

Barokupot Ganochetona Foundation (BGF)

Shyamnagar, Satkhira, Bangladesh

A Dalit & Disability-Women–Led Humanitarian Organization

Distinguished colleagues, respected DN members, and friends,

Warm greetings from the southwest coastal belt of Bangladesh, from a community that stands at the frontlines of climate vulnerability, social exclusion, and gender-based violence. My name is **Jyotsna Rani Roy**, Executive Director of the Barokupot Ganochetona Foundation (**BGF**)—a Dalit, disability-women–led local humanitarian organization that has been working for nearly three decades in Bangladesh, beside the Sundarbans.

Today, I speak not only as a practitioner, but also as a **Dalit woman with disability**, and as someone who has lived the realities we discuss in global forums.

Our organization works exclusively with **Dalit, Adivasi, marginalized, and disaster-affected women and girls**, many of whom live in remote coastal villages with limited access to protection, services, and justice.

The Reality We Face

In coastal Bangladesh, **disasters do not come alone**—they bring hunger, displacement, loss of livelihood, and a sharp rise in **gender-based violence**.

Women and girls, especially those from Dalit and marginalized castes, face:

- violence in shelters,
- violence during water and food collection,
- exploitation in humanitarian aid distribution, and
- increased digital harassment as communities become more connected.

Women with disabilities often remain **unseen, unheard, and unprotected**, despite experiencing disproportionately higher risks.

Our Work in 2025

In 2025, BGF implemented several critical community-based actions aligned with GBV risk mitigation and resilience building:

1. Community-Based GBV Prevention & Safe Spaces

We established women-led safe groups in four disaster-prone unions, offering psychosocial support, case referral pathways, and peer-leadership platforms.

2. Disability & Dalit Women’s Protection Mapping

We documented the unique risks faced by Dalit, indigenous, and disability-rights holders during cyclones and tidal floods, producing localized evidence to support inclusive humanitarian planning.

3. Awareness, Digital Safety & Leadership Training

More than 500 adolescent girls and young women received training on digital safety, cyber-bullying protection, and leadership skills.

4. Emergency Support for Cyclone-affected Survivors

During recent floods and cyclones, BGF provided dignity kits, accessible WASH support, and protection services prioritizing widows, women with disabilities, and single female-headed families.

Our Vision & Plan for 2026

In 2026, BGF is committed to expanding its work with a stronger focus on **inclusive and climate-responsive GBV prevention**:

1. Establishing Women-Led GBV Response Teams in Vulnerable Villages

These teams will coordinate early warning, safe evacuation for women with disabilities, and post-disaster protection mechanisms.

2. Digital GBV Monitoring & Reporting System

We aim to develop a community-run digital system to report online harassment, trafficking risks, and cyber-violence affecting rural women and girls.

3. Strengthening Networks with GBV & Protection Clusters

As active members of the **GiHA Working Group** and the **GBV Cluster**, we seek deeper collaboration to ensure Dalit and marginalized women are visible within national humanitarian frameworks.

4. Livelihood Protection for Women at High Risk of Violence

We plan to scale skill-building, climate-adaptive livelihoods, and entrepreneurship support for Dalit, widowed, divorced, and disability-affected women.

5. Advocacy for Inclusive Disaster Policies

BGF will continue advocating for policies that recognize caste-based discrimination and disability inclusion within Bangladesh's disaster management systems.

Our Appeal

We stand here not simply seeking visibility, but urging the global community to recognize that **GBV is both a symptom and a multiplier of inequality**.

Disasters deepen these inequalities, and unless we address them—

no resilience is truly sustainable,

no system truly inclusive,

and no community truly safe.

As a local, women-led, Dalit-led organization, our strength lies in our lived experience, our deep community connection, and our commitment to leaving no woman behind—not in disaster shelters, not online, not in policy, and not in protection systems.

We look forward to continued collaboration, learning, and solidarity with all DN members.

Closing

On behalf of **Barokupot Ganochetona Foundation-BGF** and the thousands of marginalized women we represent,

I express my heartfelt gratitude for this platform, this solidarity, and this shared vision of a world free from gender-based violence—both in physical and digital spaces.

Thank you.

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Proposed Programme for Barokupot Ganochetona Foundation-BGF

Dalit–Disability–Women–Led Humanitarian Organization

Shyamnagar, Satkhira, Bangladesh

◆ Theme:

Creating Violence-Free Digital and Physical Spaces for Women and Girls

(Aligned with the global theme: “UNiTE! Invest to Prevent Violence against Women & Girls” and the focus on safe digital spaces.)

Proposed Activities for the 16 Days of Activism (25 November – 10 December)

All activities are designed considering the coastal, disaster-prone context and the vulnerabilities of Dalit, Indigenous, marginalized, and disability-rights-holder women.

1. Women’s Digital Safety & Online GBV Prevention Workshop

Target Groups: Adolescents, young women, Dalit women, women with disabilities

Key Topics:

- Identifying online harassment
- Safe digital practices
- Cyber security & privacy
- Helpline and reporting mechanisms for cyberbullying

2. “Zero Tolerance to Violence” Community Awareness Rally

A community rally in local markets, ferry terminals, union parishads, and vulnerable settlements to promote collective action against GBV.

3. GBV Survivors’ Support Camp (Confidential Help Desk)

Providing:

- Psychosocial first aid
- Legal referral
- Health and protection guidance
- Dedicated support corner for women with disabilities

4. Dalit & Indigenous Women’s Rights Dialogue

Participants: Munda indigenous women, Dalit women, minority women

Focus Areas:

- Ending child marriage
 - Dowry & domestic violence laws
 - Safety during disasters
 - Digital harassment risks among marginalized groups
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5. Men & Boys Engagement: “Respectful Masculinity” Session

A transformative session for boys and men addressing:

- Gender equality
- Positive masculinity
- Role of men in preventing GBV
- Ending cyber harassment & child marriage

6. Women in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Leadership Training

Strengthening women’s leadership in emergencies:

- GBV risks in shelters
- Safety during water collection
- Protection for women with disabilities
- Inclusive DRR decision-making

7. Safe Water, Dignity & Menstrual Hygiene Campaign

Considering the severe salinity problem in coastal areas:

- Distribution of dignity kits
- Menstrual hygiene awareness
- Risks of washing menstrual cloths in saline water
- Preventing reproductive health infections

8. “Speak Up” Youth Art, Folk Song & Pot-Gaan Campaign

Creative awareness events using art, folk song, and pot-gaan to promote anti-violence messaging.

9. Training for GBV Volunteers & Village Protection Champions

Developing community-level “Village Safety Teams”:

- GBV risk identification
- Early reporting
- Basic response mechanisms

10. Digital Media Awareness – “16 Days Live Talk Series”

FB Live / video sessions featuring:

- Testimonies of Dalit and marginalized women
- Online GBV risks
- Disaster and protection concerns
- Inputs from GiHA Working Group and GBV Cluster

11. Community Pledge & Mass Signature Campaign

“Say No to Violence Against Women” signature campaign in schools, markets, bus stands, and community centers.

12. GBV & Climate Justice Knowledge Session

Highlighting GBV during climate-induced disasters:

- Unsafe shelters
- Risks during water and relief collection
- Exploitation at workplaces (shrimp farms, crab hatcheries, fry collection)

13. Women Survivors' Storytelling Circle (Confidential Sharing Space)

A safe circle for survivors to share experiences of violence, child marriage, digital abuse, and exploitation.

14. Special Support Session for Pregnant & Lactating Mothers

- Nutrition awareness
- Referral pathways
- Risks of saline water
- Safe sanitation and WASH for mothers and infants

15. Dalit & Indigenous Adolescent Girls Empowerment Workshop

Topics include:

- Preventing school dropout
- Child marriage risks
- Menstrual health
- Safe digital practices

16. Closing Ceremony & Declaration of the 2026 GBV Action Plan

- Presentation of BGF's 2026 GBV risk mitigation plan
- Shared commitments with GiHA Working Group & GBV Cluster
- Special recognition of Dalit and disability-women leaders