



Co-funded by the European Union



Empowered lives. Resilient nations.

Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh Phase II Project

Local Government Division

Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives

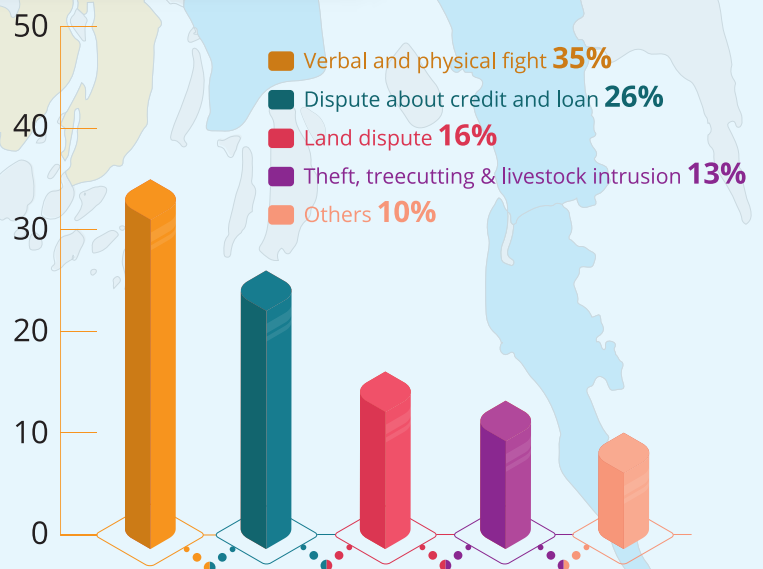
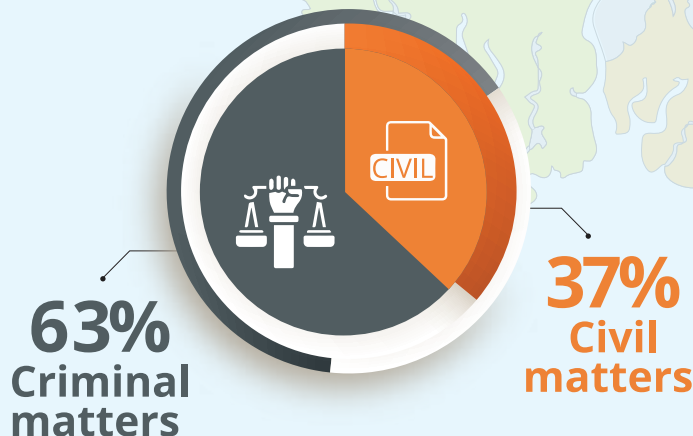


Village Courts Narrowing the justice gap

Village Court (VC) – a community-based conflict resolution mechanism – provides local, fast and inexpensive access to justice to the rural citizens. Village courts, made up of a five-person panel, are empowered to resolve small-scale cases where damages are under BDT 75,000 (USD 970.88). That way, many cases can be resolved at the local level by the communities themselves, and before these cases are even brought to the formal district courts. But these courts were not functional due to lack of skilled human resources and materials, lack of knowledge and skills of VC service providers to run VCs and lack of people’s awareness about the village courts services. Local Government Division has been implementing Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh Phase II Project in 1080 Unions of Bangladesh (2016 - 2020) with financial and technical supports of GoB, EU and UNDP to address those problems.



Type of issues dealt by VCs





Access to rural justice

(From July 2017 to October 2019)



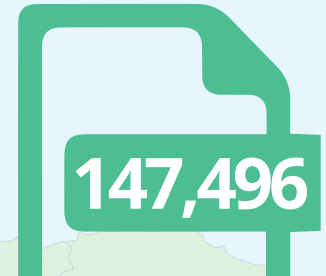
GoB, UNDP & EU support village courts

in **1078** Union Parishads



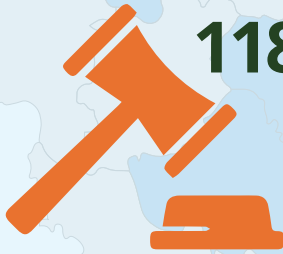
21 million

Rural citizens are targeted



147,496

Cases reported



118,818

Cases are resolved



111,758

Decisions are implemented

Village courts are efficient fast and accessible to everyone

Takes on an average **22 days** to resolve a dispute



Minimal case filing fees
BDT 10 (\$0.11) for Criminal case
BDT 20 (\$0.22) for Civil case



Court user spent **192 taka (US \$ 2.27)** as court fee, conveyance and food/snacks cost on an average to get service



Local and closed to community

Average distance from residence of the community is **1.5 km**



96% Village Court users expressed satisfaction on its services





Reduced pressure on district courts



District Courts

7,757

Village Courts

Cases are transferred from district courts to village courts in project areas

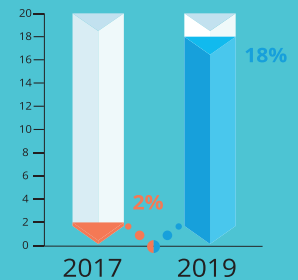


Women in Village Courts



In total, 42,857 (29% of total) women sought remedies

The involvement of women in the village court decision making process is increased from **2%** (Baseline in 2017) to **18%** (2019)



Impact of Village Courts



Applicants received **BDT 116 crore 33 Lakh** (USD 13.76 million) as compensation

Village Court returned the occupied land to disabled Samshul



Shamsul Haque, son of Serazul Haque, lives at in Auliapur village from Union of Patuakhali Sadar. He has been supporting his family of six with only 6,000 BDT (US\$71) per month, earning through a small shop. Besides his shop, he owns seven decimal lands. He was not having any problems with anyone in the area, even though he was suffering because of the low income. Suddenly, his quiet and normal life turns into anguish.

Awal Talukder (60 years old) son of Lal Mia Talukder, a neighbor of Shamsul, claimed himself as owner of those seven decimal lands, which is estimated to be worth 45,000 Taka (\$533) and illegally took possession of the land. Shamsul discussed the issue with many people in the village. He was struggling to find a solution, also his physical and financial condition made him helpless regarding this matter. Finally, he learned about the Village Court (VC) from the village police.

Following the village police advice, Samshul Haque filed a case at Auliapur Union Council on 9 March 2019 by only 20 Taka (\$0.23) fees. Later, Union's chairman ordered both parties to appear before the court on 16 March 2019. Both sides came on that specific date and made their own statements, but they could not reach a settlement.

In this circumstance, the Village Court was formed following the required process. The first hearing of the Village Court held on 23 March 2019, as scheduled with the presence of the applicant, respondent, the nominated members from both parties and the UP Chairman. After hearing of both parties' statements, the VC Chairman requested them to settle the issue by themselves. The respondent Awal Talukder understood his mistake, apologized and made a commitment to the applicant to return the land, promising to never claim it back. Finally, the parties submitted the deed of settlement before the court. The whole process was finalized within 14 days after submitting the application.

Shamsul is delighted to have the land back through the Village Court and thankful for such an amazing service with low expenses. *"I have never imagined that a helpless and disabled man like me would regain his land through the Village Court"* argued Samshul Haque, a 40 years old and physically disabled person.

Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh Phase II Project
Local Government Division
IDB Bhaban (Level 12), Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Agargaon
Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Phone: +88 (02) 9183466-68

www.villagecourts.org
info.avcb@undp.org
[activating village courts in bangladesh phase II](https://www.facebook.com/villagecourts)
www.facebook.com/villagecourts
[@villagecourts](https://twitter.com/villagecourts)