

Community Dialogue Report

Event Title: Community Level Nutrition Dialogue with Floating Manta Fisherfolk

Venue: Laharhat, Barishal Sadar, Barishal

Date: 10 September 2025

Organized by: Local Youth Leaders of SUNCSN Youth Network

Introduction

The Manta fisherfolk floating community, one of the most marginalized groups in the Barishal region, faces severe socio-economic and nutritional challenges. To understand their needs and explore sustainable solutions, local youth leaders conducted a community-based nutrition dialogue. The discussions aimed to identify key challenges, share local knowledge, and promote practical interventions to improve food security, nutrition, and livelihoods.

Participation Profile

Total Participants: 20

Female: 10

Male: 10

No.	Name	Age (Years)	Occupation
1	Lamia	11	Unemployed
2	Sumi	9	Unemployed
3	Safia	28	Housewife
4	Jasim Sardar	45	Fisherman
5	Razzak	41	Fisherman
6	Kala Jan Begum	45	Housewife
7	Rofiq Matbar	48	Boat Trader
8	Kuddus Sardar	41	Fisherman
9	Bellal	32	Fisherman
10	Nayon Sardar	28	Fisherman
11	Akkel Sardar	34	Fisherman
12	Hakim	26	Fisherman
13	Ismail Sardar	30	Fisherman
14	Md. Razzak	25	Fisherman
15	Runa Begum	22	Housewife
16	Morium	18	Housewife
17	Sonia	16	Housewife
18	Momtaj	22	Housewife
19	Mokka	16	Housewife
20	Chandni	10	Unemployed

Key Challenges Identified

1. **Decline in Fish Availability:**
Reduced fish stocks in the river have caused significant economic hardship for fishing-dependent families.
2. **Dependence on Market Purchases:**
Limited self-production forces households to purchase food from markets, often struggling with high prices.
3. **Limited Nutritional Knowledge:**
Many families prefer expensive foods while undervaluing locally available nutritious options.
4. **Household Size and Food Distribution:**
Families often have more children to support fishing activities, yet fail to ensure proper and equitable food distribution.
5. **Maternal and Child Health:**
Pregnant women frequently lack access to healthcare and proper nutrition, contributing to malnourished children.

Local Solutions and Recommendations

1. **Restore Fish Resources:**
Prevent River pollution and implement measures to revive local fish populations.
2. **Educational Access:**
Establish schools or learning centers to provide basic education and nutritional awareness.
3. **Promote Integrated Livelihoods:**
Introduce floating seedbeds, small-scale agriculture, and animal husbandry (poultry, duck, and cattle) to diversify income sources.
4. **Health and Family Planning Awareness:**
Organize sessions on maternal health, child nutrition, and family planning to improve household well-being.

Case Stories / Quotes

- **Case 1 – Md. Razzak, Fisherman (41) :**
“I spent the entire night in the river but could not catch any fish. With nothing to sell in the market, my family managed the day by cooking wild taro leaves from the riverbank.”
- **Case 2 – Bellal, Fisherman (32):**
“I did not eat tomatoes, thinking they had no health benefits. After the nutrition dialogue, I learned about their vitamins and decided to include them in my meals.”

Remarks

1. The Manta community requires targeted interventions that respect their traditional occupations while improving livelihoods.
2. Addressing river pollution and unregulated fishing is essential to ensure long-term food security.
3. Marginalized groups like the Manta need accurate nutritional information to enhance health and well-being.

Conclusion

The community dialogue provided critical insights into the socio-economic vulnerabilities and nutritional challenges faced by the Manta community. Through collaborative discussions, participants identified sustainable solutions that include environmental protection, livelihood

diversification, education, and health awareness. These findings will guide SUNCSN youth network in designing future interventions to uplift marginalized populations, ensuring both nutrition security and socio-economic resilience.

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