

Sigma Huda was enrolled as Advocate in the year 1970 and has been in active practice ever since as one of the partners of Chancery Chambers, a reputed law firm in Bangladesh with a large multi-national clientele. She is at present the Head of Chambers of the law firm. She is the Founder and current President of Bangladesh Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) and Founder Secretary of Institute for Law and Development (ILD). She is also the Founder Secretary General of the Bangladesh Association for the Prevention of Septic Abortion (BAPSA), Founder Trustee and former Vice President of the Breast Feeding Foundation, Founder Trustee and current Chairperson of the Acid Survivors Foundation and the Secretary General of Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR). She has initiated many training and advocacy programmes about the basic laws of the country through the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association, the Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights and the Institute for Law and Development, such as holding workshops, discussions and seminars at village and district town levels. Working with these three organisations, Sigma Huda has fought against trafficking and sexual exploitation, particularly of women and girls, from Bangladesh to India. In recognition of her work against trafficking, she was appointed to the National Council for Women in Development in Bangladesh, the highest national body for the development of women, by the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. She has organised and attended many international seminars and workshops on many subjects and was also involved in several engagements with UNICEF, UNFPA and other international bodies on issues relating to human rights. She was a Member and Assistant Secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association of Bangladesh and has been twice elected a Member of the Bangladesh Bar Council – the Apex body created by Statute to enrol lawyers, fix and prepare conditions of enrolment and discipline in legal practice in Bangladesh - for the terms 1995-1998 and 2001-2004. She was a Member of the Bangladesh Labour Law Reform Commission from 1991-1995 and past President of the Centre for the Training and Rehabilitation of Destitute Women (CTRDW), an organisation for the protection of pregnant and abandoned women. She is a Fellow of the Indian Council of Arbitration and a member of the International Council of Arbitration. She is currently a Board Member of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, Asia Pacific. She organised CATW's Regional and Global Conference on Combating Trafficking in Women, Globally and Regionally, which was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in 1999. She has also organised an International Workshop on Sexual Exploitation in Brussels, Belgium, in 1985 on behalf of the International Federation of Women Lawyers FIDA, of which she was then the Regional Vice President. She is an active member of the Women's Movement and is one of the 15 members steering committee of the United Women's Movement. She is also one of the core members of the Asia Pacific Advisory Forum on Judicial Education on Equality Issues – an organisation set up in the Asia Pacific region under the sponsorship of CIDA. Sigma is a Member of the Bangladesh Chapter of the Commonwealth Society and has been made a member of the Task Force on Governance (Judiciary and Corruption) set up by a non-government think tank organisation, Centre for Policy and Dialogue.

Sigma has represented Bangladesh in the United Nations General Assembly in 1978 and was allocated to the Third Committee, where she worked on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). She also went to the UN Centre for Advancement of Women in Vienna to continue her work on CEDAW. Recently, she was a Bangladesh delegate in the Drafting Committee of

the ESCAP Regional Meet for the South Asia, South East and Far East Asia Region held in Bangkok, Thailand on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2002. In January 1995, UNICEF engaged Sigma to participate in the Regional Consultation of the Draft Code on Breast Milk Substitutes. She was also engaged by UNICEF and UNIFEM to co-conduct the Regional Study on the existing laws relating to Violence Against Women. She was invited by UNICEF and IBFAN to participate as a member of the 10 members Legal Experts on Implementation of WHO Marketing Code on the Breast Milk Substitutes. She was also appointed by UNICEF to write a booklet on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Bangladeshi Child in the Nineties. In September 1991, she participated as Consultant to the Regional Consultation on Economic Empowerment of Women sponsored by IFAD and APDC in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Sigma was also one of the International Liaison Committee Members of the Global March for Women in the year 2000 and was one of the four women from 128 countries to speak at the Union Square, New York Meet of the Global March held on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2000.

Sigma has to her credit many public issues litigation resulting in landmark decisions affecting the status of women and minority issues. In 1999, she filed a Writ of Mandamus in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh against the illegal eviction of women in prostitution from their residences situated in the red light areas of Tanbazaar and Nimtoli of Narayanganj, Bangladesh, in violation of their fundamental rights and the prevailing law of tenancy. She successfully challenged the Government's contention that they are vagrants as defined in the Vagrancy Act of 1950. The Court ruled in favour of the evicted women in prostitution.

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