



**Odhikar's Human Rights defender Shampa Goswami of Satkhira was
allegedly harassed**

Fact finding Report

Odhikar

Shampa Goswami (32) is a Human Rights defender of Odhikar from Satkhira and a teacher of Mojahar Memorial Secondary School. She was harassed and threatened at the area of Laboni crossing of Shaheed Kajor Shoroni road of Satkhira on October 23, 2011, possibly due to the vocal protests against violence against women.

Odhikar conducted a fact finding mission into the matter and during this they interviewed:

- Shampa Goswami
- Eye-witness
- The accused
- Upazilla chairman
- Principal of Mojahar Memorial Secondary School
- Upazilla Executive Officer
- District Administrator (acting)
- Members of law enforcement agencies.

Shampa Goswami, Human Rights defender of Odhikar

Shampa Goswami told Odhikar that on September 2011 a woman (whose name cannot be published to respect her identity) of Baka village of Paikgachha thana of Khulna district was gang raped. Shampa went to Paikgachha Upazilla Health Complex to meet the women to find out the actual facts on behalf of Odhikar. Shampa asked her details and she said that if people came to know about the rape then people would hate her and she would be ostracized. That is why she requested Shampa to hide her identity. While talking with the woman, Shampa met a man named Shushanto Kor. Shampa explained to the victim that she could seek the help of law in this regard. She replied that she would think about it. When Shampa gave her mobile number to the woman,

Shushanto Kor was present there and took the number. After one month the woman called Shampa and said she just filed a case based on sexual harassment against a few relatives of Shushanto Kor in the Paikgachha Police Station, and did not mention the rape. Then Shushanto Kor called Shampa a few times to try and make her find a way to remove the names of his relative's from the case.

Shampa told him that the matter was of that woman and it was the jurisdiction of the court to solve the case so she could not do anything in this regard. Since then he kept threatening Shampa. In the meantime, Shushanto Kor had men to follow her and harass her. To know her daily movements, Shushanto contacted the son of Shuvash Dey who is a driver and resident of East Narayonpur near the school and her ex-student Shomir Dey (25).

At around 2 in the afternoon of October 23, 2011 Shampa went to the town to submit few necessary papers sent from Odhikar to the District Administrator of Satkhira. She was waiting for Shukumar Das Bacchu, another Human Rights defender of Odhikar at the Laboni crossing of Shaheed Kajol Shoroni road. At that time she met Noyon Das (33), who was known to her. Shampa and Noyon Das then sat in the Shuchona Bakery at Laboni crossing. Then, 4/5 young people came and sat on the table beside them and passed perverted comments.

Few minutes later, Shushanto Kor and Shomir Dey of Baka village came to the bakery. They started saying that Shampa had a bad character. Listening to them Noyon left and Shampa went out of the bakery to call the police. Then someone came from behind her and snatched away her mobile. She wanted the phone back but they did not give it back so she started going back to home. Then Shomir Dey came to her and said that their 'boss' was on the second floor of the Banani market and she would get back the phone if she went there. She refused to go and then some of them started pulling her towards the market. Arriving on the roof of the Banani market, she saw 8/10 people surrounding Noyon Das. They forced her to sit beside him and took pictures with a mobile phone. They said that she would get the phone back in exchange of 5,000 taka. They threatened that they would publish the photos with caption that they were caught red handed while doing antisocial activities, if Shampa did not give the money. Then Shampa said that she did not have any money. During that chaos, a local journalist, hearing the noise, rescued Shampa and helped her towards Kaligonj. On that day, she informed the matter to Shahadat Hossain, Chairman of Kaligonj Upazilla and Secretary of the managing committee of Mojahar Memorial Secondary School. Shahadat Hossain told her that he was in Dhaka and would look

into the matter after returning to Kaligonj. Shampa also informed the whole matter to Odhikar, the Officer-in-Charge of Satkhira Police Station, Aslam Khan and Officer-in-Charge of Kaligonj Police Station, Rofiq.

According to the advice of Odhikar, on November 25, 2011 Shampa filed a case in Satkhira Sadar Police Station against Shushanto Kor (Fotu), Shomir Dey and Roni along with 8/10 unanimous persons and under sections 143/342/379/506 of the Penal Code. The case was numbered 72 and dated: 25/11/2011. Two days after the incident, Shomir Dey called her and said that she could get back the phone by giving 1,500 taka. Shampa informed this to Rofiq, Officer-in-Charge of Kaligonj Police Station and according to his suggestion she called Shomir Dey to come to Kaligonj Bungalow to give back the phone and take the money. Shomir came and gave back the phone after taking the money and the waiting police arrested him. Later on, the investigating officer of the case, Sub Inspector Mahbub sent him to the jail.

On October 30, 2011 Shushanto Kor called Shampa and threatened her saying that he was in India and if the next date of the case on November 3, 2011, Shomir Dey would not get bail, then he would 'see to her'. Shomir's family started defaming her and said she had a bad character. They told the same thing to the secretary of the managing committee, Shahadat Hossain and other members. Regarding this matter, Shahadat Hossain called a managing committee meeting on November 3, 2011 and verbally abused Shampa in front of the teachers and guardians.

On November 3, 2011, Shomir Dey came out of the jail on bail and with the help of the local thugs, started defaming Shampa and threatened her students not to attend her class. On November 11, 2011, Shomir Dey informed Shampa through his friend that if Shampa did not withdraw the case then Shomir would teach her a lesson and flee to India.

Humayon Kabir, Manager, Shuchona Bakery, Laboni Crossing

Humayon Kabir told Odhikar that at around noon of October 23, 2011, a woman came and sat in his bakery. A boy known to that woman was also present there. After some time, around 7/8 boys came here and introduced themselves as Chhatra League¹ member. The boys passed perverted comments about that woman and boy. Seeing this behavior of those loafers, he asked everyone to leave.

¹ Student wing of AL

Milon Kumar Roy, Co-Secretary of Satkhira district Gold Businessman committee, Laboni crossing

Milon Kumar Roy identified himself as the co-secretary of the district Chhatra League and told Odhikar that at around 3 pm on October 23, 2011, a few known boys came to him and among them; Shomir said that a woman named Shampa Goswami and a boy named Noyon Das were in Shuchona bakery. Those two would be taken to the roof of the Banani market. Then he along with few other people went to the roof of Banani market and saw that 7/8 people were surrounding Noyon and Shampa. He listened to everyone and sent Shampa and Noyon Das away.

At 9.36 in the night of November 11, 2011, Milon called Odhikar's Human Rights defender, Korban Ali from 01725351593 numbers and said that Sub Inspector Mahbub, the investigating officer of the case filed by Shampa Goswami, met him and told him that he could get arrested at any time. He threatened that if Shampa Goswami did not solve the matter within November 13, 2011 then he would take her job away and would stop her social activities with the help of political power to teach her a lesson. He also said that he requested Chairman Shahadat Hossain to sack her from her job.

Shomir Dey, the accused

Shomir Dey told Odhikar that on October 23, 2011 when Milon took Shampa to the roof of the Banani market, he also took her mobile phone.

On October 26, 2011 Milon informed him that he would give back the phone in exchange of 1500 taka. Then he contacted with Shampa Goswami. At 11.30 in the morning, Milon came to the field of Mojahar Memorial Secondary School with another person and Shomir was also present. Milon then asked for 1500 taka from Shampa Goswami. Shampa did not have that much money and she gave 500 taka. Milon then did not give back the phone and gave it to Shomir and told him to give it back after taking the remaining 1000 taka. At around 1:00 in the afternoon of October 27, 2011 Shampa Goswami called him to give the rest of the money and ask him to go to Kaligonj Bungalow. When he went there, two police arrested him and sent him to the jail. On November 3, 2011, he came out of the jail on bail.

Mohammad Shahadat Hossain, Secretary, School management committee, Mojahar Memorial Secondary School and Chairman of Kaligonj Upazilla, Satkhira

Mohammad Shahadat Hossain told Odhikar that he heard from people that on October 23, 2011 Shampa went to Satkhira without taking leave from the school and that she is involved in illegal activities with several men. He said that he did not know whether the news was true or not. He formed an investigating committee and after investigation if she was found to be guilty then he would take necessary steps. He said that Shampa Goswami's character was not good. He heard that students would boycott her classes and if it happened then he would suspend her from the job.

A.F.M. Lutfor Rahman, Principal, Mojahar Memorial Secondary School, Kaligonj, Satkhira

A.F.M. Lutfor Rahman told Odhikar that his school teacher, Shampa Goswami submitted an application for leave on October 23, 2011 and she left for the town for some necessary work. He said that he did not have any complaint against Shampa Goswami.

Toufik-E-Ilahi Chowdhury, Upazilla Executive Officer, Kaligonj, Satkhira

Toufik-E-Ilahi Chowdhury told Odhikar that he heard from the principal of the school, A.F.M. Lutfor Rahman that a few Chatra League supporters and local people had snatched Shampa's mobile phone. Then they demanded 5000 taka to give the phone back. When Shampa filed a case then police recovered the phone and arrested an accused. The arrested person was the neighbor of the secretary of the school management committee. As a result, the secretary himself formed the investigating committee to take steps against Shampa.

He told Odhikar that if anything wrong happened to Shampa then he would also take necessary legal steps.

Mukhesh Chandra Bishwas, District Administrator (acting), Satkhira

Mukhesh Chandra Bishwas told Odhikar that he received a written complaint that few local people tried to harass a school teacher and Human Rights defender Shampa Gowami. He said that he would provide security and take proper steps regarding this matter.

Sub Inspector Mahbub, Satkhira Sadar Police Station, Satkhira

Sub Inspector Mahbub told Odhikar that he knows Shampa Goswami personally as she is involved with Odhikar. He said that he also investigated the case filed by Shampa on October 25, 2011. He arrested a man named Shomir Dey while investigating this case. The investigation is going on and they are trying to arrest the other accused. But the accused Shushanto Kor called him and said that he went to India.

Mohammad Habibur Rahman Khan, Police Super, Satkhira

Mohammad Habibur Rahman Khan told Odhikar that he came to know that few local men had snatched Shampa Goswami's phone and demanded money for its return. After Shampa filed a case in this regard, he ordered the Officer-in-Charge of Shodor Police Station and Kaligonj Police Station to arrest the accused and take necessary legal steps. He said that one accused is already in custody and the others will be arrested soon.

On November 2, 2011 the Odhikar's human rights defenders of Satkhira brought a rally and surrounded the city and then submitted a memorandum to the Police Super and District Administrator. On November 15, 2011 a group of 4 members including members of Odhikar and Amnesty International went to Satkhira and talked to the Police Super and District Administrator about the matter of Shampa Goswami and requested them to take immediate steps. District Administrator ordered the Upazilla Executive Officer of Kaligonj upazilla to investigate into the matter. Then he organised a press conference at the Press Club in the afternoon. On November 17, 2011 Odhikar and Amnesty International organised another press conference at the Dhaka Press Club.