

Poverty Dynamics: A Perception Study of Tenants and Agricultural Labourers in Bangladesh

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The study analyses poverty dynamics of the poor comprising of the tenants and agricultural labourers in rural Bangladesh. The study uses BIDS survey data of 64 villages in 2005 and estimates self-assessed poverty trend which demonstrates some deterioration of poverty situation over the last ten years. This deterioration has been observed to be more acute for the tenants and agricultural labourers in the rural areas. The paper also indicates some measures for improving the poverty conditions of the poor peasants in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Chronic Poverty, Land Distribution Pattern, Tenancy, Agricultural Labour

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I. INTRODUCTION

Historically, the part of Bengal that now constitutes Bangladesh has been experiencing severe incidence and magnitude of poverty from within the structure of society and economy. Internally, the society was not homogeneous even at the low level of economic condition. A sharp differentiation based on land, income, status and power existed among various groups (classes) of people. This differentiation is, thus, attributable to historical process at work. The study of J.C. Jack (1975, reprinted) on the livelihood condition of Faridpur district of the early twentieth century and the Munshi Nandajee Report (Rajshahi District Commissioner's Report)¹ on ten villages of Nawgaon Sub-division in the late nineteenth century demonstrated that nearly 30 per cent of households labeled as the group of "indigence" (Jack) and "labourers" (Nandajee Report) led a precarious mode of living. The proportion of people identified as extreme or severe poor that prevails in Bangladesh (Sen and Hulme 2004) is as significant as it was in the time of Jack and Nandajee. This indicates that the theme of

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¹ The findings of the Nandajee Report are available in Joardar (1978).

differentiation, severity and vulnerability of the poor is a part of long-standing discourse of the livelihood struggles of the poor in Bangladesh.

The process of rural differentiation and polarisation that has set in long ago thus continued unabated. In this context, it is also acknowledged that peasants, particularly the tenants and agricultural labourers, are the most vulnerable groups amongst the poor in Bangladesh. They are extremely poor not only in the present day, but also were so in the past and would likely to be so in the future under the existing socio-economic conditions, where necessary interventions are not taking place. In other words, the severity of their poverty persists from one generation to another.

In view of the above considerations, this paper analyses poverty condition of the poor particularly of the tenants and agricultural labourers in rural Bangladesh and discusses the poverty dynamics of these vulnerable groups.

II. APPROACH AND METHOD OF THE STUDY

This paper is based on the concept of chronic poverty which denotes persistence of poverty for a long period (say, for 5 or 10 years). Chronic poverty usually covers absolute or severe poverty that is experienced for an extended period of time.² A person living in absolute poverty is not able to satisfy his/her minimum requirements for food, shelter and clothing. Thus, chronically poor people are those who are living below an absolute (severe) poverty line³ for a long time. Many of the people are stuck in “poverty traps” or structurally positioned in such a way that their escape from poverty becomes difficult or impossible without intervention for significant changes. Poverty may thus be passed from one generation to another and this is of particular interest given the known and desirable possibilities of interrupting such transmission (Shepherd, 2007).

The concept of chronic poverty may also cover some moderate poverty which persists for a long period and often is intergenerational. If this type of moderate poverty is encapsulated here, the magnitude of chronic poverty would likely to be very high in Bangladesh. In our study both extreme and moderate poor have been incorporated to arrive at estimates of chronic poor. For successes in poverty reduction, it is important to target the chronic poor on a priority basis

² For conceptual clarification, see Hulme and Shepherd (2003).

³ The poverty line is usually defined in terms of a money-metric—income, expenditure and consumption; it can also be defined in terms of wider aspects of deprivation focusing on absolute poverty, but not excluding the analysis of relative poverty and the role of inequality (for details, see Shepherd 2007).

and explore the causes of chronic poverty for identifying the possible ways and means of their graduation out of poverty.

By any reckoning, the agricultural labourers and sharecroppers are both extreme and chronic poor. They are trapped in unequal social relations that are so unjust that there is no or very limited opportunity for upward social and economic mobility. In such circumstances, they experience persistently a high level of poverty. For understanding the processes that create or erode poverty (chronic), it is necessary to examine the various manifestation of their poverty over time not in isolation but in relation to other social groups who are non-poor and/or transitory poor.

An advantage of this approach of chronic poverty analysis is that it permits one to go beyond the static approach of poverty trend so as to gain meaningful insights into poverty dynamics. But the limitation of the study is to be mentioned here. This type of analysis requires longitudinal data, which are not readily available. Instead, we analyse the issues based on survey data (census, household sample and community survey carried out in 2005 in 64 villages of 64 districts) of Bangladesh.⁴ In fact, we relied heavily on perception of the respondents for the survey year (2005) and ten years ago (1995) in order to capture some multi-dimensional aspects of poverty using a set of criteria. In the following sections, the results of survey data supplemented by secondary information from government and non-government documents have been presented. Due to subjective nature of our field survey data, our results may be treated as broad indicators, rather than as precise estimates, for understanding the dynamics of poverty.

III. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Our analysis focuses on sharecroppers (pure tenants and owner-cum-tenants) and agricultural labourers who constitute nearly 30 per cent of households in both census and sample survey data (Table A.1 in Appendix). The results of our analyses of the socioeconomic conditions of these households in relation to other groups are presented below.

3.1 Basic Characteristics of Livelihood of Agricultural Labourers and Sharecroppers

The landless, functionally landless and marginal farmers constitute the overwhelming majority of the agricultural labourers and sharecroppers. In fact,

⁴ For detailed methodology of the survey, see Ali, Begum, Shahabuddin and Khan (2006).

nearly 99 per cent of agricultural labourers and 90 per cent of sharecroppers (including farmer-cum-sharecropper) belong to the group of landless and marginal farmers (below 100 decimal or one acre of land) (Table A.2 in Appendix). The vast majority of these landless poor peasants and tenants diversify their occupation by resorting to non-agricultural activities as labourers, small businessmen, craftsmen, etc. From Table I it can be seen that extent of diversification of the occupation of agricultural labourer and sharecroppers are somewhat higher than any other occupation categories. In the absence of land and non-land assets, they adopt the mechanism of survival strategy to diversify their activities though at the low income level. From Table I, it can also be seen that sharecroppers have high incidence of agricultural labour as secondary occupation, while agricultural labourers have low incidence of sharecropping. In the absence of plough and other agricultural equipment, it is obvious for the agricultural labourers not to resort to the occupation of sharecropping and thus they mostly resort to the activities of non-agricultural labourers as secondary occupation.

TABLE I
OCCUPATION MATRIX OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS

Primary occupation	Secondary occupation									Total	% of households with secondary occupation *
	Farmer	Share-cropper	Farmer & share-cropper	Agricultural labourer	Non-agri. Labourer & others	Fishermen	Professional	Businessmen	Handicraft		
Farmer	-	1.7	2.6	47.3	16.5	4.3	3.7	22.5	1.4	100.0	35.6
										(351)	
Sharecropper	4.1	-	-	65.8	17.8	2.7	-	9.6	-	100.0	46.8
										(73)	
Farmer & sharecropper	5.8	0.6	-	55.2	14.3	2.6	1.3	16.9	3.2	100.0	45.8
										(154)	
Agricultural labourer	24.8	8.5	2.1	-	51.9	2.4	0.2	3.8	6.4	100.0	45.7
										(424)	
Non-agri. Labourer & others	19.7	4.3	2.3	66.7	-	3.8	1.0	2.3	-	100.0	48.3
										(396)	
Fishermen	18.3	1.4	1.4	39.4	35.2	-	-	4.2	-	100.0	39.1
										(71)	
Professional	72.1	6.29	5.4	6.2	2.3	0.8	-	7.0	-	100.0	20.6
										(129)	
Businessmen	72.1	7.7	2.6	9.2	7.4	0.7	-0.4	-	-	100.0	34.7
										(272)	
Handicraft	31.8	9.1	-	50.0	9.1	-	-	-	-	100.0	36.0
										(22)	
Total	27.6	4.9	2.2	33.6	19.2	2.6	1.1	7.9	2.0	100.0	38.8
										(1,892)	

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey).

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate number of households.

* Estimated in relation to total number of households in each occupation category.

The noteworthy point here is that sharecroppers, agricultural labourers and non-agricultural labourers belong to separate occupation groups, but their activities are supplementary to one another so much so that they diversify their occupations along these lines of activities. Thus, this type of occupational diversification of agricultural labourers and sharecroppers not only increases their income and employment, but also acts as the poverty reducing mechanism as well as crisis coping strategy (or survival strategy) of rural livelihood.⁵ In fact, this survival strategy is of prime consideration for them to meet the demand for adequate income for ensuring their subsistence.

From Table A.3 in Appendix, it can be seen that the education status of agricultural labourers and sharecroppers is at the lowest level. More than 81 per cent of agricultural labourers and 65 per cent of sharecroppers are illiterate, while for all occupation categories (taken together), the illiteracy rate is at the level of 56 per cent. If we consider the second generation of the households (i.e. including all members of schooling age), the illiteracy rate is likely to be reduced for each occupation category.⁶

3.2 Land Distribution Pattern and Tenancy

For exploring important aspects of the socio-economic condition of sharecroppers and agricultural labourers, land distribution pattern from census and sample survey data is presented in Tables II and III. It can be seen from these tables that nearly 53 per cent and 55 per cent of households in sample and census data respectively are landless, that is, who do not own any cultivable land. In sample data, nearly 72 per cent of households own nearly 8 per cent of land, but operate 27 per cent of land (Table III). Again, the top 7 per cent of households are observed to own nearly 52 per cent of land and operate 35 per cent of land. Though the operational distribution pattern has some equalising tendency, the distribution pattern of land (more or less similar in both sample and census data) is very much skewed and appears to be more skewed than what was found in Bangladesh Agricultural Census data of 1996.⁷ The average size of land (land per household) has also significantly been reduced from 150 decimal in Agricultural Census of 1996 to 90 decimal in Agricultural Census of 2005, which is somewhat higher than our data of nearly 70 decimal. This drastic decline of average size of farm appears to be rather alarming.

⁵ For details, see Bhaduri (1989), Saha (2001b).

⁶ Our observation based on survey data indicates that illiteracy rate for the second generation has been reduced by nearly 10 per cent.

⁷ Results of agricultural census data are analysed in Saha (2001a).

TABLE II
LAND DISTRIBUTION PATTERN OF HOUSEHOLD

Farm- size (decimal)	% of household	% of land	Average land
0	54.8	0.0	0.0
1-50	16.2	6.3	27.9
51-100	10.6	11.8	78.9
101-250	11.3	26.6	167.9
251-500	5.1	25.3	355.7
501+	2.1	30.1	1026.3
All	100.0	100.0	71.3
	(14,302)	(10,19,638)	[158.4]*

Source: Field Work (Census Data).

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate number of household and amount of land (in decimal).

*[158.43] = Average farm size in decimal (excluding the landless).

TABLE III
LAND DISTRIBUTION PATTERN OF HOUSEHOLDS

Farm-size category	% of household	% of land		Average land	
		Owned	Operational	Owned	Operational
0	52.7	0.0	13.0	0.0	20.1
.01-50	18.8	7.7	14.3	27.4	61.8
50.01-100	10.8	12.6	13.8	78.4	103.9
100.01-250	11.2	28.0	23.5	167.1	170.7
250.01-500	4.7	24.9	17.1	325.3	294.1
500.01-750	1.1	10.1	7.0	625.0	524.5
750.01+	0.8	16.8	11.3	1444.7	1183.1
All	100.0	100.0	100.0	67.1	81.4
	(4,880)	(327,327.2)	(397,031.8)	[141.8]*	

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey).

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate number of household and amount of land (in decimal).

* [141.82] = Average farm size in decimal (excluding the landless).

From distribution pattern of land, the pattern of the distribution of rented-in land and extent of tenancy follow. The extent of tenancy is observed to be more than 33 per cent (Table IV), which is significantly higher than what was found in agricultural census of nearly ten years back.⁸ In village level community survey, tenancy has been observed, on an average, to be at the extent of 36.5 per cent and

⁸ In Agricultural Census data of 1996, tenancy was at the extent of nearly 22 per cent. In an earlier census of 1983/84, the figure was at the extent of 17 per cent. Thus the extent of tenancy increases over two decades or so. This change may be due to rapid rural-urban migration along with the increase of absentee landownership and abandonment of some farms for taking up rural non-farm occupation (see Saha 2001a and Hossain 2004).

for nearly 57 per cent of villages, the extent of tenancy is above 30 per cent (Table A.4 in Appendix).

From Table IV, it can also be seen that rented-in land by the smaller farmers is much more than those of the larger ones. This may be due to the fact that smaller farms have more opportunity to make better utilisation of their farm resources, if they can enlarge their farm size by renting-in more land. Due to managerial constraints imposed upon them, larger farms may not be so much inclined to the practice of renting-in land.

TABLE IV
EXTENT OF TENANCY AND DISTRIBUTION OF RENTED-IN LAND

Farm size category (decimal) (1)	Operational land (decimal) (2)	Rented-in land (decimal) (3)	% of rented- in land (3)	Extent of Tenancy (5) = (3)/(2)×100
0	51762.7	52839.7	40.1	102.1
.01-50	56595.9	34223.4	26.0	60.5
50.1-100	54595.1	20263.8	15.4	37.1
100.01-250	93385.6	17788.6	13.5	19.1
250.01-500	67936.5	4482.5	3.4	6.6
500.01-750	27797.0	1473.0	1.1	5.3
750.01+	44959.0	600.0	0.5	1.3
All	397031.8	131671.0	100.0	33.2

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey).

The sharecropping tenancy arrangement has been observed to be 68 per cent, followed by leasing-in (nearly 20 per cent) and mortgaging-in (12 per cent) respectively. The practices of leasing-in and mortgaging-in are more followed by the larger groups and the landless than by the small and the middle farmers (see Table A.5 in Appendix). Similar results were obtained in the 1996 Agricultural Census data (Saha 2001a).

3.3 Conditions of Tenants and Agricultural Labourers

We have already observed that the extent of tenancy in Bangladesh has the rising tendency over time. Studies are available to demonstrate that the adoption of new technologies has positive association with the incidence of tenancy.⁹ A

⁹ This is reported in Hossain, Quasem, Akash and Jabbar (1991).

plausible explanation of this finding is that following the adoption of new technologies in agriculture, landowners' temptation for unearned income influences this process of land transaction.

Moreover, sharecropping and other forms of tenancy arrangements are almost exclusively verbal agreement in rural Bangladesh. In the absence of written agreement, tenants have no security of tenure. They are simply tenants at-will of the landlords. More often than not, they cannot get institutional credit as they do not own land and cannot satisfy the condition of collateral security. In the face of competition for land in rental market, the bargaining power of tenants is reduced to a great extent. If they fail to get a piece of land from their landlord, they are reduced to the rank of agricultural labourers, which is more degrading than their earlier position. In these circumstances, the landlord can exploit the tenants' cheap family labour and often can bring forth a phenomenon of social servitude (e.g. patron-client relations) which can be used for support of the tenants in village politics and local conflicts (Hossain 1981).

Despite the limited information, we can observe that the work attachment of the tenants to the landowners appears to be very low. We find that nearly 5 per cent of tenants have work attachment to the landowners. These attached tenants usually provide farm (wage) and domestic labour to the landowners. The majority of attached labourers are pure tenants (see Table A.6 in Appendix).

In the above context, evidence are available (see Rahman and Islam 1988, Saha 1997) to show that the method of labour tying can ensure an assured supply of labour required to satisfy the timely demand of agricultural operation. This tends to intensify the agricultural production without giving any seasonally balanced employment of such kind of semi-attached workers. These results, however, indicate that it is mainly the employers who benefit by interlinking labour hiring with landlease and provision of credit. But the noteworthy point is that such interlinkages for tying semi-attached labour are observed to be few in many studies (see Rahman and Islam 1988, Akash 1989, Taslim 1988). What is more important is that family and casual labour, rather than attached and semi-attached labour, are prominent in the labour market of Bangladesh.

Now let us turn to the evidence derived from our field level data. From Table A.7 in Appendix, it is observed that while most of the tenants (58 per cent) sell their labour to the landowners at the market rate, a significant portion of them (36 per cent) sell their labour at less than market rate as well. Sometime they also sell at more than the market rate and also under free (unpaid) market arrangements. In such circumstances, patron-client relationships appear to be prevalent (for a similar observation, see Saha 1997), but not to a significant extent.

Agricultural labourers, on an average, work as labourers for nearly 18 years, while more than 50 per cent of them are observed to work as labourers for more than 15 years (see Table A.8 in Appendix). This does not mean that they do not change and/or cannot diversify their occupation. The point to emphasize is that they change their occupation from primary to secondary and/or vice-versa to work as agricultural labour for a long time, but diversify their occupation along the line of occupations such as non-agricultural labour, fishermen, craftsmen, etc. as a mechanism of adopting survival strategy. This indicates that they are at distress condition and most of them remain extreme poor (chronic poor) for a long period.

Table A.9 in Appendix shows that more than 30 per cent of agricultural labourers begin their occupation (as primary and/or secondary occupation) as agricultural labour. But most of them (35 per cent) were owners of small piece of land and some were sharecroppers, small businessmen, workers of cottage industries, while others were domestic servants (see Table A.9 in Appendix). For becoming labourers, the process of differentiation and polarisation (i.e. structural problem) appears to be prevalent (for similar observations, see Saha 1997 and Rahman 1986).

An agricultural labourer, on an average, is engaged annually for 162 days in agricultural activities and for 94 days in non-agricultural activities (see Table A.10 in Appendix). This indicates that an agricultural labourer remains unemployed/underemployed for a substantial period in a year.¹⁰

From Table A.10 in Appendix, it can also be seen that a large percentage (38.2 per cent) of agricultural labourers cannot bargain with their employers (landowners), though they can often change their employers. They cannot bargain mainly due to excess labour supply for which they are afraid of losing the job. It has also been observed that landowners more often than not directly employ the agricultural labourers who mostly come from within the village and/or neighbouring villages. The agricultural labourers most often work in the land of large and middle farmers. Sometimes they also work in small owners' land.

It has been observed that only an insignificant proportion (2.4 per cent) of labourers could get *khas* land from the government, but, more often than not, they have to bribe for getting the land. Most of them (90.3 per cent), however, could retain their land for their own use (see Table A.10 in Appendix).

The agricultural/rural labour market in most districts of Bangladesh is very complex. Even within a village, the labour market is segmented by the variety of

¹⁰ For employment, unemployment and underemployment conditions of agricultural labourers, see Rahman (2003).

considerations including gender differences, types of agricultural and non-agricultural activities, differences in the operations of these activities, etc. However, a significant variations of wage over regions and seasons can be seen in Table A.11 in Appendix. The lowest daily wage rate has been observed to be Taka 10 in the lean season, while the highest rate could be as much as Taka 200 in the peak season. In all cases, non-agricultural wage rate is higher than agricultural wage rate in both peak and lean seasons. Moreover, wage rate for male is significantly higher than that for female and child. The point to note is that even the child sometimes gets higher wage than the female (see Table A.11 in Appendix). Majority of the households (sharecroppers, agricultural labourers and all types of households) search for work in their own and neighbouring villages and nearly 30-40 per cent of them migrate to various towns (including Dhaka city) for their work (see Table A.12 in Appendix). This indicates that labour mobility is also significant in rural areas of Bangladesh.

About 70 per cent of all households resort to various types of loan. These figures stand at more than 75 per cent for agricultural labourers and sharecroppers, indicating that a higher percentage of agricultural labourers and sharecroppers are resorting to various types of loan. NGOs and commercial banks constitute the major sources of institutional loan, while relatives and moneylenders provide the major non-institutional loans. The average size of loan is highest (Taka 11,594.00 per loan) for all of households (taken together), while the figure stands at Taka 10,560.00 and Taka 5,978.00 for sharecroppers and agricultural labourers respectively (see Tables A.13 and A.14 in Appendix).

We do not have data relating to the nature of utilisation of loan and the rate of interest paid by the borrowers. In the absence of such data, it is difficult to say anything about the nature of exploitation of tenants and agricultural labourers by moneylenders. But from earlier studies, we know that non-institutional loans, particularly those from moneylenders, are highly unproductive and rates of interest are much higher than those of institutional loans, and the terms and conditions are also unfavourable for the tenants and agricultural labourers (see Rahman and Saha 1996).

In our village level community survey, we attempted to ascertain whether the conditions of the agricultural labourers and sharecroppers have improved, deteriorated or remained the same. For most of them (nearly 40 per cent), the condition remains more or less unchanged (see Table A.15 in Appendix). The incidence of improvement, however, is somewhat higher than the incidence of deterioration. This somewhat higher incidence of self assessed improvement, however, does not provide any indication of the emergence of mechanism for sustained improvement in the very fragile life and work conditions of agricultural labourers and sharecroppers.

3.4 Poverty Trends and Incidence

In the absence of detailed income or consumption expenditure data, we have attempted here to capture some multi-dimensional aspect of poverty based on the perception of the people with respect to their own economic condition (e.g. rich, upper middle, lower-middle, moderate and extreme poor) and food availability (e.g. “always in deficit,” “sometime in deficit,” “neither deficit nor surplus,” and “surplus”). The poor people have many ways of expressing the different experience of poverty. The households were asked to report their condition (based on their perception of their own economic condition and food availability) prevailing 10 years ago for enabling us to assess the changes in poverty condition over the last decade. Thus the estimates of subjective poverty (moderate, extreme, chronic) may not provide us the precise condition, but can give an indication of what has been happening for the sample households.

Based on the above method, the self-assessed poverty trend over the ten year period can be seen in Table V. The table shows that while the incidence of extreme poverty has decreased by 1.16 per cent over ten years, that of moderate poverty has increased by 4.45 per cent. The overall poverty situation has deteriorated by 2.65 per cent. Thus the results of subjective assessment of the respondents themselves do not provide support to the estimates of income poverty reduction (nearly 1 per cent per year) during the 1990s based on HES data (see, Sen and Hulme 2006).

TABLE V
TRENDS IN SELF-ASSESSED POVERTY OVER TEN YEARS

Self-categorisation (1)	Poverty Trends				% of change (6)= {(4)- (2)}÷(2)×100
	1995		2005		
	Number of households (2)	% of households (3)	Number of households (4)	% of households (5)	
Extreme poor	2,761	19.3	2,729	19.1	-1.2
Moderate poor	5,867	41.0	6,128	42.8	4.5
All poor	8,628	60.3	8,857	61.9	2.6
Lower middle class	4,472	31.0	4,521	31.6	1.1
Upper middle class	973	6.8	774	5.4	-20.5
Upper class	229	1.6	150	1.0	-34.5
All non-poor	5,674	39.7	5,445	38.1	-4.0
All	14,302	100.0	14,302	100.0	-

Source: Field Work (Census Data).

In fact, the incidence of rural poverty as reflected in the head-count ratio has steadily declined over the last two decades—from 61.2 per cent in 1991/92 to 55.2 per cent in 1995/96, 53.0 per cent in 2000 to 43.8 per cent in 2005 and further to 35.2 per cent in 2010 (Table A.16 in Appendix).¹¹ Between 1995/96 and 2005 (our reference sample survey period) in particular, the rural poverty has declined by 11.4 percentage points while the subjective self-assessment of poverty in rural areas indicate an increase in poverty incidence by 1.6 percentage points (Table V). Any attempt to reconcile these contrasting results may not be meaningful as the underlying methodology and approach (quantitative as opposed to qualitative subjective assessment) are different. Nevertheless, both the methods have acceptability on their own merits.

Table VI shows the extreme and chronic poverty trend over the last ten years. The chronic poor are considered to be those who are extremely poor, but could not improve their poverty situation over this period. In fact, they are chronic poor (extreme) who constitute more than 14 per cent of the households (Table VI).

TABLE VI
EXTREME AND CHRONIC POVERTY BY OCCUPATION

Occupation (1)	No. of households (2)	Extreme poor h/h (2005) (3)	Extreme poor h/h (1995) (4)	Chronic poor* (5)	% of households		
					Extreme poor (2005) (6) = (3/2) × 100	Extreme poor (1995) (7) = (4/2) ×100	Chronic poor* (8) = (5/2) × 100
Farmer	3,028	110	141	79	3.6	4.7	2.6
Sharecropper	514	85	107	62	16.5	20.8	12.1
Farmer and sharecropper	1,008	99	141	62	9.8	14.0	6.2
Agricultural labourer	2,777	1,171	1108	966	42.2	39.9	34.8
Non- agricultural labourer and others	2,262	677	656	466	29.9	29.0	20.6
Fishermen	513	131	108	58	25.5	21.1	11.3
Professional	1,820	136	163	92	7.5	9.0	5.0
Businessmen	2,241	281	302	209	12.5	13.5	9.3
Handicraft	139	39	35	25	28.1	25.2	17.1
All	14,302	2,729	2,761	2,019	19.1	19.3	14.1

Source: Field Work (Census Data).

Note: *The extreme poor who remain trapped in extreme poverty condition over ten years (1995-2005) are considered as chronic poor.

¹¹ The head-count ratio refers to the per centage of population living below the (upper) poverty line as measured by Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) method.

Our estimates of chronic poor for the agricultural labourers is, however, much higher (nearly 35 per cent) than the estimated figure of all households (14 per cent). Tables VI and VII also show that extreme poor and chronic (extreme) poor mostly concentrate in the occupation group of agricultural labourers, followed by non-agricultural labour, handicraft and sharecroppers respectively. It can be observed that nearly 48 per cent of all chronic poor are in the group of agricultural labourers (Table VII). Also, as high as 74 per cent of chronic (extreme) poor belong to the occupation groups of labourers (both agricultural and non-agricultural labourers who supplement one another) and sharecroppers (tenants and owner-cum-tenants).

TABLE VII
SELF- ASSESSED POVERTY TRENDS BY OCCUPATION

Occupation	Poverty Trends (in percentages)				Chronic poor *
	1995		2005		
	Moderate poor	Extreme poor	Moderate poor	Extreme poor	
Farmer	15.0	5.1	15.4	4.0	3.9
Sharecropper	4.4	3.9	4.9	3.1	3.1
Farmer and sharecropper	7.7	5.1	8.0	3.6	3.1
Agricultural labourer	23.1	40.1	23.9	42.9	47.9
Non- agricultural labourer and others	18.7	23.8	20.0	24.8	23.1
Fishermen	3.9	3.9	4.8	4.8	2.8
Professional	10.9	5.9	8.9	4.9	4.6
Businessmen	14.9	10.9	14.5	10.3	10.4
Handicraft	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.2
All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(5,867)	(2,761)	(6,128)	(2,729)	(2,019)

Source: Field Work (Census Data).

Note: *The extreme poor who remain trapped in extreme poverty condition over ten years (1995-2005) are considered as chronic poor. Figures in parentheses indicate number of households.

Note that if the moderate poor were considered for estimation of the chronic poor, the estimated figure might be much higher, which was 31.4 per cent in Sen and Hulme (2006). Considering both the extreme and moderate poor as poor, we can estimate the incidence of chronic poverty. Our estimated figures of currently poor, poor of ten years ago and chronic poor can be seen from Table VIII. The

table shows that chronic poor is now estimated to be 53 per cent, which is much higher than our earlier estimate of chronic (extreme) poor (14 per cent). The point to emphasize is that the levels of poverty and chronic poverty for agricultural labourers and sharecroppers are much higher and deteriorating as well. For example, the estimate of chronic poor amongst the agricultural labourers stands at nearly 87 per cent, which is much higher than our earlier estimate of chronic (extreme) poor at nearly 35 per cent. If these estimates are, however, based on food availability only rather than overall economic condition, then poverty situation somewhat improves, but still remains at a very high level (see Table A.17 in Appendix).

TABLE VIII
SELF-ASSESSED POVERTY AND CHRONIC POVERTY
(BASED ON ECONOMIC CONDITION)

Occupation (1)	Number of households (2)	Poor households		Chronic poor househol ds (5)	Percentages of households		
		1995 (3)	2005 (4)		Poor 1995 (6)=(3)/ (2)x100	Poor 2005 (7)=(4)/ (2)x100	Chronic poor (8)=(5)/(2) x 100
Farmer	3,028	1,023	954	749	33.8	31.5	24.7
Sharecropper	514	363	389	329	70.6	75.7	64.0
Farmer & sharecropper	1,008	586	590	461	58.1	58.5	45.7
Agricultural labourers	2,777	2,462	2,635	2,415	88.7	94.9	86.9
Non-agricultural labourer	2,262	1,754	1,906	1,668	77.5	84.4	73.7
Fishermen	513	342	424	311	66.7	82.7	60.6
Professional	1,820	804	680	590	44.2	37.4	32.4
Businessmen	2,241	1,179	1,167	961	52.6	52.1	42.9
Handicraft	139	115	115	104	82.7	82.7	74.8
All	14,302	8,628	8,860	7,588	60.3	61.9	53.1

Source: Field Work (Census Data).

In the dynamic context of poverty, some non-poor descend from their status of non-poor to poor. Some poor are also observed to ascend from their position of poor to non-poor. The situation of self-assessed descending non-poor (those who were once above the poverty line, but now have slipped into poverty) and ascending poor (those who crossed the poverty line) can be seen from Tables A.18 and A.19 in Appendix. The estimates of ascending poor, both on the basis of self assessed economic condition and food availability, appear to be somewhat

lower than those of descending non-poor. This movement on balance, thus, reflects a somewhat deterioration of poverty over time. The point worth mentioning is that the ascending rate of self-assessed economic condition of agricultural labourers is at the lowest (at nearly 2 per cent), which is much lower than their descending rate of nearly 8 per cent (see Table A.18 in Appendix).

For the professionals and businessmen, the reverse has been observed, indicating that the ascending rates for these categories are higher than the descending rates. Our general observation, based on the poverty condition of all occupation categories, suggests that those who escaped from poverty have mainly been those who persisted in the neighbourhood of the poverty line, while those of the extreme poor (who lived much below the line) improved to a much lesser extent.¹²

IV. POVERTY CONDITION OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS AND TENANTS FROM A WIDER PERSPECTIVE

In the preceding section, we have provided a “trap-centric” (Sen and Hulme 2006) analysis of poverty to identify the agricultural labourers and tenants as the most distress and chronic poverty-prone groups. We need to go beyond this trap centric analysis to capture the dynamic changes that are taking place in both labour and tenancy markets which have bearing on the relative poverty conditions of various sub-groups of agricultural labourers and tenants. Thus, the poverty condition of agricultural labourers and tenants in a wider perspective is analysed below.

4.1 Changes in Labour Market and Poverty Condition of Agricultural Labourers

Due to the predominance of the family-based holdings, the agricultural labour market in Bangladesh is small and fragmented. Moreover, the labourers are not homogeneous. They are transacted in the market under three major arrangements, such as hiring on a seasonal or annual contract (attached labourers), hiring on a daily wage basis (casual labourers) and hiring on a piece-rated contract (contract labourers). In our survey, data on poverty condition of these sub-groups of labourers were not collected separately. So no definite statements can be made on relative poverty condition of these sub-groups. However, based on secondary information derived from some studies, we can

¹² For a similar observation, see Sen and Hulme (2006).

provide some pointers towards the relative poverty condition of these sub-groups as well as the poverty condition of agricultural labourers as a whole.

Amongst the three sub-groups (as mentioned above), the attached labourers or *bandha majur* who live with the farm households and are paid wages on a monthly or yearly basis and provided free meals and clothing are observed to lead a precarious livelihood with low status. However, their participation in the labour market is on the decline (Hossain and Bayes 2007). The casual labourers known as *din majur* or *kamla* are employed on a daily basis, depending on the need and/or opportunity of work. Their work as agricultural wage-labourers has also declined and they are now absorbed largely in rural non-farm sectors (Hossain and Bayes 2007, Saha 2001b) which have low growth potential not being able to have any significant impact on poverty reduction (Saha 2001b, Mahmud 1996). On the other hand, in the farming activities, particularly during weeding and harvesting periods, contract labourers are gaining importance due to increasing scarcity and the problem of supervision of casual labourers. Thus the piece-rated work is more remunerative. However, due to the seasonal nature of the piece-rated work, the labourers gain little benefit for the whole year. Thus it would appear that casual workers (on a daily basis), though less remunerative, remain predominant in the labour market.

Due to wide fluctuations in seasonal and regional wages, it is difficult to estimate wages for the country as a whole. Despite these difficulties, the government has been compiling data on rural wages on an annual basis for many years. Estimates based on these data indicate that nominal wages of agricultural labourers exhibited an upward trend since independence. A study by Bose (1968) on rural income for the period 1949-66 shows that real wages had been fluctuating from year to year, but generally with a downward trend. Since the 1970s, the downward trend of real wages for rural workers in Bangladesh seems to have been more prominent. A World Bank Study (1984) shows that real wages in the early 1980s were significantly lower than those in 1972-73 and 1973-74, when the economy was still recovering from the ravages of the war of liberation. In a situation when employment opportunities are not expanding or expanding at a lower rate than the supply of labour, it is likely that rural labourers would not be able to offset their losses in earnings due to declining real wages. This decline in real wages may, therefore, have led to a significant reduction in the level of consumption by the rural poor.

The observed unequal distribution of land results in the emergence of monopsony power in the labour market where landowners are the only purchasers of labour power. Under this condition, a large segment of agricultural labourers cannot bargain with their employers (landowners), though they often

change their employers (Saha 2007). They cannot bargain mainly due to the prevailing condition of excess labour supply for which they always have the fear of remaining and/or becoming unemployed. As a result, a large portion of the labourers remain unemployed or underemployed.¹³ This high level of unemployment, underemployment and landlessness also results in stagnation and near stagnation of real wages in the rural economy (Rahman 2006). This indicates that alternative employment opportunities have not grown fast enough in the rural economy for improving the condition of the agricultural labourers.

The trend in real wage rate, especially of the agricultural labour, is often considered to be a useful indicator to assess changes in the living condition of the poor. Despite limited alternative opportunities of employment, there has been some changes in the historical trend of declining real wages. Based on the 2005 Household Income and Expenditure Survey data of BBS, Rahman (2011) shows that real wage has marginally increased in 2000-2005, though there has been substantial underemployment among the rural workforce.

If we go beyond 2005, we observe an increasing trend of real wages in agricultural sector. For example, during 1995-2005, there has been a nearly 2 per cent growth of real wage in agriculture and nearly 5 per cent during 2005-2009 (see Shahabuddin 2012, Table 3.4, p.19). The time series data on real wages shows that the indices of real wages—both general and sectoral indices—display an upward trend in recent years. However, this is much lower in agriculture which employs most of the labour force, as compared to those in the manufacturing and construction sectors (Shahabuddin 2010).

In recent years, due to scarcity of agricultural labourers in the peak season and change in the mode of payment (from attached and daily basis payment to piece-rated contractual payment), the wage rate has been more remunerative (Hossain and Bayes 2007, Sen and Hulme 2006). If we consider real wage of agricultural sector in terms of rice equivalent wage, we find a substantial increase of real wage rate—from about 3.5 kg in 1995 to about 5 kg in 2005 and further to about 7 kg in 2010 (Rahman 2011 and various Issues of *Monthly Statistical Bulletin* of BBS). This increase of real wage is likely to improve the income of the extreme poor who participate in the labour market, but may not necessarily improve the living condition of the moderate poor who are mostly small and marginal farmers. Despite these changes, due to wide fluctuations of seasonal

¹³ The underemployment rates in Bangladesh had declined from 43.3 per cent in 1989 to 31.9 per cent in 1999/2000 and further declined to 28.7 per cent in 2009 (Shahabuddin 2010).

and regional unemployment/underemployed and wage rate, it is quite likely that substantial benefit may not trickle down to the poor through the mechanism of imperfect (monopsonic) agricultural labour market.

Furthermore, mechanisation of agriculture, particularly use of power tillers, has a significant influence on labour market. Undoubtedly, it will adversely affect the poorest wage labour households, though it will help the small number of skilled labourers who will work as machine operators. The decline in labour demand for tillage activity is likely to be a contributing factor for slowing down the growth of real wage in agriculture. However, the growth of productivity (due to change in acreage, cropping pattern and intensity) may increase the demand for labour at different stages of cultivation (Rahman 2001: 63-64). The net impact on labour market, therefore, needs closer examination.

4.2 Changes in Tenancy Market and Poverty Condition of Tenants

The extent of tenancy has significantly increased and there has also been a dramatic change in the structure of tenurial arrangement in Bangladesh (see Table IX). Table IX also shows that the extent of share cropping tenancy has declined to give way to a system of fixed-rent tenancy and medium-term leasing arrangement (for detailed analyses, see Saha 2001a). These institutional changes were expected for the tenants to reap some benefits of access to land (Hossain and Bayes 2007) and additional investment in agricultural inputs (Hossain 2000) in order to realise the growth potential of agricultural sector, thereby leading to poverty reduction.

TABLE IX
EXTENT OF TENANCY AND PROPORTION OF RENTED LAND UNDER
VARIOUS TYPES OF TENURIAL ARRANGEMENTS OVER TIME

Various Survey	Extent of Tenancy* (%)	% of area rented under	
		sharecropping	fixed rent and other arrangements
1960 Pakistan Census of Agriculture	16.0	91.0	09.0
1983-84 Bangladesh Census of Agriculture	16.4	73.9	26.1
1996 Bangladesh Census of Agriculture	21.6	61.9	38.1
1999-2000 IRRI/IFPRI Survey of 62 Villages	33.1	64.0	36.0
2005 BIDS Survey of 64 Villages	33.2	68.1	31.9

Source: Various census/surveys mentioned above.

* **Note:** Extent of tenancy = $\frac{\text{rented land}}{\text{operated land}} \times 100$

When the above hypothesis is put to empirical test, it is observed that tenants refrain from making any such investment,¹⁴ and productivity of fixed-rented land is much lower than that of their own land.¹⁵ Even the higher productivity on fixed-rented land compared to sharecropped land, as is found in Zohir and Sen (1999), would not have any significant impact on the productivity and growth pattern of the country as a whole, as only an insignificant amount (less than 10 per cent of total operated land) has so far been brought under this tenurial arrangement (Saha 2007).

Furthermore, fixed-rent tenancy has been observed to be crop-specific and season-specific and has been confined to the cultivation of high yielding varieties of rice in the *aman* and *boro* seasons (Zohir and Sen 1999). Thus, households associated with fixed-rent contracts have the least diversity in land use. In other words, the practice of crop diversification that constitutes an important source of agricultural growth is impeded by the prevalence and increasing tendency of fixed-rent tenancy. Thus fixed-rent tenancy does not appear to have any positive influence on the productivity and growth performance of agriculture.

Moreover, the higher access to land for the tenants through significant increase in the extent of tenancy leads to the landowners' temptation for higher unearned income on the one hand and the greater burden of rent on small farmers on the other. These tendencies act as an impediment to productive investment and capitalist transformation of agriculture (Adnan 2008).

V. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we have analysed the abject poverty conditions of the tenants and agricultural labourers in Bangladesh. The analysis has been done not in isolation, but in relation to other socio-economic groups. Our analysis has been based on the 2005 BIDS Survey in 64 villages (Census plus). The results of survey data have also been supplemented by secondary information from government and non-government documents.

It has been observed that the landless, functionally landless and marginal farmers constitute the overwhelming majority of agricultural labourers and sharecroppers. In the absence of land and non-land assets, the agricultural labourers and sharecroppers diversify their occupation by resorting to non-agricultural activities. In this process of occupational diversification, they adopt the survival strategy to meet the demand for adequate income for ensuring their subsistence.

¹⁴ See Zohir and Sen (1999), Table 9, p. 14.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, Table 7, p. 12.

Basing on the perception of the people with respect to their overall economic condition and food availability, we have estimated the self-assessed poverty trend over the last ten years. Our perception-based subjective assessments, contrary to national estimate, demonstrate some deterioration of poverty situation in rural Bangladesh.

We also estimated the incidence of moderate, extreme and chronic poverty in our sample households. It has been observed that most of the extreme and chronic poor belong to the occupation groups of agricultural labourers and sharecroppers. Thus, the levels of poverty in general and chronic poverty in particular are much higher for these groups.

In the dynamic context of poverty, we have assessed the state of descending non-poor and ascending poor over the last ten years. The incidence of ascending from poor to non-poor appears to be somewhat lower than those of descending from non-poor to poor. This movement, on balance, thus reflects somewhat deterioration of poverty over time. It may be mentioned here that this perception-based result of deterioration is most acute for the agricultural labourers and sharecroppers.

We have analysed in this study the livelihood conditions of agricultural labourers and sharecroppers and find that they remain at the most distress condition for a long period. To address their severe poverty, creation of employment opportunities, providing access to land and non-land assets and maintaining tenancy security are often suggested. But it is debatable whether there would be an improvement of their fragile life and work condition on a sustainable basis, if these suggested measures are adopted within the existing structure of the society and economy.

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APPENDIX

TABLE A.1
OCCUPATION PATTERN OF HOUSEHOLDS IN BANGLADESH

Occupation	Census Data		Survey Data	
	Number of households	Per cent	Number of households	Per cent
Farmer	30,288	21.2	987	20.2
Sharecropper	514	3.6	156	3.2
Farmer and sharecropper	1,008	7.0	336	6.9
Agricultural labourer	2,777	19.4	928	19.0
Non- agricultural labourer and others	2,262	15.8	820	16.8
Fishermen	513	3.6	182	3.7
Professional	1,820	12.7	626	12.8
Businessmen	2,241	15.7	784	16.1
Handicraft	139	1.0	61	1.3
All	14,302	100.0	4,880	100.0

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey and Census Data).

Note: Originally data from 17,287 census households and 5,782 sample households are collected. As data relating to students, retired persons, house-work, etc. do not directly correspond to the occupation, these respondents are omitted so that numbers of census and sample households stand at 14,302 and 4,880 respectively. In some cases, other households such as retired and unemployed have been incorporated so that total number of households in those cases stands at 16,635.

TABLE A.2
OCCUPATION PATTERN BY FARM SIZE

Farm size Category (decimal)	Occupation <i>(per cent)</i>									
	Farmer	Sharecropper	Farmer & sharecropper	Agricultural labourer	Non-agri. Labourer & others	Fishermen	Professional	Businessmen	Handicraft	total
0	4.7	4.6	2.8	26.9	24.8	5.6	12.0	16.7	1.9	100.0 (2,675)
1-50	15.9	2.3	15.1	20.4	13.3	2.3	13.6	16.3	0.8	100.0 (839)
51-100	40.7	1.6	16.3	6.0	3.8	1.4	13.7	16.3	0.4	100.0 (504)
101-250	56.6	0.7	8.9	1.3	21.0	1.1	14.0	13.4	0.0	100.0 (537)
251-500	66.7	0.9	1.8	.4	1.3	0	15.4	13.2	0.4	100.0 (228)
501-750	64.8	0	1.9	0	1.9	0	14.8	16.7	0	100.0 (54)
751 & above	76.7	0	0	0	0	0	9.3	14.0	0	100.0 (43)
All	20.2	3.2	6.9	19.0	16.8	3.7	12.8	16.1	1.3	100.0 (4,880)

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey).

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate number of households.

TABLE A.3
EDUCATION LEVEL OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS BY OCCUPATION
(per cent)

Occupation category	illiterate	primary	secondary	HSC and above(including technical)	Total
Farmer	44.7	22.6	30.0	2.7	100.0 (987)
Sharecropper	65.4	19.2	12.8	2.6	100.0 (156)
Farmer & sharecropper	54.2	25.9	19.6	0.3	100.0 (336)
Agri. Labourer	81.4	14.0	4.6	-	100.0 (928)
Non-agri-labourer	77.4	15.7	6.8	-	100.0 (820)
Fishermen	84.6	13.7	1.6	-	100.0 (182)
Professional	18.5	17.4	39.9	24.1	100.0 (626)
Businessmen	40.3	24.7	30.9	4.1	100.0 (784)
Handicraft	63.9	18.0	18.0		100.0 (61)
Total	56.1	19.2	20.2	4.4	100.0 (4,880)

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey).

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate number of households.

TABLE A.4
EXTENT OF TENANCY

Extent of tenancy	Number of Villages	% of Villages
Upto 10%	8	17.0
10.1%-20%	4	8.5
20.1%-30%	8	17.0
Above 30%	27	57.4
All	47	100.0
Extent of tenancy (average for all villages)		36.5%

Source: Field Work (Community Level Survey).

Note: Data for 18 villages are not available.

TABLE A.5
RENTED-IN LAND UNDER DIFFERENT ARRANGEMENT
(in decimal)

Farm size (decimal)	Sharecropped-in	Leased-in	Mortgaged-in	Total
0	35,522 (67.2)	12,131 (22.9)	5,187 (9.8)	52,840 (100.0)
.01-50	23,753 (69.4)	5,445 (15.9)	5,026 (14.7)	34,224 (100.0)
50.01-100	13,744 (67.8)	3,415 (16.8)	3,105 (15.3)	20,264 (100.0)
100.01-250	12,838 (72.1)	3,347 (18.8)	1,604 (9.0)	17,789 (100.0)
250.01-500	3,080 (68.7)	961 (21.4)	442 (9.8)	4,483 (100.0)
500.01-750	82 (5.6)	416 (28.2)	975 (66.2)	1,473 (100.0)
750+	600 (100.0)			600 (100.0)
All	89,617 (68.1)	25,715 (19.5)	16,339 (12.4)	131,671 (100.0)

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey).

Note: Figures in parentheses are in percentage.

TABLE A.6
**ATTACHMENT OF THE TENANTS TO THE LANDOWNERS THROUGH
DIFFERENT TYPES OF WORK**

Tenants attachment	Pure tenants	Owner- cum tenants	All
Number of tenants	399	562	961
% of tenants with work attachment	6.3	3.6	4.7
% of attached tenants whose family members work as contract labourer in the land owners' house.	4.0	5.0	4.4
% of attached tenants who work as daily labourer on the landowners' land	84.0	75.0	80.0
% of attached tenants who provide domestic work in the landowners'	52.0	25.0	40.0

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey).

TABLE A.7
ATTACHMENT OF TENANTS AND THEIR WAGE PAYMENT

Types of tenants	% of attached tenants who sell labour on owners' land				
	Market rate	More than market rate	Less than market rate	Free (unpaid)	all
Pure tenants	61.9	0.0	33.3	4.8	100.0
Owner- cum tenants	53.3	6.7	40.0	0.0	100.0
All	58.3	2.8	36.1	2.8	100.0

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey).

TABLE A.8
DURATION OF OCCUPATION AS AGRICULTURAL LABOURER

Duration	Number of agricultural labourers	% of agricultural labourers	Cumulative percentage
Upto 5 years	107	8.4	8.4
5.01-10 years	231	18.2	26.6
10.01-15 years	290	22.8	49.4
15.01+ years	643	50.6	100.0
All	1,271	100.0	
Average (years)		18.1	

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey).

TABLE A.9
EARLIER OCCUPATION BEFORE BECOMING AN AGRICULTURAL LABOURER

Occupation	Number of agricultural labourers	% of Agricultural labourers	Cumulative percentage
Initially agricultural labourer	392	30.8	30.8
Sharecropper	121	9.5	40.3
Owner of a small piece of land	445	35.0	75.3
Small businessmen	60	4.7	80.0
Small and cottage industries worker	32	2.6	82.6
Domestic worker and Others	221	17.4	100.0
Total	1,271	100.0	

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey).

TABLE A.10
SOME INDICATORS TO MANIFEST THE CONDITION
OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS

Indicators		
Annual Average days of work (of a rural worker) as:		
Agricultural labour (N=1,235)		162.2
Non-agricultural labour (N=612)		94.3
% of labourers who cannot bargain with the land owners		38.2
% of labourers who cannot change the land owners		3.0
% of agricultural Labourers who have got khas land		2.4
% of khas land holders who spent extra money (bribe) to get the land		54.8
% of khas land users who could retain the land		90.3

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey).

Note: N=Number of rural workers.

TABLE A.11
DAILY WAGE RATE OF VARIOUS TYPES OF LABOUR IN BANGLADESH
(wage rate in Taka)

Types of wage labour		Agricultural labour		Non-Agricultural labour	
		Without food (peak Season)	Without food (lean Season)	Without food (peak Season)	Without food (lean Season)
Male	Average	94.5	66.0	103.9	84.9
	Minimum	30.0	20.0	10.0	25.0
	Maximum	200.0	110.0	200.0	200.0
Female	Average	52.8	42.5	57.7	48.5
	Minimum	20.0	15.0	20.0	30.0
	Maximum	90.0	70.0	110.0	100.0
Child	Average	58.6	41.8	66.8	55.7
	Minimum	15.0	15.0	20.0	20.0
	Maximum	120.0	90.0	120.0	120.0
Total	Average	75.1	53.9	87.7	71.9
	Minimum	15.0	15.0	10.0	20.0
	Maximum	200.0	110.0	200.0	200.0

Source: Field Work (Community Level Survey).

TABLE A.12
WHERE DO THE SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS SEARCH FOR WORK?

Location of Work	% of responses for searching work from		
	All sample households (N=1,524)	Sharecropper (N=293)	Agricultural Labourer (N=701)
Own village	30.0	30.0	40.0
Other village	28.0	31.0	33.0
Nearest town	14.0	14.0	8.0
Other town	11.0	9.0	11.0
Dhaka	15.0	16.0	9.0
Outside country	2.0	1.0	0.4
Total	100.0 (1,850)	100.0 (348)	100.0 (905)

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey).

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate number of responses.

TABLE A.13
THE PATTERN OF BORROWING OF HOUSEHOLDS BY SOURCES

Sources of borrowing	All Borrowing Households (N=3,324)		
	% of cases	% of Loan	Average loan (in Taka) (average per case)
Bank	12.2	21.4	20,425
NGO	32.8	23.9	8,440
Cooperative society	4.4	3.2	8,440
Money-lender	19.2	18.2	11,040
Relatives/Friends/Neighbour	27.9	27.8	11,539
Land owner	1.1	.3.2	32,924
Employer	0.1	.3	42,500
Others	2.3	1.9	9,704
Total	100.0 (4,402)	100.0 (5,10,37,254)	11,594

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey).

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate number of cases and amount of loan in Taka.

TABLE A.14
THE PATTERN OF BORROWING BY SOURCES
AND BY TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD

Sources of borrowing	Agricultural labourer (N=956)			Sharecropper (N=758)		
	% of cases	% of Loan	Average loan (in Taka) (average per case)	% of cases	% of Loan	Average loan (in Taka) (average per case)
Bank	6.3	8.1	7,710	12.5	16.3	13,712
NGO	32.2	35.0	6,489	29.3	23.1	8,330
Money-Lender	24.3	23.3	5,734	21.8	21.6	10,462
Relatives/Friends/ Neighbour	29.8	25.3	5,082	28.8	31.0	11,353
Land owner	0.78	1.7	13,280	1.4	4.1	31,067
Employer	0.08	1.3	100,000	0.0	0.0	0.0
Others	2.2	1.4	3,721	2.3	1.5	6,681
Total	100.0 (1,275)	100.0 (76,21,605)	5,978	100.0 (1,083)	100.0 (1,14,35,972)	10,560

Source: Field Work (Household Level Sample Survey).

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate number of cases and amount of loan in Tk.

TABLE A.15
CHANGES IN THE CONDITION OF SHARECROPPER
AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS

Condition	Sharecropper		Agricultural Labourer	
	Number of villages	Percentage	Number of villages	Percentage
Improved	21	33.3	20	31.7
Deteriorated	17	27.0	18	28.6
Unchanged	25	39.7	25	39.7
Total	63	100.0	63	100.0

Source: Field Work (Community Level Survey).

Note: Information for one village is not available.

TABLE A.16
INCIDENCE OF POVERTY IN BANGLADESH

Year	Head Count Ratio (per cent)			Number of Poor (million)		
	Rural	Urban	National	Rural	Urban	National
1983/84	59.6	50.2	58.5	50.3	5.6	55.9
1988/89	59.2	43.9	57.1	54.1	6.2	60.3
1991/92	61.2	44.9	58.8	57.6	6.3	63.9
1995/96	55.2	29.4	51.0	53.6	5.8	59.4
2000	53.0	36.6	49.8	53.4	9.3	62.7
2005	43.8	28.4	40.0	45.8	9.7	55.5
2010	35.2	21.3	31.5	38.7	7.6	46.3

Source: Mujeri (2000) and BBS (2007, 2011).

Notes: The head count ratio refers to the percentage of the population living below the upper poverty line as measured by Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) method.

TABLE A.17
SELF-ASSESSED POVERTY AND CHRONIC POVERTY BY
OCCUPATION (BASED ON FOOD AVAILABILITY)

Occupation (1)	Number of households (2)	Poor household		Chronic poor household (5)	Percentages of households		
		1995 (3)	2005 (4)		Poor 1995 (6)=(3)/(2)x 100	Poor 2005 (7)=(4)/(2)x 100	Chronic poor (8)=(5)/ (2)x100
Farmer	3,028	886	892	522	29.3	29.5	17.2
Share-cropper	514	304	318	227	59.1	61.9	44.2
Farmer & sharecropper	1,008	495	455	279	49.1	45.1	27.7
Agricultural labourers	2,777	2,215	2,306	1,994	79.8	83.0	71.8
Non-agricultural labourer	2,262	1,611	1,652	1,354	71.2	73.0	59.9
Fishermen	513	277	372	235	54.0	72.5	45.8
Professional	1,820	660	527	374	36.3	29.0	20.5
Businessmen	2,241	980	892	650	43.7	39.8	29.0
Handicraft	139	97	92	71	69.8	66.2	51.1
Retired/elderly/o thers	2,333	1,200	1,245	982	51.4	53.4	42.1
All	16,635	8,725	8,751	6,688	52.4	52.6	40.2

Source: Field Work (Census Data).

TABLE A.18
**DESCENDING NON-POOR AND ASCENDING POOR HOUSEHOLDS BY
 OCCUPATION (BASED ON SELF-ASSESSED ECONOMIC CONDITION)**

Occupation category (1)	Number of households (2)	Number of descending households (from non-poor to poor) (3)	Number of ascending households (from poor to non-poor) (4)	% of households	
				Descending (5)= (3)/(2)×100	Ascending (6)=(4)/(2)×100
Farmer		205	274	6.8	9.1
Sharecropper	514	60	34	11.7	6.6
Farmer and sharecropper	1,008	129	125	12.8	12.4
Agricultural labourer	2,777	220	47	7.9	1.7
Non agricultural labourer	2,262	238	86	10.5	3.8
Fishermen	513	113	31	22.0	6.0
Professional	1,820	90	214	4.9	11.7
Businessmen	2,241	206	218	9.2	9.7
Handicraft	139	11	11	7.9	7.9
Others	2,333	180	137	7.7	5.9
All	16,635	1,452	1,177	8.7	7.1

Source: Field Work (Census Data).

TABLE A.19
**SELF ASSESSED DESCENDING NON-POOR AND ASCENDING POOR
 HOUSEHOLDS BY OCCUPATION (BASED ON FOOD AVAILABILITY)**

Occupation category (1)	Number of households (2)	Number of descending households (from non-poor to poor) (3)	Number of ascending households (from poor to non-poor) (4)	% of households	
				Descending (5)=(3)/(2)×100	Ascending (6)=(4)/(2)×100
Farmer	3,028	370	364	12.2	12.0
Share-cropper	514	91	77	17.7	15.0
Farmer & sharecropper	1,008	176	216	17.5	21.4
Agricultural labourer	2,777	312	221	11.2	7.9
Non-agricultural labourer	2,262	298	257	13.2	11.4
Fishermen	513	137	42	26.7	8.2
Professional	1,820	153	286	8.4	15.7
Businessmen	2,241	242	330	10.8	14.7
Handicraft	139	21	26	15.1	18.7
Others	2,333	263	218	11.3	9.3
All	16,635	2,063	2,037	12.4	12.3

Source: Field Work (Census Data).