

INSTITUTION BUILDING  
FOR LAND RIGHTS

## Primary Organisation and GUF Formation



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Uttaran

**INSTITUTION BUILDING FOR LAND RIGHTS**

## **Primary Organisation and GUF Formation**

*Disclaimer*

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Published by : Uttaran  
Flat # B1 (1st Floor), House # 32, Road # 10/A  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1209, Bangladesh  
Phone: 88-02-9122302  
e-mail: [uttaran.dhaka@gmail.com](mailto:uttaran.dhaka@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.uttaran.net](http://www.uttaran.net)

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Content edit / design : Philip Humphreys

Translation support : Farhana Khan

Photographs : Rupal Shah

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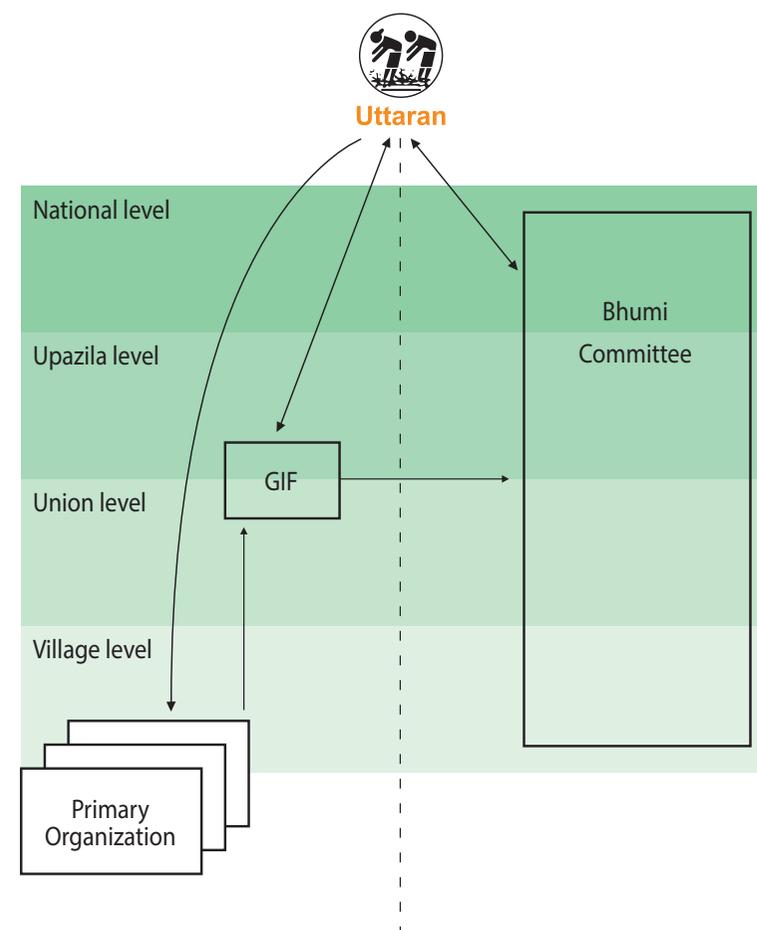
## Introduction

Since its inception in 1985, Uttaran has been creating, supporting and mentoring primary organisations for both male and female minority, marginalised and disadvantaged people at the village level in southwest Bangladesh and now beyond. In terms of land governance, the primary organisations exist to help organise the landless people, raise awareness of human and legal rights, and facilitate the process of khasland and water body redistribution. This booklet, the second in Uttaran's land governance series 1985-2015, necessarily focuses on the formation and impact of primary organisations in this context, however the POs do so much that. They are, in essence, a vehicle for improving every aspect of their members' lives.

The concept of the Gono Unnayan Federation (meaning 'public development federation' and commonly abbreviated to GUF) emerged from the need to create linkages among the primary organisations to increase their individual strengths, capacity, and efficiency, and from the desire to form a large, alternative organisation which can operate outside of the conventional box. Operating in parallel with bhumi committees (see booklet 4 in this series), both networks provide much more than land support alone.



## Overview



GUFs and POs operate at the upazila, union and village level, with their members drawn from Uttaran's target groups

For more information on Bhumi Committees, see booklet 4 in this series

# Primary Organisation



## What is a primary organisation?

Sociologists identify primary groups as networks for exchanging implicit items, such as empathy, concern, understanding and support. Examples of these networks would be family groups, crisis support groups, and religious associations. Sociologists argue that relationships formed in primary groups are often long lasting and can be goals achieved in themselves. The groups are often psychologically comforting to their individual members, and can provide a source of support and encouragement.

The concept of the primary group was introduced by Charles Cooley, a US sociologist from the Chicago School of Sociology, in his 1909 book 'Social Organisation: A Study of the Larger Mind'. Cooley noted how primary groups play an important role in the development of personal identity, arguing that the impact of the primary group is so great, individuals cling to primary ideals in more complex associations and even create new primary groupings within formal organisations. To that extent, he viewed society as a constant experiment in enlarging social experience and in coordinating variety (source: 'Boundless Sociology', 5 January 2015).

## Primary organisations and Uttaran

In terms of development, primary organisations are non-profit groups that work at a local level to improve the qualities of life for their members. The focus is on building and promoting fairness across society in all streams; for example health, education, environment, secure livelihoods and property. The inference is that the communities represented by the primary organisations are typically at a disadvantage. POs formed by Uttaran are typically - and necessarily - comprised of local community members who have first hand experience of the specific problems and needs of their villages and wards.

## Structure and guidelines of the primary organisation

### 1. Type of organisation

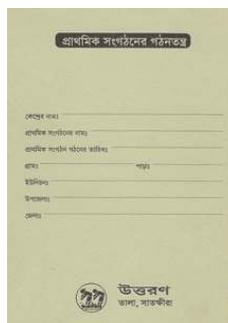
This is an organisation of impartial landless grass roots people, dedicated to the socio-economic development and exploring democratic ideas and practices.

## 2. Goal of the organisation:

To help to build an equal and liberal society through the eradication of all forms of exploitation, including that based on class, caste and race.

## 3. The objectives of the organisation are to:

- A. Organise the disadvantaged male and female of the society
- B. Participate in the democratisation process at the root level.
- C. Ensure the development of alternative leadership among the landless people
- D. Organise effectively at the union and upazila/development centre level
- E. Ensure effective participation of the members of primary organisations in the local parishads.
- F. Make the members aware of their current social status and to take initiatives to change this status through different programmes.
- G. Increase funds through regular savings
- H. Create opportunities for self-employment
- I. Ensure participation in social and national activities
- J. Deliver justice for the landless through access to the national assets
- K. Enhance the participation of the disadvantaged groups of society in the local social and economic institutions.
- L. Spread and practice the ideology of gender equality
- M. Take initiatives to protect the natural environment
- N. Increase functional literacy through education programmes
- O. Take effective initiatives to eradicate gender based violence, polygamy and child marriage, and reduce dowry and divorce rates
- P. Build awareness among disadvantaged groups of society to eradicate all forms of discrimination



Q. Ensure safe drinking water and sanitation

R. Promote primary education

## 4. Membership criteria

- A. Landless people who own less than 50 decimals of land
- B. Disadvantaged women, especially those widowed, divorced or abandoned
- C. The Dalits (so-called 'untouchables')
- D. Age group of 18-45
- E. For married women, conditions of membership may be relaxed



## 5. Organogram

This organisation will have the following two-fold structure:

General committee

Executive committee

### 5.1 Formation of the general committee

- a) The general committee will be formed of 20 -30 members of the primary organisation.
- b) All the members of the general committee will enjoy equal rights.
- c) People who fulfill the requirements of point 4 (membership criteria) are eligible to be the members of the general committee.

### 5.2 Reasons for cancelling primary organisation membership

- a) Possession of a negative attitude towards any disadvantaged group in contradiction with the spirit of the organisation
- b) Ill health affecting the ability to perform duties
- c) Migration to another place or country
- d) A change of occupation in some cases may cause cancellation of membership
- e) Failure to attend four consecutive meetings
- f) Failure to deposit weekly subscription in four consecutive meetings
- g) Seeking or acquiring membership of a conflicting organisation
- h) Involvement in anti social or anti-state activities

*Please note that all resignations from the general committee should be made in writing*

### 5.3 Roles, responsibilities and power of the general committee

- a) Members of the general committee will be informed about aims and activities of the primary organisation and different federations, formed with the coordination with the primary organisation. They will be entitled to discuss, review and recommend the above things. Moreover, the members of the general committee will be able to review the involvement of any member in any financial activities

- b) Members will enjoy voting rights and will be able to cast their votes to form executive committee or to decide on any issues of the organisation
- c) Members will be able to contest the vote
- d) Facilities of the members are non-transferable
- e) Members will be engaged with implementing the activities of the primary organisation and federations at different levels
- f) Members will follow all the rules, regulations and ethics of the organisation
- g) Members will attend the weekly, monthly and yearly meetings on a regular basis and participate in constructive discussion.
- h) Members will participate in savings programmes and will contribute to the income generating activities.
- i) Members will maintain the unity of the organisation
- j) Members will play an impartial role while taking or providing loans
- k) Members will repay any loan on time
- l) Members will participate effectively in any intervention of the organisation and will encourage others to do the same
- m) Members will conduct self-assessments
- n) Members will ensure participation of all members in all decision making

### 5.4 Formation of the executive committee

- a) A five-member executive committee should be formed to execute the activities of the organisation:

President	1 x member
Secretary	1 x member
Treasurer	1 x member
Law or education volunteer	1 x member
Health or environment volunteer	1 x member

- b) All the members of the executive committee will be elected by a democratic process

- c) None of the executive committee members will be elected for two consecutive terms.
- d) The duration of the executive committee will be two years.
- e) New committee members will take over within one month of the completion of the term of the previous committee.
- f) Any vacant position created for any reason should be filled on the basis of the consent of the majority members of the general committee within 15 days of being left vacant
- g) Members of the executive committee will be unpaid

#### **5.5 Reasons for cancelling executive committee membership**

- a) Theft from organisation funds
- b) Performing any act that contradicts the spirit of the organisation
- c) Migration to another place or country
- d) Ill health affecting the ability to perform duties
- e) Vote of no confidence held with good reason and passed by the majority of the members

#### **5.6 Collective roles and responsibilities of the executive committee**

- a) Review the activities of the primary organisation and the activities of its members
- b) Prepare the annual report of the primary organisation
- c) Prepare the financial report and circulate among the members
- d) Formulate all policies for elections

#### **5.7 Individual roles and responsibilities of the executive committee members**

##### **5.7.1 Roles and responsibilities of the president**

- a) Act as head of the organisation
- b) Preside over all meetings including weekly meetings
- c) Approve the resolutions of meetings
- d) Oversee all issues related to the interests of the organisation
- e) Encourage all members to attend the weekly meeting

- f) Ensure members repay any and all loans taken from the organisation
- g) Manage transactions with banks as needed
- h) Approve loan applications and sign the loan papers and agreements
- i) Communicate with other organisations on behalf of the primary organisation
- j) Make the casting vote in order to facilitate the collective decision of the organisation
- d) Formulate all policies for elections

##### **5.7.2 Roles and responsibilities of the secretary**

- a) Act as the executive lead for the organisation
- b) Convene meetings of the organisation
- c) Preside over meetings in the absence of the president
- d) Create an environment of cooperation and unity among the members
- e) Manage projects undertaken by the organisation
- f) Formulate the action plan of the organisation in consultation with the president and members
- g) Lead the process to build the capacity of the members
- h) Provide updates about the figures of the organisation
- i) Assist the president and the treasurer
- j) Preserve all the papers of the organisation and write letters on behalf of the organisation
- k) Communicate with other organisations including Uttaran
- l) Represent the Union and Central Gono Unnayan Federation (see pages 25-31)
- m) Take and circulate minutes of meetings and will take steps to seek the approval of the president.

##### **5.7.3 Roles and responsibilities of the treasurer**

- a) Preserve all documents related to the accounts of the organisation
- b) Collect weekly subscriptions, update and sign the pass book

- c) Manage the funds of the organisation
- d) Process financial transactions
- e) Maintain communication with Uttaran regarding the withdrawing and depositing of money
- f) Update members on financial issues on a regular basis
- g) Ensure the financial transparency of the organisation
- h) Deposit all funds received from any source within a timeframe set by the organisation
- i) Take assistance from the president and secretary to solve any financial problems

#### **5.7.4 Roles and responsibilities of the law or education worker**

- a) Build awareness among the members of the existing laws of the country including those pertaining to family violence, dowry, land reform, khasland distribution
- b) Formulate issue based strategic guidelines in consultation with the members before taking any initiatives
- c) Take necessary steps to ensure legal supports if the rights of any citizen are violated
- d) Contribute to establishing gender equality
- e) Contribute to eradicating discrimination against Dalits
- f) Participate in shalish (village courts, see booklet 6 on 'Legal support')
- g) Take effective steps to protect human rights
- h) Take fruitful steps to expand functional and adult literacy
- i) Work to enhance the reading habits of the members

#### **5.7.5 Roles and Responsibilities of the health or environment worker:**

- a) Build awareness on health issues among the members
- b) Take initiatives to ensure safe drinking water, especially arsenic free water
- c) Encourage the use of sanitary latrines in the locality and play a role in public awareness building on water borne diseases
- d) Build awareness on pre-natal and antenatal health care

- e) Enhance own knowledge on primary health care issues and disseminate these among the members
- f) Identify the health care issues of the locality and take fruitful steps to resolve them
- g) Ensure health care facilities for the locality through the healthcare centre
- h) Manage the forestation process of the locality to protect and restore the environment
- i) Ensure the participation of the members in the movements against water logging and environmental protection

#### **6. Process of conducting meeting**

- a) Weekly or fortnightly meetings should take place on a convenient day and at an agreed time. Emergency meetings can take place on any day
- b) At least two thirds of the members must be present to pass motions. Discussions can take place but no decisions can be made if fewer than two thirds of members are present
- c) The previous meeting minutes should be read out, modified, edited, added to or deducted from (if needed), and approved before entering into a detailed discussion
- d) The progress of the decisions of the previous meeting should be reviewed if it is not an emergency meeting
- e) Discussion should proceed as per the agenda
- f) A register of attendance should be taken
- g) Decisions should be taken on the basis of collective discussion
- h) Assessment of the overall activities of the organisation should be done in every quarter and this should be presented in the annual meeting

## 7. Preservation of documents

All the documents should be preserved in order to accelerate the activities of the organisation. The following papers should be kept:

- Members' register
- Resolution book
- Savings register
- Cash Book
- Bank deposit and pass book
- General ledger book
- Bank cheque book
- Personal savings and loans book
- Loan applications and agreement
- Attendance register
- Communication book
- Stamp, seal and pad



## 8. Membership



- a) A person should pay the following fees to become a member:
- Pass book = 5.00 taka
  - Shares = 10.00 taka
  - Savings = 5.00 taka

Among the whole amount, 15 taka is non-refundable and 5 taka will be deposited as the member's savings

- b) Except in special cases, no new members can be recruited to the organisation once it has completed one year
- c) Terms and conditions for recruiting new members:
- The organisation has a limited number of members
  - A majority of members agree to a new membership if anyone applies in the weekly or fortnightly meeting
  - The proposed new member agrees to deposit the same amount of money as that already deposited by each existing member
  - A family member of any member who has died could be a new member as per the approval of the organisation

## 9. Restriction of membership

- a) A member should inform the secretary if he or she fails to attend the weekly meeting or fails to deposit savings. In this case the membership will be restricted
- b) Weekly savings could be suspended for a certain time due to natural disaster as per the decision of the organisation. In this case membership would be restricted

## 10. Cancellation of membership

- a) On the basis of a valid ground, like change of occupation or migration, a member could cancel his or her membership
- b) A written application should be submitted to the president at least one month ahead for the cancellation of membership
- c) The applicant should hand over all charges and accounts by own if the application is granted
- d) He or she could not claim the profit of any ongoing project; rather, he or she would be entitled to the profit from the completed projects only. In this case this member will get all his or her savings and pre-defined profits. At the moment of membership cancellation, the member should pay 5 taka which will be added to the funds of the organisation

### 11. Editing and addition of articles

Any policy of the organisation can be edited, modified, added to and cancelled as per the decision of two thirds of the members

### 12. Dismissal of the organisation

The organisation could be dismissed as per the decision of half of the members. All the properties of the organisation should be used to make the final payment to the members and the extra money is to be divided equally. The executive committee will be bound to make the final payment of the members within one month of the dismissal. If the executive committee fails to make the final payment, the members may take legal action against them.

## Primary Organisation in practice

**Members of three primary organisations in Depukhali in Debhata upazila under Satkhira district discuss how the assistance and support of their groups has helped them through some tough times. Of the 155 members in the three POs, 40 are involved in ongoing cases to secure their access to khasland.**



“My mother died in a land related dispute and I was shot,” says **Halima Khatun**, a middle-aged housewife. “When we did not possess any land record documents, the land grabbers tortured us day and night. They threw us out of our houses, threw our possessions on the streets, beat our children, put our husbands and other male members in jail and destroyed our houses with the aid of the police.”

**Nihar Ronjon Mondol** was another killed in the struggle. His son has inherited the mantle of landless leader and chairperson, and is continuing the fight for justice: “We do not want to face a fate like my father. We want full security of our lives,” he says. “We are hopeful that we will get our land back through Uttaran’s assistance within a year.”

“When my husband left me alone with my two-and-a-half-year-old son, I had nothing,” says **Monowara**, an old woman. “I used to work as a day labourer and my life was very miserable. Fortunately, I was introduced to Uttaran through the land rights movement.”

“During the land rights movement, Uttaran has helped us to gain greater coverage in the media,” says **Md. Faizul Islam**, one of the primary organisation beneficiaries and a landless leader of Debhata and Kaliganj.

**Motaleb Mia**, an old fisherman, has already seen a successful outcome of his case. “After giving us the permanent settlement, Uttaran also gave each family 1,000 taka to start working on their respective cultivation,” he says.



“Uttaran has helped us a lot with counselling and guiding us through all the legal aid processes,” says **Halima**. “It has trained us on health issues and financially supported us to buy medication, provided education and trained us on farming various dairy products, fisheries and vegetation.”

**Moriom Perveen**, a young housewife with two children, agrees. “Through Uttaran’s training, we learnt about so many issues: women’s empowerment and rights to land, hygiene, sanitation, health and safety, prevention of dowry, dangers to child marriage and significance of education for children,” she says.

**Shopna Mondol** is the head of her household of four. “I work as a labourer and earn 200 BDT a day. My husband works as a day labourer, too. I have 15 decimals of khasland on which I cultivate rice, but I do not have any official record or documentation for it yet. I get a lot of mental and emotional support from this primary organisation, and that is a big help to me, my husband, and our son and daughter.”

#### Primary organisation chairperson Rehana Khatun

“I was selected by my community to lead this primary organisation through personal voting. My job as a chairperson comprises calling public meetings, solving problems, conducting discussions and looking after the welfare of all the people. All the members hold me in high esteem and abide by my decisions. The women benefit greatly from being members of a primary organisation.



“They act like a forum where we can gather to share, discuss and brainstorm problems faced by the female community as a whole. The primary organisation can be made more effective with the greater participation of women and by maximising the number of meetings we hold. I think Uttaran is the greatest strength of these organisations”.



## Gono Unnayan Federation (GUF)

Every primary organisation formed by Uttaran is working towards the shared vision and objectives under the framework of a Gono Unnayan Federation (GUF). The GUF exist to promote values of democracy and environmental sensitivity among the poor, landless, and other minorities through awareness raising activities and training.

### Concept of Gono Unnayan Federation

The GUF help to create a secular society where all men and women irrespective of their class, creed or race are treated equally.

Through these large umbrella organisations, the poorest families are able to overcome their disadvantages and continue with the development activities that are already in place. They avoid the risks of unequal distribution of public assets and services, and retain their entitled public assets.

Initially, each GUF conducts its activities at union and upazila level, helping to promote alternative leadership emergence and participation in local federations. However, they will work together on regional and national issues also.

### Purpose of Gono Unnayan Federation

1. Form primary organisations to empower the poor and minorities through providing assistance and consciousness, participate in local governance and contribute towards national issues
2. Aid the establishment of greater unity among POs through communication, interaction, and cooperation, and also assist in the long term goal of set up and implementation
3. Assist in the tackling of unfairness imposed on the poor and the minority as identified in the POs
4. Retain communication with different governmental, private and independent organisations and make provisions for obtaining developmental facilities and services
5. Form human chain rallies and takes necessary steps in exercising rights of the poor and the landless in respective areas when they are faced with torture, unequal treatment, or violation of rights
6. Undertake various activities in accomplishing the emergence of alternative leadership
7. Uplift the organisational consciousness at upazila and district level and accept to undertake joint activities with unity when necessary through increased interaction with similar minded and similar level organisations
8. Increase the participation of landless under the guidelines and policy of the local government and national level policies

9. Increase effective public participation in the development of regional institutions' long term plans
10. Carry out movements to eradicate the custom of untouchables and creed discrimination
11. Establish societal acknowledgement for the unrecognised such as women, low level caste population and the poor
12. Take proactive steps in the changing of conventional concepts and discriminatory rules concerning creed, class and anti-egalitarian laws that run in the constitution
13. Contribute to conflict resolution by resolving conflicts among the PO members, interpersonal and regional conflicts, and also conflicts that prevails in the families of the poor and the minority hence establishing peace, security and stability in the society
14. Build capacity among the poor population to face water-gas disasters and create movements to combat various environmental problems and advocate for their prevention
15. Take joint steps to tackle artificial disasters like water logging and any other manmade disasters
16. Implement the public cultural activities by proper implementation of developmental activities, creation of public approval and strengthen the foundation of the poor people's unity
17. Inspire and create awareness among the PO members and also their family members regarding consciousness in health, hygiene, sanitation and consumption of safe drinking water
18. Create movements against the various superstitions and traditional mal customs of the area through means of conducting various workshops
19. Create protest movements against all sorts of social injustices like child marriage, polygamy, dowry, divorce, and torture towards women and children
20. Create social movements to enable all children to attend school
21. Give assistance to help members of the PO receive legal aid



## Structure and guidelines of the Gono Unnayan Federation

There are two types of GUF: the Union Gono Unnayan Federation (UGUF) and the Centre Gono Unnayan Federation (CGUF).

### Union Gono Unnayan Federation (UGUF)

#### 1. Formation

- a) Each primary organisation within a union is regarded as a member of a Gono Unnayan Federation
- b) Apart from the activities of primary organisations, those who are engaged in similar interests and mass cooperation are also included in Gono Unnayan Federation.

#### 2. Purpose of UGUF

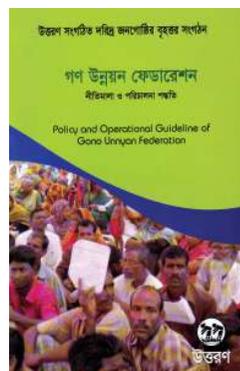
- a) Establish cooperation and unity among all the primary organisations within the UGUF and form a large organisation at the union level.
- b) Contribute towards accomplishing the goals of the Gono Unnayan Federation at the union level.
- c) Continuously cooperate in the implementation of the long term plans of the primary organisations and create linkages between or among all these primary organisations to accomplish the purpose
- d) Provide advice for, and monitor, the successful implementation of the projects undertaken by the poor primary organisation family members, enable them to obtain the capital and put forward projects to enhance the income of primary organisation members

#### 3. Institutional framework of UGUF

In order to execute the tasks of the UGUF perfectly, there exists a two-fold structure:

General Body

Management Committee



#### a) General Body

- i. Every primary organisation under the umbrella of the union is to be regarded as a member of the general body
- ii. One general editor or elected representative from every respective primary organisation will represent the UGUF on its behalf.
- iii. This body will possess all power and control over all matters related to the Union Federation.
- iv. This body can take any final decision with written approval from the majority in accordance to the policy guidelines.

#### b) Management Committee

- i. The management committee comprises 10 elected members from the general body plus one Uttaran supervisor, making 11 people in total.
- ii. The framework of the management committee is as follows:
 

Chairperson	: 1
Vice-chairperson	: 1
Secretariat member	: 1
Economic secretariat	: 1
Management members	: 7
- iii. Among these members, at least four should be women and two should represent the 'Untouchable'- Dalit community (where present)
- iv. If in any union there are fewer organisations then five management members can be formed instead of seven during the initial stages
- v. The duration of the management committee should be two years
- vii. The management committee will regularly arrange meetings, undertake and implement various projects to fulfil the objectives of the Gono Unnayan Federation.
- viii. The management committee will implement the approved decisions taken at the Annual General Meeting and present annual reports accordingly.
- ix. If any important decision is taken, then it should be immediately approved by the general body.

#### 4. Meetings and execution process of UGUF

##### a) Meetings of the General Body

- i. At least one meeting will be held per year in the general body
- ii. Secretariat member of the Union Federation will chair the meeting and arrange for all necessities upon prior approval from the chairperson.
- iii. The notice of the meeting has to be issued at least 15 days before.
- iv. The chairperson of the Union Federation will chair the meeting
- v. In the absence of the chairperson, the vice-chairperson will chair the meeting
- vi. If the vice-chairperson is also absent, then a member elected by the majority can chair the meeting.
- vii. Presence of the majority members is essential for the execution of the meeting.
- viii. In the meeting, the materialistic contribution of the Union Federation will be evaluated, final decisions will be taken and the last year work progress of the Union Federation will be evaluated as well plans for the next year will be made.
- ix. Every work details from all meetings will be entered into a specific book along with the signatures of all present members concerned preserved by the secretariat member.

##### b) Purpose of the Annual General Meeting

- i. Monitor, filter, select and approve all the works' progress of last year
- ii. Plan and approve of activities for the next year
- iii. Launch massive unity process/method
- iv. Present accumulated strengths in other divisions of the society, institutions and the Government.
- v. Elaborate in detail the different developmental workshops and activities.

##### c) Meeting of the Management Committee

- i. The meeting must be held once in every two months
- ii. There will be quorum in the attendance of the maximum number of members
- iii. Upon the advice of the chairperson, the secretariat member will inaugurate the meeting. He/she will issue the meeting order at least prior to 7 days (keeping into account the urgency of the situation)
- iv. The chairperson of the body will chair the meeting. The vice-chairperson will perform this responsibility in his/her absence
- v. The past month evaluation of the work progress will be monitored and work plan for the next month will be formatted
- vi. All the work details of the meeting will be recorded in the resolution book along with the signatures of all members present. It is explicitly stated that the secretariat member will preserve the book along with the recording of the work details of the meeting.

#### 5. Transfer of representative passed down from the Primary Organisation of the general body of the UGUF

If any primary organisation wants to bring about any changes in the representative of the Union Federation then they have to send a change-related resolution to the chairperson or secretariat member of the UGUF along with the signatures of two-thirds of the entire membership. This proposal will be evaluated in the upcoming meeting and the change will only be implemented after approval.

#### 6. Office of UGUF

A specific office or Uttaran head office will be used to execute the assignments of the UGUF, requiring necessary seating arrangements and storage furniture to preserve the documents and other papers.

## Central Gono Unnayan Federation (CGUF)

### 1. Formation

The Central Gono Unnayan Federation will be formed by all Uttaran directed development centres, all primary organisations and Union Federation in an upazila.

### 2. Institutional framework of CGUF

In order to execute the tasks of the UGUF perfectly, there exists a two-fold structure:

General Body

Management Committee

#### a) General Body

- i. Central Gono Unnayan Federation will be composed of all primary organisations in an upazila
- ii. All primary organisations will be considered a part of the general body
- iii. Uttaran aided organisations, those who run under the same level projects and primary organisations adhering to the same policies are considered a member of Gono Unnayan Federation.
- iv. One Chairperson, Editor or elected person from every primary organisation will represent the Central Gono Unnayan Federation.
- v. The duration of the General Body is two years.

#### b) Executive Committee

- i. All centres should comprise of 11 members in all centres/Upazila Gono Unnayan executive committee. The framework of the Centre/Upazila Gono Unnayan Federation executive committee is given below:

Chairperson	: 1 person
Vice Chairperson	: 1 person
Secretariat member	: 1 person
Executive Committee Members	: 7 persons

- ii. The Centre Manager or homogeneous level Uttaran staff will carry out the responsibility as Member Secretariat of the 11 member Executive Committee. Moreover, all Chairperson of every Gono Unnayan Federation who is a part of every Union included in the Centre are to be considered as members of the Executive Committee for their designation.
- iii. The remaining members will be elected by direct vote or on the basis of opinion by the members of the General Body.
- iv. It must be kept in mind that among these members, 5 should be at least women and 2 should represent the community of "Untouchables" (if the community exists).
- v. The duration of the Executive Committee will be 2 years

### 3. Meetings and execution process of CGUF

#### a) Meetings of the General Body

- i. Every year, one general meeting of the General Body will be held.
- ii. If necessary, more meetings can be held.
- iii. Election will be held at the last meeting of the second year to elect the new governing body.
- iv. If required, urgent meetings can be called with 24 hours' notice.

#### b) Purpose of the Annual General Meeting

- i. All power of the federation is bestowed upon this AGM
- ii. This meeting possesses full right over the activities of the federation and for the assessment of the activities of the management body.
- iii. The AGM has to be notified to all the members of the general body with a written notice containing the date, time, venue and agenda 15 days prior to the meeting being held.

### c) Activities of the General Body

- i. Control the activities of policy making.
- ii. Make sub-articles on how the CGUF should operate
- iii. Approve policies of the different project coordination prepared by the executive committee.
- iv. Assess the progress of the executive committee's reports and future work plans, assess monthly meeting activities, and make and approve necessary decisions.
- v. Prepare the annual budget and present it to Uttaran
- vi. Assess the activities of the previous year
- vii. Initiate steps in communicating with the various social welfare services of the government to fill the gaps.

### b) Activities of the Executive Committee

- i. The general body is accountable to the executive committee.
- ii. The executive committee should ensure the smooth operation of annual elections held by the alternative federations
- iii. It should elect the representatives of the general body
- iv. Assess the activities of the union management and take initiatives to solve their problems
- vi. Form Sub-Committees when required and create policies, guidelines and activities for those committees.
- vii. Assist to review the annual expenditure when necessary.
- viii. Prepare a draft of the annual income and expenditure and present it in the Annual General Meeting for approval
- ix. Report the closing balance at the end of the year and present it to the Annual General Meeting for approval.

## Gono Unnayan Federation in practise



In a meeting held at Uttaran's branch office in Parulia, Debhata Upazila of Satkhira District, seven female leaders from separate primary organisations came together under their Gono Unnayan Federation to share and discuss their experiences.

**Name:** Farida Begum

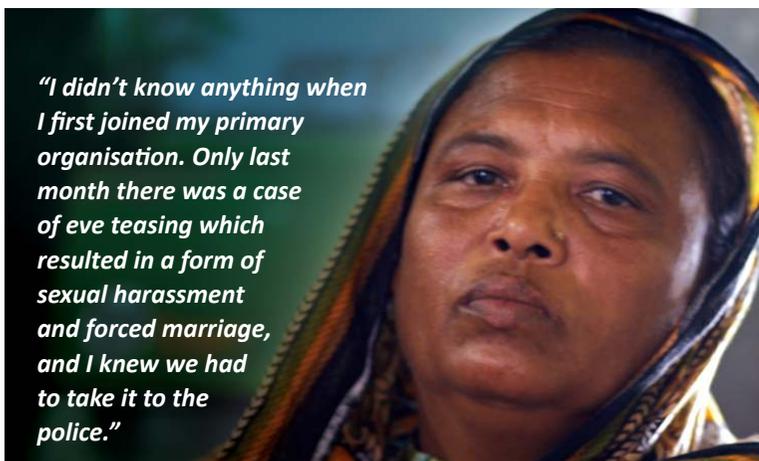
**Primary organisation:** Shimul, Kulia, Debhata

"I am the chairperson in my primary organisation. It comprises 36 people at the union level. I look after every member's problems, contribute towards the equitable distribution of microfinance, and organise meetings related to land or other problems issues require immediate attention. When I am unable to solve a particular problem individually, I call a meeting with the rest of the members of our Gono Unnayan Federation. Together we are able to solve the problems by forming movements, human chains, rallies or filing cases as and when

necessary. In this way we can reach decisions at the union level and if for some reason we cannot, we take help from the upazila-level CGUF. Together, we have achieved some special things.”

**Name: Fazila Begum**

**Primary organisation: Sangramee, Kamini Bosu, Debhata**



“The land grabbers used to threaten me, saying they would throw me off my land. They threw away my cooking pots and other utensils into the streets and beat up my children, because they were rich and wanted to show their muscle. Uttaran has supported us highly in these cases. All the land record documents are prepared by Uttaran. All the petty lands were previously in control of the land grabbers, but not anymore.”

**Name: Khadiza Begum**

**Primary organisation: Bonolota, Shokhipur**

“I was able to provide shelter to the landless with the cooperation of all of my fellow members of the Gono Unnayan Federation. But the land grabbers went to the police and filed a complaint, and since they are rich and influential, they bribed the police to take their side. The Gono Unnayan Federation gathered together and approached the union land officer. He took our side and explained to the police and

the land grabbers who the land rightfully belonged to. Around 250 to 300 women of the Gono Unnayan Federation stood in front of the police so that they could not hurt the landless. We got this much courage only after attending various meetings and becoming aware of our rights.”

“Previously, we used to think of life as being a housewife, cooking for our husbands and children, but now we perceive life differently. Uttaran has made us aware of our rights by calling public meetings and training them on topics like dairy farming, hygiene, sanitation, gender, cultivation of vegetation, law and order and simultaneously making us aware about issues such as human trafficking. Uttaran has made us feel like we are entitled to the same rights as men.”

**Name: Nilima Rani**

**Primary organisation: Ekota, Shokhipur**

“I oversee all the problems faced by the other 25 members of my primary organisation, and I notify Uttaran of all their problems. I myself have a big problem. I live in a place controlled by an influential person, and he has threatened me. He is a government official and he knows very well that he has government back-up in whatever he does.

“I need my land just to survive. I immediately brought this to the notice of the centre manager of the Uttaran Debhata office, Mr Bodruzzaman. He urged me to stay calm and said no one or nothing could do me any harm. I have a lot of confidence in Uttaran that it will enable me to get my land back. Now I expect to be able to live with safety and security, to not be threatened by any external force, and to have my land documents recorded. Uttaran is providing us with all the legal assistance we require in this respect.”

**Name: Momtaz Begum**

**Primary organisation: Misti Kumra, Gorurhat, Parulia**

“We live in a village. We are poor. If we are to take any stand, we need money which we cannot afford. Torture, domination, acid violence, dowry and child marriages are all common problems shared by the women in our village society. Uttaran though has emerged to stand by us. Through the formation of the Gono Unnayan Federation, we can

now work as a team to protest against the wrongdoings– something we could not have done alone. For example, through teamwork we have realised our right to free medicine from hospital.

“We are gaining outstanding recognition by being a member of this Gono Unnayan Federation. We now receive ration cards, VGB cards, pregnancy and old age allowances. We have the opportunity to be in the school committee and police committee, and people first inform us during times of election. Previously we did not have access to village courts and now we are invited to attend. We together created a food bank for the storing of paddy. When the price of paddy goes high, we distribute it among the poor on behalf of Uttaran. When the price of the paddy is low, the paddy given is taken back. Members of the Gono Unnayan Federation are in charge of distribution and taking the paddy back. It shows how we are working together.”

**Name: Hamida Begum**

**Primary organisation: Sonar Bangla,  
Kajurbaria, Parulia**

“We don’t have money but to be strong you need it. Uttaran however has given us the feeling that we are also human beings. Through the Gono Unnayan Federation we can work together as a team to achieve the unachievable, as nothing can be done alone. We have gained a lot of recognition after forming GUF. People respect, recognise and value us.”

