

Report on a study entitled
Collective Farming and Initiative for Market Access
of Grassroots Marginalized Communities
Ganaprochesta Group

Submitted to

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The study entitled “**Collective Farming and Initiative for Market Access of Grassroots Marginalized Communities Ganaprochesta Group**” at long last led to completion, as a consequence of a 6-month untiring endeavor of the HDRC research team whose members worked with unflinching devotion and unflagging curiosity in view of a fact-finding mission towards assessing the impact, emanating from the initiative.

The formation of Ganaprochesta Groups (GGs), in fact, is an attempt of the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), to experiment with a basic philosophy of development—that is, cooperation between and among the people. Bearing in mind a rock-solid attempt of ALRD at the experimentation of human cooperation, the Human Development Research Centre (HDRC), bestows a profusion of thankful compliments upon the creditable position which the Executive Director of the organization Mr. Shamsul Huda holds. Let me extend thanks to ALRD for having assigned us for the study. Rowshan Jahan Moni, Deputy Executive Director (ALRD) deserves thankful attention for a high degree of integrity and sincerity she revealed in the transmission of information for the smooth completion of the study, particularly identification of appropriate respondents.

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Finally, I give credence to the fact that the findings emerging from the study will prove most effective in demonstrating the impact, emanating from the ALRD initiative, a particular task of substantive assessment, likely to lead the organization in the right direction from the perspective of management, in the gradual growth and expansion of GGs across the country.



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Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---|
| AIDS | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| ALRD | Association for Land Reform and Development |
| DCI | Data Collection Instrument |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| EU | European Union |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| GG | Ganapochesta Group |
| HDRC | Human Development Research centre |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| ICA | International Cooperative Alliance |
| IDI | In-depth Interview |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| KII | Key Informant Interview |
| NACHU | National Cooperative Housing Union |
| NGO | Non-Government Organization |
| NUC | National Trade Union Congress |
| PNGO | Partner Non-Government Organization |
| TUCP | Trade Union Congress of the Philippines |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNO | United Nations Organization |
| VHA | Veterans Health Administration |

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Executive Summary

A small-scale increase and decrease in the achievement level of a development initiative is reasonably inferable when the change initiative is a short-term endeavor. In fact, the rise and fall on a diminutive scale in the performance level of any development program conclusively appears when its dynamics are intended to bring about progressive social change, whereas the driving social, intellectual and moral forces likely to produce activities and change have not worked long. The same is the case with the activities of Ganaprostesta Groups (GGs). Many a GG has continued less than six years. The matter of fact is that a microscopic increase or decrease is observable in the development level by which the GG activities are measured. Justifiably and rationally speaking, the findings emerging from the study entitled “**Collective Farming and Initiative for Market Access of Grassroots Marginalized Communities Ganaprostesta Group**” represent a general trend towards development.

Dedicated to the concept of well-being, Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) in collaboration with partner NGOs has formed 56 Ganaprostesta (People’s Initiative) Groups out of the grassroots marginalized people in several areas of 8 districts of the country, namely Mymensingh, Tangail, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Bogra, Kushtia and Faridpur.

The prime objective of ALRD includes measuring the impact of the activities by the GG members. This was a study where both the quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were applied to assess the collectivization drive in the aforementioned districts. For quantitative data collection, a household survey was held. The household survey questionnaire was a structured questionnaire including close-ended questions, multiple choice questions and the questions demanding a single-word response. Qualitative information was obtained by means of In-depth Interviews (IDI), Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Case Study. Finally, the data was triangulated.

It is noteworthy that as part of the strategies, intended to conduct the study, a comparative method was adopted in order to juxtapose the realities, befalling the people before and after they have joined the GGs. In view of an assessment of the impact of GGs, the HDRC research team made a prying attempt at the pre- and post-joining situations by means of the method, and collected information on the livelihood activities of GG members at household level; asset ownership; income; credit status; housing type; sources of drinking water; latrine type; electrification status; food security status; people’s access to various institutions; participatory role of women in decision-taking; and constraints and challenges.

A trend towards a diminutive rise is noticed in the findings. An increase or decrease that has integrated into the pre- and post-joining realities can be calibrated and measured by the same minuscule scale.

A closer look at the homestead ownership reveals that 45 percent household, on an average, for the people’s post-joining stage of GGs, holds homestead (own) each possessing 10 decimals of land; whereas the respective figure for the pre-joining stage is 40 percent with each household having 8.5 decimals. An inquisitive glance at the pond ownership unveils the same reality of minuscule increase. For instance, 1.2 percent household for the post-joining stage holds ponds (leased out), each possessing 7.2 decimals of land whereas the respective figure for the pre-joining stage is 0.5 percent, each holding 5.2 decimals.

The similar diminutive rise is discernible in the ownership of animal and poultry. The average household size, for the average number of cows (milking/pregnant local) (2.1) of the post-joining stage is 18 percent; whereas the same for the pre-joining stage is 14.2 percent for 1.9 cows on average. Average 75.6 percent of households, for the post-joining stage, possess local chicken, each possessing 6.6 chickens, whereas the respective figure for the pre-joining stage is 64.8 percent of household, each holding 6.2 chickens.

A microscopic change is visible when the tree-asset ownership is located and assessed in the context of the pre- and post-joining situations. The HDRC research team used types of tree involving tree (fruit); tree (wood); bamboo (clump) as indicators. The number of trees held in possession per household, on average, for the post-joining stage is 8.6 tree(fruit); 19.5 tree(wood); and 153 bamboo(clump); while the respective figure for the pre-joining stage is 8.1, 17.8 and 152.6. The portion of households, for the post-joining stage, possessing the abovementioned tree (fruit); tree (wood); and bamboo (clump) includes 81.5, 53.6 and 36.2 percent while the respective figure for the pre-joining stage is 72.6, 43.4 and 34.7 percent.

A closer examination of housing type represents a small-scale improvement. Overall, the highest portion of households (87%) of the post-joining stage accounts for use of tin/CI sheet in roof construction, followed by masonry/concrete(mixture of brick chips, cement, sand and water) (8%), clay tiles (2.8%) and thatch (2.2), whereas the respective figure for the pre-joining stage is 79, 6, 5 and 10 percent.

The HDRC research team does not find any huge gap as they concentrate upon the main sources of drinking water; rather they beheld a minuscule-scale improvement. In order to assess main sources of drinking water, the core research team detected types of source of water as indicators encompassing deep tube well; shallow tube well; well; and pond. The portion of households for the people's post-joining stage of GGs, depending on the aforementioned sources of drinking water, includes 51, 45, 2.5 and 1.5 percent respectively while the respective figure for the pre-joining stage is 47, 43, 6 and 4 percent.

The researchers draw a similar line of differentiation—the basis of which is a small-scale increase—as they fasten their eyes upon the people's access to several institutions. For the post-joining stage, the male and female household members, enjoying access to Union Parishad, include 37.3 and 27 percent while the respective figure for the pre-joining stage is 33.1 and 21 percent.

Judged in the context of the pre- and post-joining stage, women's participatory role in decision-taking on the issue of 'whether the children should go to school or not' reveals the same trend towards a minuscule increase. For the post-joining situations, the portion of households, standing for 'she solely'; 'husband solely'; 'jointly with husband'; 'jointly with other male members of household'; and 'jointly with other male and female members of household' includes 15, 13.5, 54, 3 and 14.5 percent while the respective figure for the pre-joining stage is 14, 16, 51, 6 and 13 percent.

The change taking place in the food security status is appreciable. For the post-joining stage the highest portion (45.5 %) of household members, as the report claims, have sufficient income to buy food; followed by almost sufficient income(34.5%); and lack of sufficient income(20%), whereas the respective figure for the pre-joining stage is 12.5, 17.5 and 70 percent.

The glimmer of hope is simply traceable to the people's attitudinal change at ethical level. An increase taking place in the people's tendency towards democratic participation in social activities is notable. Here four types of indicators encompassing participated actively; participated; only a little participation; and no participation were adopted. The findings reveal that the portion of households during the post-joining stage of GGs, accounting for participated actively; participated; only a little participation and no participation includes 18.5, 31.5, 30 and 20 percent while the respective figure for the pre-joining stage is 3.5, 22.5, 42 and 32.

The GG activities at community level are noticeable. The visibility of a minuscule increase in the portion of households possessing the helping attitude suggests a general trend towards development. The portion of households for the post-joining stage, encouraging practice of adequate helping attitude; not adequate; only a little; and almost nil accounts for 35, 28, 23 and 14 percent respectively, while the respective figure for the pre-joining stage is 15, 20, 44 and 26 percent.

In expressing opinion about family farming most GG members in the interventions districts stress the point that family farming ultimately leads to land fragmentation, whereas the drive for collective farming gives birth to scope for the amalgamation of land. They express feelings in an emphatic manner, "The rippling effect of land fragmentation badly affects us in a hundred different ways. The amount of land- held in possession per individual- not only diminishes; but also negates the existence of close-knit community with the people lingering in a state of seclusion from each other."

The major challenge for the GG members is the challenge of marketing management. Members of Ganaprochesta Group express their uttermost inability in Focus Group Discussions, "We produce vermicompost but we cannot transfer it from the producer to the seller." Nearly 85 percent households get confronted with the challenge.

The Government should recognize the potential of such micro-initiatives like the formation of *Ganaprochesta Groups* in every sphere of national life in the sense that cooperative is one of the most viable and effective means of reducing poverty, thereafter providing financial backing in order for the growth and expansion of GGs across the country.