

## Study finds gender equality key to peace in society

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Vice-Chancellor of BRUR, Dr Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, UN Women Bangladesh Program Specialist Asuka Murata, and Executive Director of Centre for Peace and Justice (CPJ), Manzoor Hasan addresses a program at Brac Centre Inn in the capital on Saturday, March 23, 2019 **Mahmud Hossain Opu/Dhaka Tribune**

**96.8% female students say equal opportunity for both men and women can promote cohesion in society**

A majority of young students believe violence cannot be eradicated from society if men and women do not get equal opportunities.

A study finds a total of 96.8% female students think equal opportunities for men and women can promote cohesion in society, revealed at a program at Brac Centre Inn in the capital on Saturday.

Vice-Chancellor of BRUR, Dr Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, UN Women Bangladesh Program Specialist Asuka Murata, and Manzoor Hasan, Executive Director of Centre for Peace and Justice (CPJ), were present at the event among others.

The “Empowered Women, Peaceful Community” project conducted by the Centre for Peace and Justice, and UN Women Bangladesh, revealed the information.

The findings of the project were based on surveys of students at Begum Rokeya University (BRUR) and Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University (JKKNIU).

The surveys showed students favored freedom of choice, zero tolerance of gender based violence, and ensuring the rights of religious and ethnic minorities, as some key elements to promote peace and unity in society.

At the program, Ambassador of Sweden to Bangladesh, Charlotta Schlyter, explained the need to engage men to combat gender based violence to build peace.

She said: “We often forget to ask young men what they want,” adding that men also need to be part of combating gender inequality.

Brac University Pro Vice- Chancellor, Dr Md Tamim, said it is high time to focus on men because most of the time they are the offenders.

Centre for Peace and Justice started the project back in June 2018. It has so far trained 320 female students from BRUR and JKKNIU on entrepreneurship to develop business ideas which promote peace.

Four student groups from these universities also received startup capital to implement their ideas.

Sharing her experience of the training sessions, JKKNIU student Sadia Binti Siddik said: “The main motive of entrepreneurship is not just making profit. Entrepreneurs can also help bring peace and equality in society.”

Another funding recipient from BRUR, Rifat Ara Risti, said after dealing with a lot of harassment on her campus ,she felt she needed to create a space for women where they can share their ordeals.