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Uttaran

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Introduction



Uttaran believes that certifying land rights and the fair distribution of khasland are fundamental to breaking the cycle of poverty and accelerating economic growth in Bangladesh. For three decades it has been holding the government and its agencies to account to ensure transparency and equity in the land policy decisions that impact upon the marginalised, extreme poor people of the country. At their most successful, Uttaran’s research and advocacy initiatives in this field have made and strengthened the case for recovering land from illegal occupiers and enabling its transfer to those with the greatest need.

In terms of governance, however, land-related central and local government offices are still found to be among the least honest in a

country which is consistently held as one of the most corrupt in the world. This means that ordinary citizens become victims of delays, distortion and other malpractices due to the actions of those in high office. This causes a huge burden for, and abuse of, the extreme poor, who suffer most due to their illiteracy and lack of power when trying to uphold their rights to land, or when buying or selling land.

Uttaran’s ever-expanding portfolio of research on land governance continues to make a compelling case for cleaning up the public sector, clamping down on illegal khasland occupancy and widening the reach of the government’s land redistribution programmes.

This booklet attempts to collate the most incisive of these situation analyses, studies and surveys inside one cover for the first time. Each summary provides an overview of the objectives, headline findings and key recommendations which have been used to inform Uttaran’s advocacy initiatives.

Uttaran is proud of its position at the forefront of land governance research and advocacy in Bangladesh. If you would like to receive soft copies of any of the papers summarised on the following pages, please email research@uttaran.net

“Uttaran has worked for many years on the land issues. We know the issues very well and we have the capacity to help the people. We would like to put pressure on the government through advocacy as well as work closely with the government. We would like to bring the issues to the table for discussions and for decisions.”

Uttaran Director, Shahidul Islam



Message

Advocacy and research are two key initiatives which Uttaran has undertaken from the inception of its work on khasland.

With the technical and financial support of the donor community, Uttaran has since 2009 published a series of research documents, the findings of which have informed and benefitted landless people, project implementers, other NGOs, different stakeholders and policy makers.

To raise awareness of the research and advocacy initiatives underpinning the khasland redistribution process, Uttaran organises workshops, seminars and meetings with key stakeholders and decision makers who are directly or indirectly involved in helping to transfer khasland to the extreme poor and marginalised beneficiaries. Uttaran's work in this field has influenced the outlook, opinions and actions of people and policy makers from the ground level to the highest tiers of government.

Uttaran is continuously developing explorative papers and presenting these to local elected bodies, parliament members, civil society members, government stakeholders especially union parishad land officers, assistant commissioners of land, UNOs and deputy commissioners, honorable ministers and distinguished personnel including print and electronic media personnel for advocating in favour of landless. By advocating for these initiatives, Uttaran has received much support for its khasland projects in terms of enabling a significant number of landless households to access land from the State.

Uttaran believes that without research and best practice sharing initiatives such as those developed by the organisation, khasland redistribution and retention projects in Bangladesh cannot be truly successful.



Uttaran SEMPTI
Project Coordinator
Abdul Khaleque

Research papers



The Rural Land Market in Bangladesh:

A situation analysis

SALE project draft paper by Abul Barkat, GM Suhrawardy, Asmar Osman, Hasna Hena Shawaly, Kawsher Ahmed of the Human Development Research Centre (HDRC)

March 2015, 204 pages

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Understanding the effectiveness of access to khasland: Comparing khasland receivers to non-receivers

SEMPTI project working paper No.24 by SK Tariquzzaman and Sohel Rana

December 2011, 31 page

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The role of social protection allowance programmes in supporting extreme poor households' resilience: Social means to economic resilience?

SEMPTI project working paper No.22 by Sk Tariquzzaman and Sohel Rana

1 March 2014, 42 pages

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Is land significant to extreme poor? An interpretation from recent agrarian change in Bangladesh

SEMPTI project working paper by SK. Tariquzzaman and Asaduzzaman

To be published, 25 pages

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Making productive use of khasland: Experiences of extreme poor households
 shiree working paper No.6
 by Sonia Kabir and Korban Ali
 October 2011, 45 pages

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Supporting extremely poor elderly people in rural Bangladesh with asset transfers for income generation
 SEMPTI project working paper No.15
 by Sonia Tahera Kabir and Sohel Rana with contributions from Peter Davis, SDRI
 July 2013, 35 pages

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Cost-benefit analysis of land leasing or mortgaging as IGA of extreme poor households
 by Dulal Chandra Biswas and Asaduzzaman
 October 2014, 7 pages

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The ground reality: The plight and challenges of the landless people on their quest for their Land rights in the southwest region
 11 pages

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The Rural Land Market in Bangladesh: A situation analysis

A SALE project draft paper published in November 2014 by Professor Abul Barkat and GM Suhrawardy, Asmar Osman, Hasna Hena Shawaly, Kawsher Ahmed of the Human Development Research Centre (HDRC)



This study explores the rural land market (RLM) in Bangladesh and drafts policy recommendations on possible methods for equitable inclusion of poor, marginalised people and women into the market.

The Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) was assigned by MJF to conduct the survey in early 2014 under the leadership of Professor Abul Barkat.

Objectives

1. To assess nature and structure of rural land market in terms of market actors, factors and motivations which play roles in buying, selling, price setting, holding in and out, rent setting, and leasing of land.

2. To understand the dynamics of the rural tenancy market in terms of recent changes, linkages with buy-sale market and other rural markets (for example, rural credit market).
3. To assess financial policies of banks and to recommend rural-friendly bank loan measures.
4. To assess poor and marginalised groups' participation in rural land markets in terms of status, access barriers, and distress land selling.
5. To assess various aspects of land digitalization, focusing on access, control and utilisation of land by poor and marginalised groups.
6. To consider policy gaps (if any) hindering poor people's access to rural land markets and to recommend policy measures for pro-poor land market institutions and administration

The study employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Based on appropriate statistical formula with 95% confidence level and 4% non-response rate, 424 marginalised farming households are surveyed from the three upazilas targeted for the digital land record and survey: Amtali, Jamalpur and Mohanpur. These include religious and ethnic minorities, female-headed households and char dwellers. To counter gaps in the quantitative survey, the research team additionally conducted 14 focus group discussions, 15 key informant interviews and 20 case studies.

Main findings

- Re-arrangement of asset portfolio and livelihood obligations are underlying factors in RLM participation by the poor and marginalised
- Additionally, livelihood obligations are observed to be the underlying factors of RLM participation
- Growing commercialisation of the rural economy is leading to commercial uses of agricultural lands which has both a soaring and dampening price effect on the RLM
- The RLM is afflicted with asymmetric information of actors which leads to under-pricing in case of selling and over-pricing in case of

- buying, land loss (lower amount of land in case of purchase and higher amount of land in case of sale), money loss (bribes, extra charges etc), and time loss (repeat visits to land offices)
- Heterogeneity of landed property, the absence of buyers and sellers, prejudices of actors, asymmetric information and a lack of freedom in the market place all contribute to market imperfections
- Institutional failure appears in the form of poor service delivery by local land offices.
- The rental market is more competitive than the sales market, resulting in less competitive aggregate RLM
- The market place is not inclusive for marginalised households and consequently fails to allocate landed resources with warranted efficiency and equity.
- Land prices vary significantly between country's northern and southern regions: per decimal land is found to be more expensive in Rajshahi and less expensive in Barguna; water bodies used for commercial fishing are most costly along the survey districts, followed by homestead land and three-crop land
- In the 10 years prior to the paper, over two-thirds of the households lost their land for various reasons including grabbing (suffered by nearly one-fifth of the households) and acquisition (suffered by more than one-tenth).

Key Recommendations

The study finds the rural land market is non-competitive and non-encompassing for a wide section of the rural households. The policy recommendations accompanying the study are put forward with the emphasis of removing barriers to market participation and empowering marginalised communities through legal and administrative support, and through equitable policy regimes.

The study makes specific policy recommendations in two sections.

Group 1: Policy Reforms and Law

1. Public commercial banks, specialised banks and microfinance institutions should design special credit and finance schemes so

that the marginalised households can keep their existing holdings along with refreshed intervention in the market place.

2. Interest free short-term bank loans may be instituted for the poor and marginalised farmers. Lessons learned from Janata Bank have already been acknowledged by the central bank and should be instituted nationwide.
3. Mechanisms are required to ensure the effective retention by landless poor of the khasland which has already been distributed. Input-subsidy and marketing facilities should be ensured.
4. Litigation process should be simplified so the marginalised can access justice without much loss of time, money, or physical and mental toil.
5. Separate Land Commissions for plain-land indigenous peoples are essential.
6. Charland management committees should be set up both at central and local level, with active participation of the representatives of the char dwellers and their primary organisations.
7. All relevant texts of the Vested Property Repeal (Return) Act 2001 that do not protect and safeguard the interests of affected families should be changed and amended. Amendment made on 5 May 2013 [section 9(6)] is illegal, and therefore should be scrapped

Group 2: Land Administration and Digitalisation

1. Institutional reform is an urgent necessity to prevent corrupt and inefficient land offices and land digitalisation can play a pivotal role in this regard
2. Coordination among the service providing agencies should be improved and be made more transparent. Sub-registrar's office (under Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs), Tehsil office and AC land office (under Ministry of land) should be merged under one ministry
3. Land services related information should be disseminated with the fullest possible transparency. Among many other means and ways, this can be ensured by formulating a citizen charter of land rights

consisting of the type of services available and their fees and charges, the name and designation of the official(s) responsible for delivering services, and maximum time for receiving each service.

The charter should be displayed in front of respective land offices and other relevant places

4. Along with other market reforms, the study recommends comprehensive institutional reforms through the digitalisation of land administration (*see picture, below*)



Understanding the effectiveness of access to khasland: comparing khasland receivers to non-receivers

SEMPTI project working paper No.24 published in December 2011 by Sk Tariqzaman and Sohel Rana

This research paper assesses the effectiveness of access to khasland on the wellbeing of extreme landless people in southwest Bangladesh. It is based on the findings of exploratory, qualitative fieldwork carried out by Uttaran in Noapara Union of Debhata Upazila under Satkhira District over six weeks in January and February 2013, which contrasted the experiences of khasland receivers with non-receivers.



Objectives

The specific research questions answered in the paper are:

1. What is the impact of khasland on intra-household dynamics?
2. What is the impact on household and community relations?
3. What is the impact on market dynamics?

In the selected area the above three specific research questions are investigated using qualitative methods - group discussions, life histories, informal interviews and observations – carried out with individuals and groups of khasland receivers, non receivers, influential leaders, local government representatives and different market actors. The sample participants of non receivers based on a similar socioeconomic context were stratified from surrounded villages.

Main findings

The paper shows how access to khasland in the study area is a strongly political process which has the potential to benefit the landless by facilitating community interaction and creating better income opportunities. There is evidence that even those from the lower socio-economic strata, such as beggars, can benefit from khasland to the extent where they do not have to take loans to access khasland.

The analysis shows that:

1. Khasland provides insurance and security through creating diverse income opportunities which can often mitigate the negative and long term impacts of economic shocks
2. Khasland allocation incentivises women's engagement with labouring activities and household asset management, as well as boosting their mobility within the village
3. Livelihood comparisons between khasland receivers and non receivers show that the income diversification effect of khasland and the potential for women to contribute to household income gives beneficiaries the opportunity to save higher amounts
4. The social norms of the landless have changed. Being a landholder has changed their identity and they can now reap the benefits of the market
5. Being a landholder has changed the identity of the previously landless, opening them up to the benefits of the market
6. Using one large piece of land has changed the structure of the market. Holders of such land become key market players as suppliers
7. Social setbacks may still have implications for retaining khasland.

Key recommendations

The paper concludes that the collective movement played a pivotal role in shaping the livelihoods of land receivers. By following a similar process and organising a community movement to get the landless access to khasland, similar benefits may be realised. If this is possible,

then thousands of beneficiaries may not be denied permanent lease.

Though the overwhelmingly positive contributions of landless leaders are undeniable, the paper says they have a controversial role which is creating social insecurity to some extent. However, the leaders are negotiating with the external institutions and personnel to solve their community problems. So, by following a similar process and organising a community movement to get the landless access to khasland, similar benefits may be realised.

Report extract on land-less movement leaders:

“All the villagers are directed by a few leaders of khasland receivers. These leaders played a role to motivate the landless, organise the movement and fight against the elite land grabbers. The leaders play a crucial role in the community of land receivers. They control the villagers and lead all kinds of external support and land related activities. They govern the customary rule of the village.”



The role of social protection allowance programmes in supporting extreme poor households' resilience: Social means to economic resilience?

SEMPTI project working paper No.22 published in March 2014
by Sk Tariquzzaman and Sohel Rana

In the last few decades social protection programmes have gained recognition as an integral part of the anti-poverty strategy. Their potential to protect the poor from falling into deeper poverty and to uphold past achievements is generally acknowledged. In Bangladesh, the budget allocated to such safety net interventions increases every year— BDT 114 billion in 2008-09, BDT 154 billion in 2010-11 and BDT 198 billion for 2013-14.

Objectives

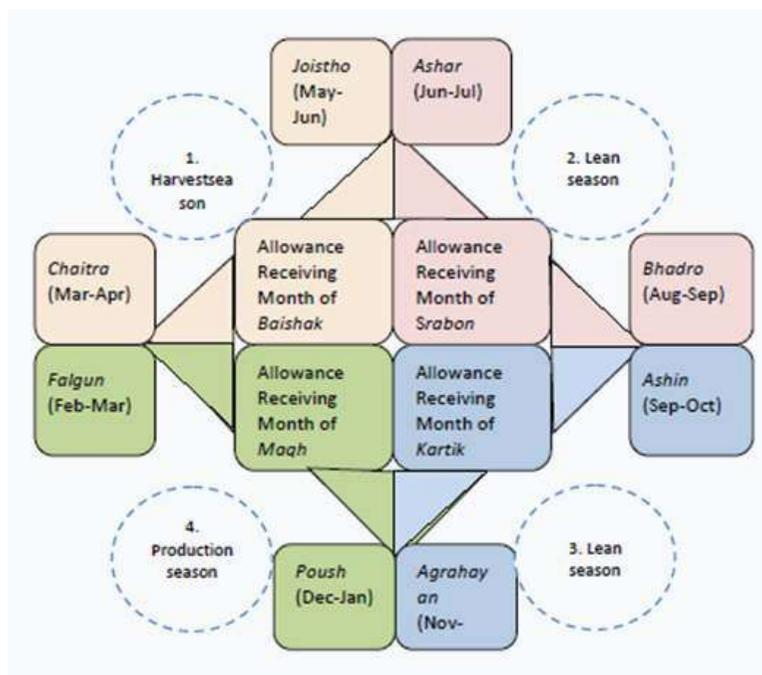
The main objective of this research paper is to identify the role played by social protection programmes in supporting the resilience of extreme poor households.

The researchers consider three types of social protection schemes: the allowance to the disabled; the old age allowance; and the widow allowance for the widowed, deserted and destitute women. The paper first reviews the literature on the challenges to resilience building faced by the extreme poor and provides some useful background information on the debates around social protection, before introducing the conceptual framework of the research. Section three presents the research site and methodology adopted for this study. Section four presents, in an analytical manner, the main findings and arguments emerging from the collected data. Finally section five summarises this and concludes on their implications for the graduation and resilience debates.

Main findings

The paper finds that generally, independent extreme poor people like

the elderly, disabled, and widowed are living with an everyday economic crisis of insufficient working opportunities, health shocks, seasonal variations and various social stresses. This traps them in a vicious cycle of deficit level income.



Sample diagram from the paper: Correlation between allowance months and seasonal income variation

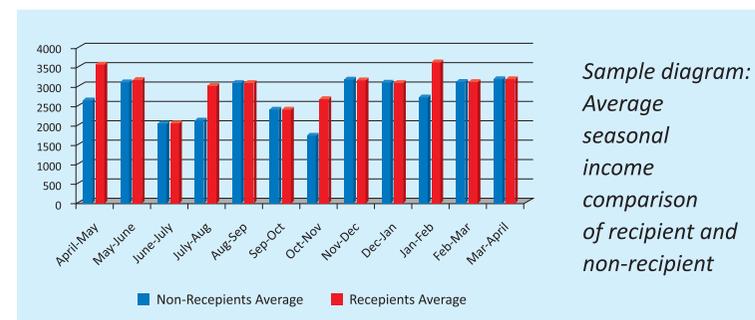
The income-expenditure calculation reveals that although the allowance these groups receive from the government is not sufficient to pull them out of extreme poverty, it can provide an effective platform on which to balance their income-expenditure ratio and sustain their social networks which can in turn bring significant economic benefits.

This phenomenon is driven by several factors:

1. Allowances are secured life-long (up to death)

2. The recipients are considered more reliable when applying for credit support to buy products
3. The allowances can enable receivers to access loans and diversify their income and mitigate seasonal variations as they have an authentic source of regular income
4. In the lives of dependent recipients, the allowances are found to play a positive role in building intra-household relationships and allowing care givers to take care of dependent household members
5. Horizontal relationships are created within communities; and
6. Vertical relationships are created within community institutions using social capital, bargaining and connections with the government poverty alleviation initiatives.

Through this process the recipients of social safety net allowance interventions are made socially resilient compared to non-recipients, even if the recipients are economically dependent on other household members.



Key recommendations

Compared to non-recipients, the recipients of social protection allowance programmes become socially resilient even if they are dependent recipients and economically dependent on other household members. However, further research is required to explore the resilience of the recipients of this study.

Is land significant to extreme poor? An interpretation from recent agrarian change in Bangladesh

SEMPTI project paper by SK. Tariquzzaman and Asaduzzaman



In Bangladesh, it has long been held that land is one of the most important economic determinants of household extreme poverty. Government statistics have shown that the rural poverty rate was consistently over 10 percent higher among the landless households from 2000 to 2010, and although this rate fell from 63.5 percent to 45.6 percent in that decade (HIES, 2000, 2005 and 2010), extreme poverty has remained a significant rural phenomenon. It is already known that the majority of the extreme poor have access to less than three decimals of land (EEP/shiree, 2014) – significantly below the 10 decimal definition used for the landless by the government.

Objectives

So how significant is land ownership to the extreme poor? This paper seeks to answer the question by analysing the trend of agrarian

change and the experience of extreme poor households with land. It aims to identify what role land plays in supporting the livelihood benefits of extreme poor households, around five main objectives:

1. To compare the wellbeing statuses of landholders and landless extreme poor
2. To explore the dynamics of access to land and wellbeing of the extreme poor
3. To analyse the underlying factors and challenges of access to land
4. To analyse how land helps the households build economic resilience
5. To understand the significance of land to the extreme poor households

To meet these objectives this paper analyses both quantitative and qualitative data drawn from a socio-economic and anthropometric survey-administered to provide in depth socio-economic and nutritional data allowing an assessment of longer term change and the impact of project—and a qualitative longitudinal tracking tool called CMS5, which documents the dynamics of extreme poverty as it is experienced and changes in beneficiaries' lives as a result of project interventions. Beyond these primary data sets, surgical fieldwork was carried out to get some specific detail on answers which emerged from both databases.

The paper reviews literature on landlessness and extreme poverty, agrarian changes and recent debate on significance of land in rural livelihood. It presents quantitative and qualitative findings on the comparative well-being status of land accessed and non-accessed extreme poor households. Based on the findings, it analyses the underlying factors of access and benefits of land and its challenges, and also discusses why and how land plays a key role for extreme poor households.

Main findings

Rural livelihood is dependent on agriculture where landownership is important in rural social power structures. But landlessness is

increasing which is considered as a key indicator of poverty and extreme poverty in Bangladesh. Land reform policy supports the landless to get access to government khasland but this is difficult to impose. So, landless extreme poor people are moving on to alternative paths to get access to land. Therefore tenant farming is increasing and is now a common feature of the agricultural fields of the country.



Key recommendations

The debate on land use in Bangladesh centres on the question of productivity. A rising number of tenant farmers have led to an increase in production which proves that marginal farms in Bangladesh are efficient in boosting agricultural productivity by themselves. Based on this changed realities of scope to enter into tenancy market of land, many extreme poor households are endeavouring to build household resilience. A number of households are being supported to rent land as part of moving out of extreme poverty which has a significant policy implication in Bangladesh. Both in north and south it has been found that a number of extreme poor households are individually leasing land on their own or as a group, to cultivate with the assistance of NGOs such as Uttaran. Based on other livelihood activities and credit facilities they can meet the start-up costs of production. This initiative can be realized to assist extreme poor people to move out from extreme poverty.

Making productive use of khasland: Experiences of extreme poor households

Shiree working paper 6 published in October 2011 by
Sonia Kabir and Korban Ali



The Uttaran/shiree supported SEMPTI project has been an active attempt to provide support to extreme poor households in the southwest districts of Khulna and Satkhira through the provision of khasland (on a temporary and permanent basis) and by giving income generating activity (IGA) assistance, with the overarching aim of elevating them from their existing situations of extreme poverty. This research paper captures the major learning from the first two years of the project.

The data used in this paper comes from the Economic Empowerment of the Poorest Programme, an initiative established by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Government of Bangladesh to help 1 million people lift themselves out of extreme poverty.

The paper was peer reviewed by the Char Livelihood Programme (CLP), the UNDP Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction (UPPR) and BRAC's 'Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction - Targeting the Ultra Poor' (CFPR-TUP) programme. Each programme is part of the DFID/UK aid extreme poverty portfolio in Bangladesh.

Objectives

This paper investigates three key aspects influencing negotiations for the purpose of understanding how gains are made from the khasland by extreme poor households. These are:

1. If and how intra-household dynamics and characteristics impact the negotiations
2. If and how the local socio-political situation and the location of the land bear influence
3. How the extreme poor's relationships with external agencies including markets, the state and institutions have an impact on the negotiation process and how the land is made productive.

To answer these research questions, the primary data collection tools used are case studies, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Semi-Structured Interviews (SSIs). Respondent groups of the study include:

- SEMPTI project beneficiary primary groups
- households getting access to government khasland through Uttaran's assistance
- Uttaran Bhumi Committee members
- SEMPTI project income IGA officers for fisheries and agriculture
- Upazilla Nirbahi officers
- AC/Land and Union Parishad chairpersons.

Main findings

The data collected through FGDs and SSIs with different respondent groups point to three major conclusions:

1. Though khasland is considered an important source of livelihood

for extreme poor people, it is difficult to generate and protect the gains for sustainable livelihoods for those with low quality, under-sized land, and land situated in isolated locations

2. The strength and functionality of the extra-household relationships and networks built up by households are the keys to ensuring better productive use of the land. The more non-functional or exploitative these relationships, the less successful the households become. These relationships need to be negotiated - and negotiations bring both opportunities and costs
3. Khasland is an important livelihoods source; however female-headed households have not been as successful as their male counterparts. This is because the outside networking needed for production and decisions about selling are still dominated by men. Women, therefore, avoid or are denied the contacts necessary for improving productivity, and this impacts negatively on their ability to make better use of their assets.

Overall, the study has arrived at the conclusion that the social structures within which extreme poor households function, constrain them in various ways. In most of the cases, a capacity deficit in terms of knowledge, skills, negotiation and bargaining power, and access to government agencies for services, limits them in overcoming these constraining forces. The low productive practices of extreme poor households coupled with the difficult and isolated locations of their land are manifestations of their relative powerlessness.

Key recommendations

The paper makes a number of important suggestions for project-level improvement. Firstly, IGAs should be harmonised with the requirements of making land productive. This should be done in a way which allows the beneficiary to supplement project activities on their own terms. Secondly, field level staff should be more thoroughly trained in IGAs so that they can assist households in deciding the IGAs most appropriate for them. Trainings could also be done in more visible and demonstrative ways.

Thirdly, given that female-headed households are found by the study to be facing distinct challenges, attention needs to be given to developing gender-sensitive assistance which meets the unique needs of women while also raising their confidence and voices. Finally, investments must be made in a timely and appropriate way in order to maximise the returns on land.



In addition to these project-based recommendations, the research findings also point to wider policy issues concerning khasland identification and distribution. If these are considered as a development imperative by the government, the paper says there is scope for rural development policies and farmer development projects to include components for the development of khasland receiving households. While land needs to be transferred, simultaneous assistance is also needed to make the land productive. The role of UNOs needs to be expanded so that they fulfil their responsibilities set out in the 1997 policy on khasland identification and distribution.

To conclude, the paper says accessing khasland can help poor households diversify their incomes and facilitate a process of asset building alongside reducing the risks which threaten their livelihoods. However, for the extreme poor, fulfilling the right to government-provided khasland and then making a sustainable livelihood from it is a difficult and challenging task. These are people who have no assets, whose daily income and expenditure rarely exceeds 50 Taka, whose daily consumption does not cross the recommended minimum consumption level of 2,100 calories, and who spend the majority (70 percent) of their income on immediate food consumption. As noted by Divine and Notely (shiree 2009) the

extreme poor are not merely poorer than poor people: they face a fundamentally different set of situations.

To overcome these distinct situations, new social relationships need to be built and negotiations with different agencies need to take place. In some cases, however, these negotiations initiate circumstances which lead the extreme poor into severely disadvantaged situations, while in other cases, they work in favour of building more secure futures for the extremely poor



Supporting extremely poor elderly people in rural Bangladesh with asset transfers for income generation

Working Paper Series 15 on lessons from Uttaran's SEMPTI project, published in July 2013 by Sonia Tahera Kabir and Sohel Rana with contributions from Peter Davis, SDRI



This research study was produced as a part of the lesson learning component of the Uttaran/shiree supported SEMPTI project.

Objectives

The paper reports on how extreme poverty affects the elderly, and how the project, which is organised around the transfer of productive assets, impacts their lives.

The paper is based on the findings of 18 focus-group discussions (FGDs) and 20 semi-structured interviews (SSIs) with participants, their family members, and staff of Uttaran's SEMPTI project.

Main findings

The paper finds that the relationships of elderly participants with their family members or others who helped them to manage their assets are crucial to the success of project interventions. Participants who have strong relationships are more likely to report that they benefit from the asset transfer. When relatives, or others, who do not share strong pre-existing reciprocal relationships with the elderly person, manage assets, projects are less likely to benefit the elderly person. The idea of intergenerational bargain (Collard 2000) is used to by the researchers to describe this dynamic.

The paper provides evidence that it is possible to effectively support some extreme poor elderly people by transferring productive assets to them, and that some can manage these assets themselves in order to generate sufficient income. However, the research also shows that other elderly extremely poor people are not able to manage productive assets on their own. Some elderly people lose their capacity to manage assets even when the activities chosen - such as rearing cattle - demand relatively low levels of physical labour or complex management. In these cases, relatives or neighbours can sometimes manage assets on their behalf and support them with the income derived. However, the success of such arrangements is not always guaranteed.

The paper also finds that elderly people who have good relationships

with relatives of younger generations are more likely to be adequately supported by the income generated from the management of assets. However, for elderly people who are already isolated or had poor relationships with younger generation relatives, assets transferred were less likely to be used to support them. In these situations, organised groups are useful in helping to rectify some poor relationships, but the paper shows that for a number of elderly people who are too infirm, or for other reasons are unable to manage an asset, the transfer of a productive asset for income generation is unlikely to produce a significant improvement in their lives.

Key recommendations

The paper draws attention to the need to clearly understand elderly peoples' family and social contexts for the successful implementation of social protection interventions, especially when they are based on the transfer of productive assets for income generation.

The paper concludes that productive asset transfers for income generating projects are not a magic bullet for lifting all extremely poor elderly people out of poverty. They work in some cases, but in others alternative forms of income support and social protection are required, particularly when the elderly person is infirm, isolated, or has poor relationships with relatives. Given observed social trends in Bangladesh, the paper says it is very likely that the numbers of people who fall into this category will continue to rise in the coming years.



Cost-benefit analysis of land leasing or mortgaging as IGA of extreme poor households

Published in Oct 2014 by Dulal Chandra Biswas & Asaduzzaman



Agriculture in Bangladesh remains the single most important sector of the economy, contributing 18.7 percent of the country's GDP (BBS2, 2013). Land is the mother input for agricultural production and tenancy an important feature; over one-sixth of the total cultivated land in Bangladesh is farmed under tenancy arrangements. This is called 'Hari' land.

Under the Uttaran/Shiree supported SEMPTI project, beneficiary households (BHHs) often enlist the support of Uttaran to lease or mortgage land for cultivating paddy, vegetables, other crops or fish or shrimp. Uttaran recognises that the proper use of leased or mortgaged

land can be profitable for BHHs and can empower the landless extreme poor people.

Objectives

The analysis seeks to develop a full understanding of the impacts and sustainability of this type of IGA. It is conducted among the beneficiaries of Uttaran who are poor and under-educated; a total of 19 BHHs were randomly selected from five upazilas where the SEMPTI program is implemented in Khulna, Jessore and Satkhira districts. The analysis employs empirical field work for capturing data in a questionnaire which lists five categories of use of land either leased or 'Hari' mortgaged by the beneficiaries of the SEMPTI project.

Main findings

The analysis finds that land cultivation is more effective than any other IGA and can be achieved with minimum risk and uncertainty. The more profitable land utilisation found to be paddy and fish culture.

Key recommendations

For a better utilisation and more profit from the lands, agricultural advices and aids become urgent for these beneficiaries. By ensuring the rights to khaslands of the beneficiaries, 'Uttaran' can not only connect them with income generating activities but can also play an important role in the agro-economy of the country.



The ground reality: The plight and challenges of the landless people in their quest for land rights in the southwest region

(under process of publication)



This paper documents the experiences, impact and lessons of Uttaran's work in helping the landless people of southwest Bangladesh overcome their many challenges and acquire access to khasland.

Objectives

The paper aims to trace and chronicle the conflicts of interest that arise over khasland. Typically, these are between landless people and those vested interest groups which act with the tacit support of corrupt police, government officials and UP leaders and whose prime motive is to uproot the landless for their own financial gain.

The paper seeks to record the legal and human rights violations and abuses suffered by the landless during these struggles, including the destruction of their homesteads. In so doing it looks for historical examples which served to rally support for the landless cause and give rise to a co-ordinated movement, with the help of leading NGOs like

Uttaran. It aims to document and assess the impact of Uttaran's involvement in organising the landless, supporting their cause and advocating for their rights. Finally, the paper makes several recommendations to ensure the sustainability of the landless movement in the long term.

Main findings

The paper asserts that the challenges faced by the landless are exacerbated by their lack of knowledge on khasland and their own rights, and by the complexities of the legal processes underlying khasland distribution and ownership.

It further finds how considerable loopholes in the existing land laws and an absence of legal protection enabled the vested interest landlords to manipulate the land registration process by dividing their holdings among their relatives, or by using dummies through falsification of the land transfers. The corrupting of government officials in favour of the elites has been further derailing the full realisation of land reform in Bangladesh.

However, it identifies how the landless movement emerged amid much persecution as a united force and effective vehicle for securing access and establishing ownership rights to land. The paper describes how NGOs played a substantially critical role through the building of institutions such as primary organisations to mobilise the landless, as recognised in the Land Reform Action Program 1987. It further notes how mass public opinion and pressure from civil society groups and NGOs including Uttaran eventually turned the tide of political opinion in favour of the landless, as the government was made to see that they have a duty to protect the rights and wellbeing of all citizens of Bangladesh.

The paper says that because of Uttaran's advocacy initiatives, the GoB has recovered a large amount of land from illegal occupiers and has implemented two khasland distribution projects in Satkhira and Khulna districts with the support of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and Shiree/DFID.

In more detail, the paper highlights the following successes of the land redistribution projects supported by Uttaran:

1. Creation of social capital

- Awareness raised among the poor landless people about their rights to the khasland
- Landless people organised into primary organisations which have given them extra cumulative energy and social capital
- Landless Selection Committees formed at the Union and Ward level throughout Tala upazila through development and mirroring of the 'Tala Model' (see page 5 of booklet 3 in this series on 'landless identification').
- Strategies instituted to effectively strengthen the ongoing initiatives, such as are training for social mobilisation and capacity building, solving many problems locally through mediation, providing interest free loans to pay for DCR, and increasing participation of landless people socially and politically.

2. Promotion of good governance

- Scope for bribery and corruption reduced by a transparent land settlement process which has saved money for poor people and reduced the incidence of case filing in administrative courts. Landless people previously had to pay inducements of circa 3,000 taka to the Upazila Land Office for assuring DCR. Although bribes are still demanded, both the amount and frequency of the payments have reduced in comparison to the past
- Scope for bribery and corruption reduced by enhanced communication among stakeholders, especially evident in the case of land settlement where upazila administration, landless people, civil society, UP chairmen/members hold frequent and open communications including face-to-face.

3. Reduction of the social gap

- Bonds built among the civil society and poor landless people
- Message of the people carried by civil society to the government administration to make them aware and motivate them to work in favour of the landless

- In many cases, direct access has been granted to the landless people to UNO or AC offices to enquire or complain about their situations

4. Improved economic wellbeing of the landless

- Income increased and expenditure reduced for households which acquire land, ultimately contributing to a reduction of poverty.
- Quantifiable improvements to the food, accommodation and alternative income generating security of the landless
- Increased disposable income spent on house construction, indicating that people have a new expectation of living in a good house.



Key recommendations

The paper asserts that the landless and khasland issue has manifold dimensions and that finding the entry points and opportunities for all actors, especially among NGOs and civil society, is imperative to establishing and protecting the legitimate rights of the landless people. It further argues that land reform is essential in Bangladesh to ensure the equitable distribution of public resources such as khasland.

The paper says the Tala Model is viewed to be unique and its success and the methodology used should be replicated in other areas of the southwest region.

It does, however, sound a note of caution: the movements to recover khasland and establish the rights of the landless people are not yet over and all actors face significant challenges if the current initiatives are to be sustained in the long term. The paper recommends:

- Accelerating the current multi-sector efforts on khasland identification and distribution among the legitimate landless people.
- Strengthening and expanding landless movements in partnership with likeminded or allied NGOs, civil societies, media, political parties, social organisations, and local administration (DC, TNO and UPs). This should establish the legitimate stake of the landless people in the land reform process and facilitate the fast-tracking of the khasland recovery and distribution.
- An increase in the role of NGOs by optimising the legal framework in relation to assistance and cooperation at pre- and post-land settlement at the local level in the light LRAP 87 Section 121.
- Involved NGOs reflecting upon their development programmes and strategies and strengthening their facilitation and monitoring roles, taking the synergy of both rights and needs-based interventions with the landless communities
- NGOs, civil society and the landless movements lobbying major political parties (ruling party and opposition) to incorporate a political commitment into their respective manifestos
- Creating effective mechanisms to strategically address land-related administrative complexities and hurdles in achieving permanent settlement, reduce the influence of political actors and land grabbing elites, and improve financial support for the landless in the ongoing land rights initiatives.
- Conducting regular public forums on the issues to provide in-depth understanding of the land rights status and khasland issues of the landless people in order to create a platform for public opinion and debates on land reform policy



- Strengthening and intensifying campaigning and advocacy initiatives on people's rights and khasland issues. In this regards, there is a need for a review of existing policy and its practice in lieu of the land reform program and khasland issue. The review process will facilitate to identify the policy gaps for clear-cut understanding on the issue and development of peoples' agenda to effectively proceed with the advocacy works.
- Building and expanding a network with likeminded organisations both at home and abroad to exchange land reform issues and concerns.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary

Appendix 2: List of Acronyms

Appendix 3: Bangladesh local government system

Appendix 1: Glossary

The below Bangla names and terms are used in Uttaran materials

Bigha	Unit of land measurement equal to 1,337.8m ² (approx 1/3 of an acre)
Bhumi	Land
Bhumiheen	Landless
Char	Riverine sand and silt landmasses
Decimal	Unit of land measurement equal to 40.46m ² (approx 1/100 of an acre)
Gono	Public
Haor	Wetland
Jalmohal	Waterbody
Khasland	State-owned land
Mouza	A type of administrative district corresponding to a specific land area, used in land size calculation and registration, revenue collection, record preparation and for the Identification of landowners
Salish	Mediation (in a village court)
Sangstha	Organisation
Tala	The town and upazila in Satkhira District in Khulna Division where Uttaran was founded and the Tala Model was developed for identifying landless people
Unnayan	Development
Uttaran	Transition

Appendix 2: List of Acronyms

The following acronyms and initialisms appear in Uttaran materials:

A2I	Access to Information
AC (Land)	Assistant Commissioner (Land)
ASO	Assistant Settlement Officer
ADC	Additional Deputy Commissioner
APARAJEO	Access to Public resources by Asserting Rights and Justice for Economic Opportunities (project)
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CLO	Certificate of Land Ownership
CS	Cadastral Survey
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DC	District Commissioner
DCR	Duplicate Carbon Receipt
DKKBBC	Districty Krishi Khasjami Bondobasto o Babosthapona Committee (District Agri-Khasland Settlement and Management Committee)
DLR	Department of Land Registration
DLRS	Directorate of Land Records and Survey
DPD	Deputy Project Director
EU	European Union
FCM	Field Coordination Meeting
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GIS	Geographical Information System
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GPS	Global Positioning System
GUF	Gono Unnayan Federation (public development federation)
HDRC	Human Development Research Centre
IDRT	Institute for Development Research and Training
IEC	Information, Education and Communication materials
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LEB	Local Elected Body
MIS	Management Information System
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding

MoL	Ministry of Land
MJF	Manusher Jonno Foundation
MSF	Multi-stakeholder Forum
NFPE	Non-Formal Primary Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPD	National Project Director
PCM	Partnership Coordination Meeting
PMU	Project Management Unit
PO	Primary Organisation
PTAT	Project Technical Assistance Team
RDC	Revenue Deputy Commissioners
ROM	Results Oriented Monitoring
SALE	Sustainable Access Land Equality (project)
SEMPTI	Sustained and Expanded Effort to Make the Ultra Poor Out of Extreme Poverty by Transferring Assets, Cash and Skill in an Integrated Approach (project)
SWC	Social Watch Committee
SALPRACB	Strengthening Access to Land and Property Rights for All Citizens of Bangladesh (GoB name; known to Uttaran and project partners as the SALE project)
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
TRM	Tidal River Management
UAKDMC	Upazila Agricultural Khasland Distribution and Management Committee
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UP	Union Parishad
UKKBCC	Upazila Krishi Khasjami Bondobasto o Babosthapona Committee (Upazila Agricultural Khasland Settlement and Management Committee)
UBBC	Union Bhumiheen Bachchai Committee (Union Landless Selection Committee)
WBBC	Ward Bhumiheen Bachchai Committee (Ward Landless Selection Committee)
ZSO	Zonal Settlement Officer

Appendix 3: Bangladesh local government system



The regional administrative structure of Bangladesh consists of 7 Divisions, 64 Districts, 488 Upazilas (or sometimes called Thanas), and 4,550 Union Parishads (UPs), which are each further divided into Wards - the lowest tier.

