champion the cause of Right to Information especially among hard to reach communities through various publications notable among them being an easy version of the law in the vernacular, an information booklet on Safety Net Activities by the Government and List of Authorities, a process documentation of the implementation of Right to Information Act in Bangladesh and Marginal Communities, FAQs booklet on RTI, My Right to Know: What, How and from Whom all of which have contributed to RIB's reputation of being an organization which can instigate the process and practice of RTI in Bangladesh from the ground up in other words by focusing on the demand side of RTI law.

RIB has been able to train people in RTI procedures through actual practices of writing applications and following through the process. RIB has been working in the area of empowering the disadvantaged groups through RTI in various parts of the country from 2010 till now and was able to solicit thousands of applications involving citizens groups representing various communities and some groups consisting of women, labourer and students from mainstream communities.

During implementation of one of its previous project from 2010-2012 supported by RLS and CHRI, RIB was also able to play a part in national advocacy by acting as a RTI watch group of the Information Commission and publishing a Two Years of Right to Information in Bangladesh:

A Review, holding national seminars, publishing 3000 poster, brochures for distribution and establishing an RTI website twinned with an RTI helpline through mobile phones.

RIB has been working in the area of empowering the disadvantaged groups through RTI in various parts of the country. In its first stages, RTI was used to help get marginalized communities, such as indigenous and Dalit (untouchable) people, basic right of access to government services and safety net measures through seeking information so as to help alleviation of poverty. Following RIB's introduction of RTI to them, the communities that were included have gradually shown more and more interest about the application of this law. The important fact is that, not only the members of the community who have submitted applications to the authorities but also the government offices where these applications are submitted got to know about this Act through mutual interaction. It has been observed that a good relationship has evolved between the service providers and service receivers. Previously the gates of government offices were in effect closed to these marginalized groups. But through the RTI Act they succeeded in creating an opening, however slowly.

Other initiatives

Though RIB has primarily focused on working with demand side so that people can be empowered through intervention of RTI. Simultaneously has closely worked on creating awareness and motivation among public officials too. With support from World Bank, RIB took initiatives and developed a hand-on module for DOs and sub-district and district level government officers who by the use of it can easily make themselves aware and keep themselves informed as to status of implementation of RTI law in their regions.

RIB has provided various trainings and capacity building on RTI to different actors and stakeholders including students group, women entrepreneur, farmers, professionals, organizations, local authorities and government officers.

RIB has a vast experience of organizing and facilitating local and international conferences and seminars on RTI as well as RIB's representatives have participated in various conferences held locally and internationally highlighting on promotion of RTI law.

Additionally RIB writes down a monthly column in a leading national daily "The Daily Star" on RTI with an objective to get people from different strata of society involved in the RTI law regime and also to make public officials aware about the law.

RTI projects of RIB (2011-2017)

| SI No | Name of Project | Donors | Timeline |
|-------|--|-------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | Empowering the Disadvantaged in Bangladesh Through Access to Justice by the Right to Information | Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung (RLS) | |

1 st phase

(January to December 2010)

2 nd Phase (January 2011-December 2012)

2.

Community Legal Services

BLAST, DFID

April 2013 to March 2017

3.

Strengthening Human Rights Institutionalization Through Vulnerable Empowerment (STRIVE)

NETZ Bangladesh, Supported by BMZ, Germany

January 2013 to December 2016

4

Empowering Communities through Right to Information

World Bank

January to June 2014

5

Engendering Collaboration between Supply and Demand side of RTI by involving District Advisory Com

World Bank

December 2015 to September 2016

6

Accountability Through Information

Research

(Shekhar Singh, Inida)

November 2015 to July 2016

7

Civil Society organization Strengthen Democratic Governance

NETZ Bangladesh, Funded by EU

January 2016 to December 2019

Publication and reports on RTI:

1. Totho Odhikar Shohoj Path (3rd edition) Dec 2013
 2. Shorkari Sheba mulok kormoshuchi o Kortripokher talika August 2011
 3. Amar totho janar odhikar, September 2012
 4. Bangladeshe Totho odhikar ain o Prantik jonogoshi, april 2012
 5. Ami jante chai, July 2014,
 6. Vulnerable Group's Access to Safety Net Programs through PAR and RTI, December 2016
 7. Empowerment Through Information – The evolution of transparency regimes in South Asia, Vol 1& 2, February' 2015
 8. Leaflet on RTI, September'2017
 9. Right to Information Act brochure
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10. Role of PAR & RTI in claiming rights, December 2017.

Reports:

1. Empowering Communities through Right to Information.
2. Identifying approaches to establish an informed interaction and collaboration between supply and demand sides through DAC.