

IMPACT SURVEY OF RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROGRAM: EX-POST EVALUATION OF JBIC-FINANCED PROJECT

Submitted to:

IC Net Limited



JAPAN FINANCE CORPORATION



**JAPAN BANK FOR
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

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Dhaka: 18 March 2009

Executive Summary

This study has been conducted to assess the impact of rural electrification on household level benefits and livelihood changes in four Rural Electricity Cooperatives (Pally Bidyut Samity, PBS), namaely Jhalakati, Khulna, Munshiganj, and Sunamganj which received funding support from JBIC. Besides, the study is also aimed to understand beneficiaries' perception about pertinent problems and to obtain information about beneficiaries' concerns and suggestions towards improvement of Rural Electrification Programme (REP). A total of 416 households have been interviewed with at least 100 households in each of the 4 PBS: Jhalakati, Khulna, Munshiganj, and Sunamganj.

Survey outcome is pretty much similar across the PBS, yet regional variation is found in some of the issues like prime reason for taking electricity connection, economic condition, duration of cooking time etc. A little more than half of the respondents reported that they took electricity connection at home for their children, yet most of the respondents from Jhalakati and Sunamganj said that they took electricity connection at home for improving livelihood. After taking electricity connection at home, attaining education has become easier and lifestyle has also improved. Many feel satisfied in terms of achieving objectives. Before having electricity at their homes, respondents could not use TV, fan, bulb etc.; now, they derive benefits of using these gadgets. Moreover, they can now use electricity for rice husking, pumping water and ensuring security at night. Though half of the total respondents have reported that economic condition has improved, most of the respondents from Jhalakati, Khulna and Munshiganj have told that there is no change in their economic condition after having electricity at home. Respondents who think their economic conditions have improved mentioned "New business opportunity" and "Increased agricultural production" as the leading specific reasons. However, many have said that there is no change in their income after having electricity connection at home.

Respondents reported significant changes in livelihoods associated with having electricity connections at their homes. Daily household work or cooking time has shortened. Children are now spending more hours behind studying. Many feel that their health condition has improved since people are getting better information and improving knowledge through TV

viewing and they have better access to health facilities. Respondents, on the other hand, have reported facing frequent load-shedding – as almost everyday phenomenon. Monthly spending on kerosene has reduced. Many respondents consider the current rate of tariff is reasonable, yet majority from Khulna and Munshiganj consider it expensive. After taking electricity connection at home, people now can watch TV, use fan, refrigerator, run pump etc. Since security system has improved, they are less worried about their possessions and belongings. In nut shell, people are now happy about their lives after having electricity in their houses. To improve the overall situation with rural electrification, respondents have forwarded some suggestions, including taking appropriate measures towards reduction of load shedding, ensuring electricity in the evening, informing about load shedding ahead of time, increasing power generation, and so on.