

Baseline Study of the Tackling Marginalisation and Discrimination Project

Submitted to



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March 2020

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|---|
| ANGOC | Asian NGO Coalition |
| BDT | Bangladesh Taka |
| CBO | Community Based Organization |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| DCI | Data Collection Instruments |
| EBSATA | East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| GED | General Economics Division |
| GoB | Government of Bangladesh |
| HDRC | Human Development Research Centre |
| HIES | Household Income and Expenditure Survey |
| IGA | Income Generating Activities |
| KII | Key Informant Interview |
| LDO | Landless Development Organization |
| LRAP | Land Reform Action Programme |
| MJF | Manusher Jonno Foundation |
| NGO | Non-Government Organization |
| NNGO | National Non-government Organization |
| PPI | Poverty Probability Index |
| PPP | Public Private Partnership |
| PWD | Person with Disability |
| SEZ | Special Economic Zone |
| SSNP | Social Safety Net Program |
| VGD | Vulnerable Group Development |
| VGf | Vulnerable Group Feeding |

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Executive Summary

This cross-sectional survey was conducted in 5 target districts (Pabna, Satkhira, Khulna, Noakhali, and Laxmipur). To address the objectives of the assignment, a mixed-method approach was adopted where a structured questionnaire survey served the purpose of quantitative methods, and qualitative methods included focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and Case studies. Categories of respondents/informants/participants during the data and information collection process included potential beneficiaries, land officials, land rights activists. Data Collection Tools included a structured survey questionnaire, a checklist for Key Informant Interview, and guidelines for Case Study and Focus Group Discussion. There was a Format for secondary data compilation.

A multi-stage cluster sampling procedure was employed for the structured household survey. A total of 810 randomly selected households was interviewed across 41 villages within the target area. Before data collection, informed consent was obtained from the key respondent. Data from the quantitative and qualitative survey was analyzed separately and synthesized.

Household Demographic and Socio-economic Condition

The average family size is 4.8, which is higher than the national estimate (4.06). 77.4 per cent of households are Muslim, and 99.1 per cent are Bengali. 9.8 per cent are female-headed household. Among households, 8.9 per cent have members who are otherwise able. Nearly half of the household heads do not have any formal education.

Data suggests that nearly two-thirds (63.7%) of the respondents are involved in physical labour, 19.1 per cent in business, and 11.1 per cent are involved in farming. Among surveyed households, 37 per cent are involved in income generating activities (IGAs). Mentionable IGAs are day labour (42.2%) and agriculture (15.7%). Most of the households' average per-month income ranges between BDT 5,001 to 10,000. The average monthly income of our surveyed households is BDT 7,639 with a standard deviation of BDT 3,508 while the average monthly expenditure is BDT 7,315 with a standard deviation of BDT 3,637. The per capita expenditure (BDT 1,523) suggests that most of the surveyed households are poor. This supports the findings from the PPI index, suggesting poverty likelihood of surveyed households is 66 per cent considering USD 1.9 PPP and 92.3 per cent considering USD 3.1 PPP though only 32.7 per cent of households are currently availing any one of the programs.

Nearly three-fifths of the households (58.4%) have access to hygienic latrines. The concerning issue is that there is evidence of using hanging-latrines or open defecation which can be a severe risk to health and hygiene. Most of the households have access to drinking water.

Surveyed data showed that the overall 78 per cent of households have food deficiency in the last one year. Overall, almost 45.4 per cent of households are severely food insecure, while only 16.5 per cent of households are food secure. Also, 31.6 per cent of households are moderately food insecure, and 6.4 per cent mildly food-insecure. The most food deficiency period was between mid-June to mid-November (Bangla months; Ashar to Agrhayan) which is the disaster-prone period in Bangladesh. Because of this reason opportunities of work reduced in rural areas. That creates severe damage to their income, and they became more food deficient. So the surveyed households are prone to disaster risk.

Nearly two-thirds of the households (64.4%) are absolute landlessness. Though 35.6 per cent of households own some land; Majority of them can be considered as functionally landless, according to the existing policy, as they possess less than ten decimal of land—the average amount of land owned by households 6.7 decimals. Reportedly, 71.9 per cent of households in the surveyed area do not have homestead land. Agriculture landlessness is more widespread among households compared to the homestead landlessness as only 3.8 per cent of the surveyed households own agricultural land.

Access to *Khas* Land and Associated Knowledge

Most of the respondents are familiar with the term of landless but they have no perfect knowledge about the condition of being a landless; out of them, the highest 88.1 per cent have identified a landless person who is living by agricultural activities but has no agricultural land. As many as 76.9 per cent are known to *Khas* land; out of them, more than one-third (38.2%) heard it from the neighbouring residents while a few of them (18.1%) have known it from landless persons who are already familiar with this. A mentionable portion is not entirely familiar with the conditions of being a landless person. The discussions suggest that the knowledge about 'landless' and *Khas* land among community people is partial and they are not aware of the official (i.e., used by the government) terms and conditions.

65.4 per cent of surveyed respondents believe that officials of government land office are responsible for preparing the *Khas* land list while another 45.3 per cent think that NGOs are responsible for this task and more than one-fourth believe that the administration of Union Council prepares this list (indicates the lack of proper information among community people). More than one-fifth of the respondents reported a combination of land officials, NGOs and union officials as the responsible person for preparing the list of landless and *Khas* land. These suggest gap in information sharing with the community people. There is also lack of information regarding the identification of *Khas* land among community people. Lands those are identified as '*Khas*' by the community people do not always coincide with the list of *Khas* land prepared by the government officials.

Majority of the respondents (64.3%) believe that officials of the land office play a vital role for land distribution while another 18.3 per cent perceive that Union Council administration is responsible for this task. Further, more than one-fifth of them also assume that NGOs are also responsible for *Khas* land distribution. The role of NGOs regarding this activity needs to be informed more accurately. Only, a few of the respondents (14.9%) have confessed that they are not aware of this.

Group discussants argued that, if they visit the union council to know about the allocation of *Khas* land, the authority of union council misbehaves with them and threatens instead of providing accurate information. Even most of them claim that the land officers are not cooperative at all in this regard. They also added that there is targeting error (inclusion as well as exclusion error) regarding identification and distribution of *Khas* land due to nepotism and influences by people of political parties in power.

Within last year, 79.8 per cent of the surveyed household applied for *Khas* land, but only 11.2 per cent either received the land or been enlisted for *Khas* land. 71.0 per cent think that there are irregularities in *Khas* land distribution. The most reported irregularity is bribe and corruption (75.3%) followed by nepotism (47.2%) and giving the *Khas* land to the political party supported men. Discussants reveal that the application process for *Khas* land is complex and requires a lot of documentation. Also, some discussants mentioned that they are not aware of the appropriate method of application and may of the applicants reported being harassed by officials while applying for *Khas* land. Land officials mentioned land grabbing, failure to recover illegally occupied *Khas* land are the main hinders for managing *Khas* land for the landless. Sometimes, some have turned the *Khas* land into *Khas* jola and running the business of fish cultivation.

Most of the respondents (74.1) never saw any advertisement or publicity regarding *Khas* land. Only 28.6 per cent are satisfied with the land distribution process. Discussants informed that because of *Khas* land, various types of conflicts had taken place like murder, deadly and bloody conflict between two groups, heating by lethal weapons etc.