



THE STATE OF MARGINALISED IN BANGLADESH 2021

Narrative Report and Marginalisation Index 2021

Haor-People
Christian
Tea-workers
Lower-cast PWD
Third-Gender Bihari Marma
Kumar Sex-Workers Khumi
Bawm Oran Floating-people
Traditional-Fisher-Folks
Rishi Santal Bede Hijra
Bosti-Basi Buddhist
Garo Chakma Tripura
Khyang Horizon
Marginalised
Char-People



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Human Development Research Centre

humane development through research and action

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Submitted to:



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ACRONYMS

BB	Bangladesh Bank
BD	Bangladesh
BDHS	Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
BEA	Bangladesh Economic Association
CS	Case Study
DCI	Data Collection Instruments
DCT	Data Collection Tools
EU	European Union
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GD	Group Discussion
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HDDS	Household Dietary Diversity Score
HDRC	Human Development Research Centre
HFIES	Household Food Insecurity Experience Scale
HIES	Household Income-Expenditure Survey
HH	Household
HHS	Household Survey
ICF	Index Calculation Formula
IDI	In-Depth Interview
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGI	Local Government Institution
MJF	Manusher Jonno Foundation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs

HDRC's Study on State of Marginalised in Bangladesh 2021

MoHFP Ministry of Health and Family Planning

MoP Ministry of Planning

PMO Prime Minister's Office

PPP Purchasing Power Parities

PRA Participatory Rapid Appraisal

PWD Person with Disabilities

SSN Social Safety Net

SSNP Social Safety Net Programme

UN United Nations

US United States

USD US Dollar

WB World Bank

Table of Contents

ACRONYMS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
PART A: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY	1
Chapter 1: Introduction and Study Perspective	2
1.1. Context and Study Rationale.....	2
1.2. Study Purpose and Objective.....	3
1.3. Marginalisation Index Purpose and Objective	4
Chapter 2: Methodology	5
2.1. Study Design.....	5
2.2. Study Coverage	6
2.3. Sample Design.....	7
2.4. Marginalisation Index	8
2.5. Data Collection Instruments (DCIs).....	9
2.6. Analysis Plan.....	10
2.7. Study Limitations.....	12
PART B: STATE OF MARGINALISED GROUPS IN BANGLADESH 2021	13
Chapter 3: Demographic Profile	14
3.1 Household Size	14
3.2 Age and Sex of Household Members	14
3.3 Marital Status.....	16
Chapter 4: Education	18
4.1 Literacy.....	18
4.2 Attending an Educational Institute	20
4.3 Level of Educational Attainment.....	22
Chapter 5: Livelihood Outcomes	24
5.1 Income	24
5.2 Expenditure	26
5.3 Household Amenities.....	27
Chapter 6: Food Security and Nutrition	30
6.1 Household Food Security	30
6.2 Household Dietary Diversity	32
Chapter 7: Morbidity Status and Health-Seeking Behaviour	34

MJF-HDRC's Study on State of Marginalised in Bangladesh 2021

7.1	Morbidity Status.....	34
7.2	Health-Seeking Behaviour.....	36
7.3	Child Immunisation	37
Chapter 8: Land and Dwelling		39
8.1	Homestead, Land, and Landlessness	39
8.2	Access to Public Utility Services	44
Chapter 9: Socio-Financial Security.....		47
9.1	Access to Financial Services	47
9.2	Access to Social Safety Net Programmes (SSNPs).....	53
Chapter 10: Governance Accessibility.....		56
10.1	Official Recognition	56
10.2	Access to Local Government Institutes.....	57
10.3	Access to Government Offices.....	58
10.4	Access to Legal and Judicial Services	59
Chapter 11: Social Injustice and Violence.....		61
11.1	Social Injustice.....	61
11.2	Violence.....	64
Chapter 12: Poverty.....		67
12.1	Poverty Estimates: Using the Cost of Basic Needs (CBN)	68
12.2	Poverty Estimates: Using the International Poverty line	70
PART C: MARGINALISED INDEX 2021.....		71
Chapter 13: Marginalised Index 2021		72
13.1	Preperatons for the Index.....	72
13.2	The Variables for the Marginalisation Index.....	74
13.3	The Index Preparation.....	75
13.4	The Marginalisation Index.....	76
PART D: WAY FORWARD.....		80
Chapter 14: Marginalisaiton Study and Index for Peopling Development.....		81

BOXES, DIAGRAMS, FIGURES AND TABLES

Box 4.1. Why am I deprived of rights to education, and to whom I should account as responsible?.....	21
Box 5.1. Hijra is not chosen but a God-given identity.....	25
Box 5.2. Bede—a community dying with their profession in poverty and hunger	26
Box 6.1. Fish is untouchable to Haor people, and tourists dance with fish barbecue in Haor or the city..	32
Box 7.1. We Char people feel lucky if could touch or see health centre before death is healthcare access.....	37
Box 8.1. State depriving us of our legitimate rights on forefathers' land.....	42
Box 8.2. Eviction in disguise	43
Box 8.3. 16 times victims of bringing down river banks	43
Box 8.4. Where should we get water to drink?	45
Box 9.1. We know bang (frog) but not a bank; how do we know where not even count as a human being?.....	53
Box 9.2. Social justice is also disabled for us because we are disabled	55
Box 10.1. Injustice in the name of law.....	58
Box 10.2. An outcome of the cruel Vested Property Act	60
Box 11.1. Story of a sex worker.....	62
Box 11.2. Social Alienation.....	63
Box 11.3. "If we want to have food in a good restaurant, we are refused"	64
Box 12.1. Rishis are born in poverty with poverty to live and die in poverty.....	67
Box 13.1. Canadian Index of Multiple Deprivation (CIMD).....	72
Diagram 2.1. Major Data Collection Techniques Used in Study	6
Diagram 2.2. Data Collection Instruments (DCIs) Development Process.	10
Diagram 2.3. Triangulation Model	12
Figure 3. 1. Population Pyramids of Marginalised Groups and All Populations of Bangladesh (in %)	16
Figure 4.1. Adult literacy rate (%).....	18
Figure 4.2. Literacy rate by sex (%)	19
Figure 4.3. Household members never attended an educational institute (%)	20
Figure 4.4. Key reasons for never attending school (%)	21
Figure 4.5. Level of educational attainment (in %)	22
Figure 5. 1. Net yearly household income (in BDT).....	25
Figure 5.2. Yearly household consumption expenditure (BDT)	26
Figure 5.3. Composition of household consumption expenditure (%)	27
Figure 6.1. Household Food Security Status (in %).....	31
Figure 6.2. Household Food Insecurity among Marginalised groups and all population of Bangladesh (in %)	31
Figure 6.3. Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS)	33
Figure 7.1. Households having a member suffered from any disease prior to the last three months of the survey (%).....	34
Figure 7.2. Households suffered from any disease in the past three months before the survey (in %)	35
Figure 7.3. Household members reported incidences of diseases in the last three months before the survey (in %).....	35

Figure 7.4. HH members received treatment for disease occurred in the last 3 months before the survey (by service station) (in %)	36
Figure 7.5. Children immunised (%)	38
Figure 8. 1. Marginalised households without own homestead (%)	39
Figure 8.2. Marginalised households without own agricultural land (%)	40
Figure 8.3. Landless marginalised households (%)	41
Figure 8.4. Household's use of improved sanitary latrine (%)	45
Figure 9.1. Marginalised households having an account (%)	47
Figure 9.2. Distribution of account by type among the account holders only (%)	48
Figure 9.3. Marginalised households with savings (%)	49
Figure 9.4. Households having saving under BDT 20,000 (%)	49
Figure 9.5. Distribution of household savings by place (%)	50
Figure 9.6. Use of saved money (%)	50
Figure 9.7. Household loan status (%)	51
Figure 9.8. Households having a loan under BDT 50,000 (%)	52
Figure 9.9. Sources of credit (%)	52
Figure 9.10. Marginalised households, where at least one member received any benefits from Govt.' SSNPs (%)	54
Figure 9. 11. Type of problems faced in getting SSNP benefits (%)	55
Figure 10.1. Household members of marginalised groups having a national recognition document (%)	56
Figure 10.2. Access to local government institutions (%)	57
Figure 10.3. Access to government offices (%)	59
Figure 10.4. Access to legal and judicial services (%)	60
Figure 11.1. Social injustice faced in the households of the marginalised groups, in last year (%)	61
Figure 11.2. Violence faced in the households of the marginalised groups last year (%)	65
Figure 12. 1. Marginalised households under poverty, using the CBN method (%)	69
Figure 12.2. Marginalised households under poverty by category, using the CBN method (%)	69
Figure 12.3. Marginalised households under poverty, using the international poverty line (%)	70
Figure 12.4. Marginalised households under poverty by category using the international poverty line (%)	70
Figure 13.1. The four dimensions of multiple deprivations and their corresponding indicators, Canada, 2016	73
Figure 13.2. Multidimensional poverty index for Mexico	73
Figure 13.3. Concept of deprivation and/or inaccessibility, Poverty, and Marginalisation	74
Figure 13.4. Marginalisation Index 2021 Status (on a scale of scores 0 to 1)	79
Table 2.1. Distribution of households by surveyed group types and areas	7
Table 3. 1. Percentage distribution of households by size (i.e., number of members)	14
Table 3.2. Percentage distribution of the marginalized groups' household members by age categories	15
Table 3.3. Percentage distribution of household members by marital status among only those who are currently above 15 years of age	17
Table 5.1. Percentage distribution of households by owning of amenities	28
Table 9.1. Most receiving benefits from SSNPs last one year among the marginalised households	54
Table 11.1. Marginalised groups faced the most social injustice last year (in %)	62

MJF-HDRC's Study on State of Marginalised in Bangladesh 2021

Table 11.2. Marginalised groups faced the most violence last year (in %)	65
Table 13. 1. Status of selected indicators for Marginalisation Index (in %).....	77
Table 13. 2. Score of selected indicators for Marginalisation Index.....	78

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and Study Perspective

Article 28 of Bangladesh's Constitution forbade any form of discrimination, exclusion and alienation of any individual or community of Bangladesh. In reality, the principle of Article 28 is missing both in statecraft and in the national society. Marginalisation occurs in plains and hills, with population-minor groups/communities based on ethnic, religious, occupational and social identities. In this study, marginalisation is coined as *both a process and a condition that prevents individuals or groups from full participation in social, economic, and political life*; it is a social exclusion in essence; it can prevent individuals from actively participating in the multidimensional arenas of life. The Study attempted to find facts and factors of unpeopling through marginalisation in Bangladesh.

The study had two key objectives, namely (1) to develop an index based on Human Rights for selected marginalised communities so that this document can be reckoned as reference material to understand marginalisation in Bangladesh, and (2) to explore the current situation of marginalised people through the developed index so that MJF can assess the changes in the lives of the people of the marginalised communities in every two years.

Furthermore, the broader objectives of the Marginalised Index are to explore the State of inequalities of the marginalised population of Bangladesh in various measures of health and social well-being; to identify the most and least marginalised groups among the marginalised people of Bangladesh in different dimensions.

The study based on investigation reported the State of Marginalised in Bangladesh and a comprehensive Marginalised Index. People can be marginalised due to multiple factors, including gender, religion, ethnicity, caste, creed, class, displacement, disability, geography, and conflict.

Methodology

The Study on the State of Marginalised in Bangladesh 2021 espoused a mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Following quantitative and qualitative methods, the Study adopted six data collection techniques, namely Household Survey (HHS), Focus Group Discussion (FGD), In-Depth Interview (IDI), Key Informant Interview (KII) and Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA).

In this study, 24 marginalised groups under thirteen broad clusters: (i) Hilly Adivasi, (ii) Plain-Land Adivasi, (iii) Dalit, (iv) Geographically Remote People, (v) Traditional Fisher Folks, (vi) Religious Minorities, (vii) Sex workers, (viii) Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), (ix) Tea-Garden Workers, (x) Third-Gender, (xi) Bihari, (xii) Bede, and (xiii) Urban Poor- were targeted for investigations. The study location was selected purposively based on a probabilistic equation that determined the sample size of target groups.

In the analysis, SPSS used for quantitative data analysis; content and narrative analysis were applied for qualitative analysis.

Demographic Profile

The average size of the surveyed households is 3.9, with nearly half (47.4%) having less than three family members. The sex ratio indicates a higher proportion of males among the marginalised groups. The dependency ratio among marginalised households is 54.1. 46.9 per cent of the surveyed household members (15+ years) are married. The average age of first marriage among females is 17.2 years, while

among men, it is 22.8 years. However, the median age at first marriage remains 16.4 years, less than the national estimated 18 years.

Education

The adult literacy rate among the members of the marginalised households is 56.3 per cent. In comparison, the national average is 75.6 per cent.

- Adult literacy rate: 56.3% (national: 75.6%)
- Primary level incomplete: 54.1% (national: 24.6%)
- Secondary level incomplete: 6.3% (national: 27.4%)

In general, the adult literacy rate is low among the female members of the marginalised households compared to the male members (59% versus 53.3%). In contrast, nationally, the adult literacy rate among males is 78.2 per cent, whereas for females. More than one-third (36.1%) of members of the marginalised households never attended any educational institutes. At the same time, the national average for the same is 20 per cent. The most-reported reason for never attending any educational institutes—for females (70.2%) and males (72.8%)— was that the households could not bear the educational expense. Some people from geographically marginalised households and indigenous peoples (both in the CHT and plains) reported not having a school in the adjacent area, which barred them from sending their children to school. Sometimes, an individual's identity from the marginalised groups creates a cruel barrier to attaining education.

The level of educational attainment among the country's marginalised people shows a bleak picture. More than half of the members (54.1%) from the marginalised households could not complete their primary education (i.e., completing fifth grade), whereas the national average is 24.6 per cent. At the same time, more than two-thirds of them (68.3%) did not complete secondary education; the corresponding figure at the national level is 27.4 per cent.

Livelihood Outcomes

The annual net income is much lower among the marginalised households than the national average: BDT 156,873 versus BDT 252,444. Simultaneously, on average, the annual consumption expenditure of the marginalised households is BDT 118,731, which is less than half of the national average (i.e., BDT 243,480)—an extremely low amount to maintain a bare minimum living standard. Moreover, three-fifths (61.4%) of the expenditure of the marginalised households used to buy food, which indicates that the spending on other critical human development factors (i.e., education, health, and so on) remain low. The marginalised communities possess the most miniature amenities at their homestead, and they cannot afford to enjoy luxury in their lives. Compared to the national scenario, the scenario is depressing. In addition, the forced sale of household amenities was a common phenomenon last year. Notably, in the previous year (which was a COVID-19 pandemic year), almost nine-tenths of the households (88.8%) had to sell their furniture—whatever little, dilapidated one they had. Four-fifths of the households had to sell electronic, electric, and work tools. Not many households possessed ornaments; however, among those who had some such possessions, 46.1 per cent had to sell that too.

- Net yearly income (BDT): 156,873 (national average: 252,444)
- Yearly consumption expenditure (BDT): 118,731 (national average: 243,480)
- Sold furniture, electronic items, kitchen appliances, and ornament in last year: 89%, 82%, 95.2% and 46.4%

Food Security and Nutrition

The marginalised groups are more food insecure than Bangladesh's overall population. About 49.0 per cent of

- Severely Food Insecure: 18.8% (national average: 10.5%)
- Moderately Food Insecure: 49.0% (national average: 21.4%)
- HDDS: 7.1

households are moderately food insecure, followed by 18.8 per cent severely food insecure and 18.9 per

cent mildly food insecure. It is mention-worthy that among the marginalised groups, the worst scenario regarding the households that do not experience any food insecurity or have to worry about food very rarely is only 13.3 per cent. This study's average HDDS for the targeted marginalised households was 7.1. It is mention-worthy that less than 20 per cent of the targeted marginalised households consumed meat and poultry, eggs, and milk and milk products and slightly over half of them consumed fish and seafood.

Morbidity Status and Health-seeking Behaviour

Three-fifths (60.7%) of the marginalised household had at least one member who suffered from a disease in the last three months before the survey. The rate is the highest among the urban poor households—almost four-fifths (78.7%) of households suffered. On average, 22 per cent of the marginalised people within the surveyed households suffered from a disease in the last three months before the survey.

The common diseases reported are cold and cough (39.8%) and fever of unknown origin (32.6%). Household members of the tea garden workers reported suffering from fever of unknown origin (62.7%). Indigenous peoples in the plain (53.6%) and in the CHT (50.3%) reported colds and coughs. Almost all the diseased household members (98.2%) reported receiving treatment. However, in nearly three-fourths of the cases (73.5%), they went to the local pharmacy to buy some medicine without consulting any competent health person. Around one-fourth (24.3%) of them went to Govt. health centres/hospitals, followed by private clinics (11.7%) and chambers of MBBS doctors (6.7%). The extent of visiting Traditional Healer/homoeopaths/Ayurved is low. It is good to see that 82.4 per cent of children among the households from the marginalised communities are immunised, while the national average is not very different (i.e., 86%¹). However, the reported rate was meagre among the Bede community (only 18%). All these require priority-based attention.

- **In the last three months before the survey:**
 - Households with at least one diseased member: 60.7%
 - Marginalised people with disease: 22%
 - Common diseases: Cold and cough (39.8%), fever of unknown origin (32.6%)
 - Received treatment: 98.2% (from local pharmacy: 73.5%; Govt. health centres/hospitals: 24.3%; Private clinic and chambers: 18.4%)
- Immunised children: 82.4% (national: 86%)

Land and Dwelling

The marginalised peoples are far from establishing their land rights and availing all the basic public utilities. Almost half of the marginalised households (48.5%) do not own

a house. No households of tea garden workers own a homestead, similar to the Bihari households. Indigenous communities—both in the plan land and in the CHT—reported owning a homestead. Still, they are fully aware that their land rights are constantly threatened. More than four-fifths of the marginalised households (80.8%) do not own any agricultural land. Nine in every ten households (89.1%) from the marginalised groups are functionally landless, whereas the national figure is 58.6 per cent. Around two-thirds of the homesteads (64.8%) can protect them from storms, rain, and cold.

- Do not own a house: 48.5%
- Functionally landless: 89.1% (national average: 58.6%)
- Use improved latrine: 36.1% (national average: 65%)

Meanwhile, the scenario is the worst among the urban poor households: only around one-fifth of the cases (21.7%), their living place can protect them from adverse weather. Around four-fifths (78%) of the marginalised households use safe drinking water. In contrast, the corresponding national figure is 98 per cent. It is mention-worthy that among the marginalised groups, the worst scenario regarding using safe

¹ Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18 (2019). NIPORT.

drinking water is among the urban poor: only 31.2 per cent reported using safe drinking water. Only around one-third of the marginalised households (36.1%) use an improved sanitary latrine, while the national average is 65 per cent. The scenario of using an improved latrine is the worst among the Third gender, Bede, Bihari, and Urban poor households. In addition, the condition of the latrines, for these groups in particular, totally fails to protect the privacy of adolescent girls and women.

Socio-financial Security

Three-fifths of households (59.6%) have an account in a scheduled bank or mobile. Most marginalised people prefer mobile bank accounts instead of bank accounts (76.2% versus 23.8%). Geographically marginalised households have the most access to such services (77.7%). Only one-third of the households among the indigenous people who live on plain land maintain any bank account.

A 45.2 per cent of the marginalised households have savings, meaning more than half of them (54.8%) do not have any savings. Only 13 per cent of Bede households have any savings, while the rates are also low among the urban poor (24.1%), Dalits (26.1%), Bihari (30%), and third gender (34.9). Their savings amount is also low: Among households with some savings, the household savings amount is less than BDT 20,000 among more than four-fifths (82.9%) of the marginalised households. In around three-fourths (72.3%) of the cases, the households save at the cooperatives/samitis/NGOs. A 12.8 per cent save at government banks, while for the private bank, the rate is low at 3.1 per cent. 5.4 per cent of households save in their mobile bank account. The spending pattern of the savings amount reflects the marginalised state of the households. Almost half of them (45%) spend their savings purchasing food. All the Bede households had to use their savings to buy food, 83.3 per cent among the Dalits. One-fourth of households used it for medical treatment, while 21.4 per cent used it for debt settlement.

Half of the marginalised households (50.4%) reported having a loan. Notably, most traditional fisher households (85%) reported having a loan. The loan-taking status is relatively low among the third gender group (22.1) and the urban poor (28.5%). Among those households who take loans, their current average loan amount is BDT 47,610. Banks—either public or private—have not been the source of credit for the members of the marginalised households. The primary source of credit remains the NGOs (54.1%), followed by relatives/friends (22.7%), Mahajan (20.7%), and Shop owing (14.5%).

Around three-fourths (73.4%) of marginalised people, who need the social safety net benefits the most, did not receive any. The third gender is the most deprived of getting these services—almost none of them receive any benefits. The situation is also much more depressing among the Biharis (only 5.1%), sex workers (only 5.2%), tea garden workers (only 8%), and urban poor (13.8%) who received benefits. However, 74.2 per cent of households with persons with disabilities received social safety net benefits across the categories.

- Having an account in a household: 59.6% (mobile: 76.2%; scheduled bank: 23.8%)
- Having any savings in a household: 45.2% (savings is less than BDT 20,000 among 82.9% of households)
- Place of savings: Cooperative/Samiti/NGO—73.2%; Public bank—12.8% and Private bank: 3.1%
- Use of saving: 45% on food purchases, 25% on medical treatment, 21.4% on debt repayment
- Households with a loan: 50.4% (source: NGOs—54.1%; relatives/friends—22.7%; Mahajan—20.7%)
- Received benefits from the government's social safety net benefits: 26.6% of households

Governance Accessibility

Around 97 per cent of marginalised aged 18 and above do not have a National Identity Card, and only 77.8 per cent of the third gender have it. A National Identity Card is not held by nearly one-fifth (17.7%) of the urban poor. Only almost three-fifths of individuals (74.4%) under 18 have a birth registration certificate. Only 33.3 per cent of sex workers had birth registration, and the prevalence is low among bede (41.6%) and urban poor people (50%).

They do not consider going to local government institutes because of their generations-long status as social outcasts. The prevailing assumption is that "*none will serve us.*" They strive to avoid government offices for two reasons: they believe they will go unnoticed and risk getting into more significant problems. Only a few households were interested in visiting the institutions. Only a small percentage of people compelled to visit those offices did so. For example, just 28.1 per cent of individuals who were expected to visit Zila Parishad did so.

There are several land-related disputes among marginalised communities. Still, just 2 per cent of households considered going to the land offices last year.

Despite the relatively high violence against marginalised groups, their visits to security and discipline-related offices at the district and Upazila levels are infrequent. At the Upazila level, 3.3 per cent of households felt like visiting the police station, even though 20 per cent did not do so.

- Having NID cards (above 18 years of age): 97% (Third gender: 78%; Urban poor: 82%)
- Having Birth Registration Certificates (below 18 years): 74% (Sex workers: 33%; Urban poor: 50%)
- Only a few were interested in visiting local government institutions and government offices as they thought "*none will serve us.*" For example, despite having many land-related problems, just 2% considered going to the land offices last year.
- Despite the relatively high violence against marginalised groups, their visits to security and discipline-related offices are infrequent. Only 3.3% felt like visiting the police station, even though 20% did not do so

Social Injustice and Violence

The household survey revealed that more than one-fifth of the households (22.1%) faced at least one kind of discrimination or

- Faced at least one social injustice last year: 22.1%
- Faced at least one violence last year: 34%

injustice in the last year. One-fifth (19%) of them faced resistance to income-generating work. Around 14 per cent reported being restricted in opinion sharing and expressing views. The Bede, Bihari, Dalits, Sex Workers, Third Gender, Traditional Fisher folk and Urban poor are the ones who face the most social injustice. More than nine-tenths (93%) of the Third Gender people faced restrictions in income-generating work. A notable portion of these groups is not allowed to express views and face restricted opinion sharing. The household survey revealed that facing violence by marginalised household members is not rare: 34 per cent of households faced at least one violence last year.

In the last year, around two-thirds of the households (63.9%) became victims of verbal abuse. Notably, 100 per cent of people in the third gender group faced verbal abuse, 86 per cent were blamed unnecessarily, and 52.3 per cent were the victim of battering. More than one-third (36.3%) of sex workers were victims of battering. More than one-fourth of households (27.3%) had been blamed unnecessarily on many issues simply because they were voiceless due to their marginalised identity. More than ten per cent of households faced battering and/or snatching of their hard-earned income. A portion of the income

of around half of the CHT indigenous households (48.7%) had been snatched forcibly in the last year. The numbers of rape, trafficking, forced prostitution, murder, and compelled suicide may seem minor, but they are not insignificant at all. Such an extreme level of violence is never a regular phenomenon. Still, even such acts took place in some households of marginalised groups last year. Through informal talks with the marginalised groups, the study team learnt that the fundamental social injustice and violence-related data acquired from the household survey might be significantly low—the actual number could be substantially higher.

Poverty

Poverty is difficult to measure, and there are numerous dimensions to it. To keep the poverty estimates comparable with existing data, the study estimates the poverty of the marginalised households using two typically used methods: Expenditure Poverty (using the Cost of Basic Needs Methods) and Income Poverty (using the international poverty lines with purchasing power parity dollar).

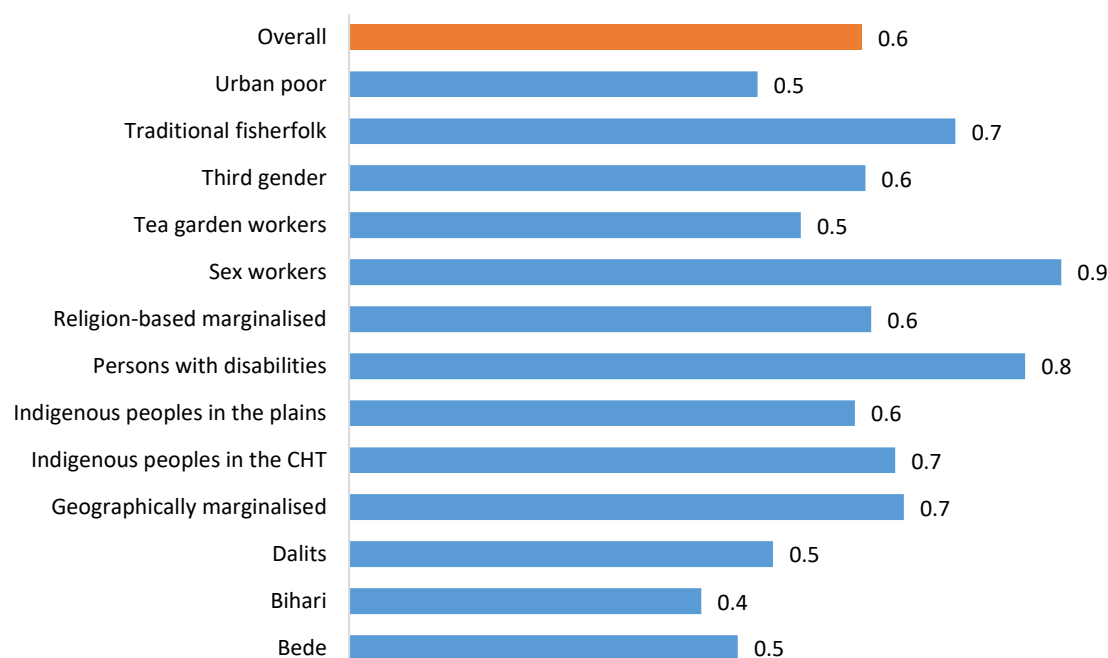
The marginalised households are cruelly poor in any measure. Using the Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) method, it is estimated that almost nine-tenths of the households (89.8%) under the marginalised groups fall below the upper poverty line (national rate: 24.3%). Almost an equal portion (87.9%) falls below the lower poverty line (national rate: 12.9%).

Using the CBN method:

- households under upper poverty line (poor): 89.8% (national: 24.3%)
- households under lower poverty line (extremely poor): 87.9% (national: 12.9%)

Marginalisation Index 2021

Based on the surveyed data among the marginalised communities, compared to the national estimates, the overall marginalisation index is 0.6 out of 1.0. It means that the marginalised communities are 40 per cent behind the average households in Bangladesh based on the set of indicators selected for the marginalisation index.



Marginalisation Study and Index for Peopling Development

In investigating the State of Marginalised in Bangladesh and developing the Marginalisation Index, the Study found some specific areas of intervention by GoB in collaboration with development partners and Non-Government Institutions. Among those identified areas of intervention, the unavailability of national data on some major components, like data on basic healthcare services, food insecurities, and violence prevalence, are major concerns. Those areas of intervention are pointed out below as recommendations:

SN.	Recommendations (Area of Intervention)	Lead/Key Responsible Actor/Organisation
1.	Accommodate the Marginalisation Index 2021 in the revision of existing public policies	Ministry of Planning and Prime Minister Office, GoB
2.	Accommodate the Marginalisation Index 2021 in the social safety net programming of GoB	Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning, GoB
3.	Accommodate the Marginalisation Index 2021 to review the application of legal and judicial instruments	Ministry of Law and Ministry of Home Affairs, GoB
4.	Initiate bi-annual updating of the Marginalisation Index based on research titled the State of Marginalised in Bangladesh	Manusher Jonno Foundation, in collaboration with Development Partners
5.	Gradually include all marginalised groups in the research on the State of Marginalised in Bangladesh and the Marginalisation Index	Manusher Jonno Foundation, in collaboration with Development Partners
6.	Forming a platform of bellwethers representing the marginalised communities to monitor the updating of the Marginalisation Index	Representatives from marginalised communities and their organisations (MJF could facilitate this platform)
7.	Conduct a Nationwide survey on Food (In)Security and Dietary Diversity of women, children and household	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), in collaboration with Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP)
8.	Conduct a Nationwide survey on primary health services access	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in collaboration with Unicef and the World Health Organisation (WHO)
9.	Conduct a Nationwide survey on violence against women, children, PWDs and marginalised groups	Rights-based NGOs with Development Partners
10.	Conduct a Nationwide survey on land rights of marginalised/excluded/poor communities	Rights-based NGOs with Development Partners

The Study findings and Index can be used to prevent unpeopling in every layer of development and governance. Peopling should be the principle of the society and the State according to the Constitution of Bangladesh 1972.