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Land Use, Social and Economic Status of Rural Households in Bangladesh: 
A Case Study of One Village (Dugasi mouza) 
UMMEY HABIBA RATHNA*

1. Introduction

There are about 87,316 villages in Bangladesh. Agriculture has been the primary source of livelihoods of rural Bangladesh since many years. But, recently livelihoods are gradually diversifying away from agriculture towards business, remittance, non-farm wage labor, agro-processing and cottage industries, construction and transportation operation, petty trade and various services. According to the estimation of Bangladesh Agriculture Workers Association, half of the population of Bangladesh is rural workers including their family members and their number is more than seven crore. According to the World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources rural population in Bangladesh was reported at 64.96 percent in 2016. Bangladeshi villages are the mirror of Bangladesh past and present.

The history of Bangladeshi villages presents an interesting occupation scenario, which has changed with time. The “Mughal” divided the countryside into village units called mauzas for purposes of land revenue collection, as is done for official purposes to this day. However, instead of mauzas, it terms such as “gram”, “desh” and “bari” that have the most profound cultural resonance and social relevance to the rural people of Bangladesh. Today, Bangladesh rural society is characterized by inequalities of land ownership. Tremendous demographic pressure has also reduced the per capita land owned. The largest landholding groups have also experienced a declining in their average quantity of landholdings.

Agriculture and farming were the prominent occupations of the Bangladeshi villagers during the ancient period and the other occupations included doing clerical jobs in king’s courts or working as soldiers for the emperors. The villagers remained dependent on agriculture for several centuries till the British period. However, the scenario changed during the British rule with the introduction of several industries. The villagers started to move to the urban areas, leaving their traditional occupation of agriculture. They joined different industrial organizations as workers or laborers and found alternate occupation. However, agriculture is still the principal occupation in most villages in Bangladesh. The history of Bangladeshi villages, in fact, goes back to the Vedic era when the kingdoms comprised a major city and several villages. The villages were a cluster of houses and the surrounding land was cultivated by the villagers.

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During the British period, the villagers got influenced by the Christian religious culture and a rich diversity of several religions was seen during that period. The social structure in the Bangladeshi villages also changed accordingly with the change of religious and cultural scenarios.

Most of the village are representing the whole country in economic, social, educational and all others area as well as villages are the roots of Bangladesh. The present study devoted to examine the land use, social and economic status of rural households in Bangladesh. The rural area of Bangladesh is changing rapidly due to modernization, development of communication and globalization. In Bangladesh, thousands of rural households are playing a vital role in the socio-economic structure. Increase of crop production, use of new technology in agriculture sector, development initiatives taken by the GOs (government organizations) and NGOs (non-government organizations) are occurring changes in the rural areas. It was pottered by many writings and myths that Bangladeshi villages were calm and quite. The paper aims to draw a holistic picture based on sample study villages in Bangladesh.

My first paper was about the status of rural women in Bangladesh, a case study on Dugasi mouza, that paper was to focus light on the real status of rural women in Bangladesh and this paper tried to focus on specific one village for getting the in depth scenario of rural area. Both paper was conducted the same study area. During the research I have gained concrete understanding about not only real scenario of rural village but also the real status of rural women in Bangladesh.

2. The research area

Dugasi mouza is situated at north east side of Mymensingh district and south side of Phulpur upazila. Phulpur thana was turned into an upazila in 1983. Phulpur upazila of Mymensingh district, having an area of 626 square kilometers and consists of 20 unions, 377 mouzas and Dugasi mouza is one of them. The distance between Dhaka to Mymensingh is 116 kilometers and Mymensingh to Dugasi mouza is about 34 kilometers (Figure 1). In total, from Dhaka to Dugasi mouza’s distance is 150 kilometer.

In this study, the rural household is an entity, and household information served as the basis for analysis. The reasons behind I selected the village firstly, the village is medium in respect of population and territory. There are more families separated in different subgroups living in the village. Secondly, the village is a complex one with a variety of people living there. Thirdly, the village consists of a large number of various professions households. The last cause of selecting the village is that, the village is far from the urban area, it’s a remote area. For the purpose of analysis I have conducted a survey of one village of Phulpur, namely Dugasi mouza. I have drowned a sample of 131 households in 2013.
Historical information of the village was collected from the elderly ones who is the resident of Dugasi mouza. According to the view or oral history from the most elders of the locality Dugasi mouza was settled in 1920, some families, migrated from the impoverished Tarakanda of Mymensingh to stake a claim on newly opened forest land. They found dense jungle with seemingly infinite resources, trees, good soil, fish, and wildlife. The newcomers cleared a small portion of the land for crop production, and cut trees for house construction and firewood. "It was easy to find food here," recalls the old men of the Dugasi mouza. "There were many edible plants and vegetables growing wild near our houses. The fish in the streams were easy to catch" (70 year’s old, resident of Dugasi mouza). The population of the study area in 1920 was estimated 100 and in 1950, 1980, 2000 estimated population was 211, 1054 and 1396 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2003). With abundance at hand and a cooperative spirit in the village, life was good. Things started to change in the 1975 (after the liberation war). Farmers were encouraged to modernize and grow cash crops such as rice, jute for export. An Agricultural Krishi Bank, Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) established in 1973 aiming at the economic development in the rural area, BKB was established to provide them loans for hybrid seed, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and farm equipment. Farmers in the region switched from diversified traditional agriculture to mono-cropping cash crops with heavy use of chemicals. They cut more forest to expand their farmland and sold the timber as a bonus. The farmers, who never had so much money in their pockets before, used the money from loans, farm
Villagers eventually cut the last remnants of forest to expand their fields. The houses in the village are in the form of clusters with 5 to 10 houses per cluster.

The name of Dugasi is come from “Gacha” (Traditional “Gacha” used as lamp stand). When the cut forest they made “Gacha” by wood and that time two types of trees are used to make “Gacha”. In Bangla word two means “dui”. That’s the reason the name of the village is Dugasi. Household survey is done using a questionnaire containing all the queries addressing to the goals of the study. Survey is conducted by personally visiting the households in the village and asking questions to retrieve the required information. The survey covered 131 households in the village containing 1320 inhabitants, which included 698 male and 627 women (Figure 2).

Above the figure 2 shows the total number of male and female in different age group. In this age group the number of male and female are almost near to each other.

It is found in the study that majority of the households in the village are associated with agriculture. Around 35 percent of the households have agriculture as their main source of income. Working as a daily laborer is the second major source of income in the village which covers 25 percent of the households. Most of the low income households are working as labor and high income households are associated with agriculture. All the people who are daily laborer, work in the agricultural fields, so majority of the households are directly or indirectly associated with agriculture. Analyzing the income expenditure with income groups reveals that food is the main priority of households for income expenditure among low, medium and high income groups. It is noted that spending on energy is not one of their main priorities because of the availability of fuel at very little or no cost. Similar trend of low priority is observed for
education which is also evident from the poor educational status of the village as more than 50 percent of the respondents revealed to have no schooling of any kind.

3. Important characteristics and land use pattern of Dugasi mouza

The important characteristics of the Dugasi mouza was summarized as hospitality, feminist traditionalism, fatalism, religiousness often combined with superstitious beliefs, leisure attitude to life, and low standard of living. The joint family system still forms the basic structural unit in the village community. Most of the members live together under the same roof, take food cooked in the common hearth, hold property together, participate in common worship and are related to each other as some particular type of kindred. It is found that the number of joint families in villages is much more than that in towns and cities. Agriculture is the biggest occupation in Dugasi mouza. It is essentially a way of life for the ruralities as their whole mode of social life, daily routine, habits and attitudes revolve round agriculture. A small section of the rural population depend upon non-agricultural occupations such as small business, wage labor etc. for their livelihood but these occupations are also indirectly related to the major occupation that is agriculture. It is interesting to observe that even in the materialistic age of today, the generally accepted ideal in the village is one of simple living and high thinking. The reason is attributed to the lack of satisfactory spread of education in the Dugasi mouza. On account of gross poverty and lack of adequate employment opportunities, the standard of living of the ruralities is very low. Hence most of them do not have home conveniences and recreational facilities.

On the north side of Dugasi mouza is Karkuchikanda, Rangsa River flows in the south side of this mouza, on the west side Bagirpara and on the east side Mozamia Kanda (Figure 3). Rapid growth of population in Dugasi mouza with increased use of land for housing, roads, commercial activities etc. has resulted tremendous pressure on limited land available for agriculture. Since land is very scarce in Dugasi mouza and land available for cultivation has been reducing day by day. The major changes in land use are the using of cultivable land to build infrastructures and the dwellings for the population and the minor changes are that the cropping pattern is changing.

The total area of Dugasi mouza is 145.83 acres. Comprising 33.23 acres area of Dugasi mouza settlement and road has been built up, that is 23 percent of the total area. Agricultural lands and crops lands are in dishevel manner. There are about 69 percent of agricultural lands and that is 100.30 acre of total area. In non-agricultural lands use of the surveyed areas trees and permanent lands, fallen lands, vegetable garden, bunch of bamboos, marshy lands, mosques, graveyard, educational institutions etc. The area of such lands use is 12.30 acres, which is 8 percent of total area. Maximum households build their house beside the road. There are only one metallic road in Dugasi mouza another one is muddy road. The roadside land is higher than the middle land, that’s way villager trend to build house beside the road ride. In the rainy season the middle land was overflowed with flood water and villagers faced a lot of problem.
abundant rains raise water levels in Rangsa River, besides destroying everything in their path.

Figure 3 shows that the alphabet indicates the location of sample houses in the map like A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P indicate the sample houses and briefly describe about this sample houses economic and other information in section 5.

The principal religion in the study village is Islam. There is a mosque beside the main road of the village, and villagers go to the mosque every morning and evening. Some villagers follow Hindu religion and they live north border side of this village.

4. Agriculture and irrigation process in Dugasi mouza

In Dugasi Mouza most of the farmers plough their land three times in a year. They use to plant paddy in their low land and for vegetable they use high land. From the respondents, it is
found that they follow a certain cropping pattern and this pattern depends on the season. It is to mention that, most of them followed the circle- "Paddy-Paddy-Vegetables" and "Paddy-Vegetables-Paddy." According to the respondent farmers of study village farmers cultivate various types of crops. But, they mainly focused on paddy cultivating. Among various species of paddy they cultivate boro and amon. Besides, cultivating paddy they grow various types of seasonal vegetables namely: gourd, bean, potato, eggplants, spinach, tomato, bitter gourd, cauliflower etc. In the subject village it is seen the villagers are related with horticulture. In their yard they have guava, jack fruit, mango, papaw, and wood-apple trees.

The area of single crops are very less than double crops area. The area of single crops is 5.45 acres that is 4 percent of the total area. There are two types of crop production at the discussed mouza is single and double crop and the area of two or double crops are more. Because the crops lands of this area under the plain lands. It is possible cultivate in draught season. At the discussed Dugasi mouza the area of such lands is 94.85 acres, that is 65 percent of the total area.

After bearing all cost of the production (including seed cost, irrigation expanses, fertilizer cost etc.) the farmers of Dugasi mouza make some profit. Our study focused much on the paddy production. In Dugasi mouza village most of the farmers are familiar with modern instrumental tools that are used for farming. From them it has come out that, they use tractor, power tiller, and hand weedier. Two technological method are used the farmer to cultivate their land, one is traditional method and another is modern method. In total cultivating area, farmer used traditional method is 7.69 percent and modern method is 92.31 percent.

Seed is the main production input in the agriculture sector. The availability and quality of which are the means of sustainable agricultural production. In the subject village most of the farmers are satisfied with the seeds that they use for their production and satisfaction range is 61.54 percent. Others comment that the quality is moderate or average for production. Survey data indicates that, among agriculture to agricultural allied the change rate of single to double cropped area has been decreased by 31.25 percent. Single to multiple cropped areas has been decreased by 1.69 percent and others by 3.9 percent within 7 years. Fertilizer input is another critical factor of production. The expansion of modern agricultural practices together with intensified cultivation has led to an increasing demand for fertilizers. In Dugasi mouza village farmers use both organic and chemical fertilizer in production. But, from the research it has come out that in the village farmers rely mostly on the chemical fertilizer. And these fertilizers are- tsp, urea, potash, phosphorus etc. Only few uses in organic materials. Among them some in organic materials are manures, compost, ashes, mulching of grass. In using the fertilizer and pesticide 40 percent of the people take advice of the agriculturists. But 60 percent of farmers used fertilizer and pesticides as per their experience.

In Dugasi mouza there has been a rising dependence on groundwater due to lack of surface water in the recent past. In winter more than 70 percent of crop production is boro rice. Boro
rice is a major food crop which uses up a lot of water per hectare (ha) in the production
process. The five types of irrigation systems are traditional or local method, canal irrigation
project of the government, low lift pump, shallow and deep tube well. Irrigation has expanded
to more than 50 percent of cultivated land and is provided through minor irrigation devices
such as low lift pumps, shallow tube wells and deep tube wells. Initially low lift pumps, deep
tube wells and shallow tube wells were supplied by Bangladesh Agricultural Development
Corporation a public sector organization. According to this field research one can get the
information on water volume in two ways. One is deep tube well and another is shallow tube
well. We did not however find anyone using traditional or local irrigation method in Dugasi
mouza. Farmers use low lift pump to pump water from surface water sources and shallow or
deep tube wells for groundwater. The use of low lift pump is limited by the availability of
surface water in the canals and rivers during the dry season. Since investment in deep tube
well is lumpy in nature farmers prefer shallow tube wells. In case of shallow tube wells the
energy cost (electricity or diesel) is the main component of irrigation cost. As electricity is not
available in all the villages farmers have to depend on diesel to run irrigation pumps to a large
extent. Hence the price of diesel in the international market plays a crucial role in cost of
irrigation for the private sector. From the Dugasi mouza all farmers using two different types
of irrigation options were interviewed.

5. Social classes in study area

People are simply asked to identify the class they belonged to, and thus, sociologists identify
the three major classes, the upper, middle and the lower, more or less reflecting the prevailing
notion among the members of the society. Mainly people of village Dugasi mouza were farmers.
They used to farm for their living. But as the time went, their occupation evolved and changed.
Within 131 household I am trying to give briefly describe the situation of social class in the
study village. It’s difficult to explain 131 household socio economic condition, that’s way I am
trying to give some sample to understand the actual situation of upper, middle and lower
classes people.

Figure 4 shows the alphabet content similar sign is their agricultural land for example ‘A’
alphabet indicates sign the agricultural land of Mr. A and ‘B’ alphabet indicates sign the
agriculture land of Mr. B. The agriculture land of upper and middle classes people are only
showing above the figure 4, lower class people have no agricultural land they have small land
for making their house and to live there. The location of all three classes people houses are
showing the figure 3. The main characteristics of the case study groups are summarized in the
figure 4. In this figure land size and income were the primary factors which classified an
individual. There are three class people live in the study village upper, middle and lower class.
Here group [1] is upper class, group [2] is middle class and group [3] is lower class.
Based on the monthly income of the households, the households of the selected village were broadly categorized into three socio-economic groups:

Group [1] = per capita income above 35000 taka (A, B, C, D are upper class and they are in group [1]).

Group [2] = per capita income lower than 20000 taka (E, F, G, H, I are Middle class and they are in group [2]).

Group [3] = per capita income lower than 5000 taka (J, K, L, M, N, O, P are lower class and they are in group [3]). Per capita income have been used in order to conform to national poverty-ranking practice.

This breakdown retains the lower wealth group as the largest group while providing a sufficient number of cases in the other groups to allow for some comparative analysis. The group [1] population consisted of 8 households, group [2] 54 and group [3] 69 households. Based on income and asset levels of the households. The socio-economic classification worked fine within our survey households, since we found highly meaningful differences of average household yearly total incomes from all sources across the three classes (for groups[1], [2] and

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[3] these numbers were TK. 199,790, TK. 107,918 and TK. 45,588, respectively) average crop lands owned by households across these three groups differed markedly as well.

Upper class farmers run their agriculture commercially, they are selling their products in the commercial market. Upper class produces agriculture for his family need and his primary aim is to fulfill his own family need and the secondary target is to sell surplus products in market. Most of the large land holders do not cultivate the entire part of their own land. They cultivate a part of their land with the help of wage-laborer’s or family labor and they give the rest to the share-croppers, whereby they control the small farmers. Apart from this, they also control all sorts of markets (commodity and means of production), and by putting a barrier to the entry of small farmers to such markets they create an opportunity for themselves to exploit the surplus labor of the small farmers. The rich farmers exploit the rural poor and the landless through different methods such as lending money on interest to them, mortgaging poor peasants lands, share-cropping practices, collecting exorbitant rate of rent on lands, meagre wage rate etc. In Dugasi mouza, most of the upper class villagers main profession is primary teacher, University teacher and businessman etc, and their side profession is farming on the other hand middle class villagers main profession is farmer and lower class villagers profession is day or wage labor, rishkaw puller etc. Land owners and land users are always not one individual. Land users are subordinate of land owners, but this relation is a process of exploitative system.

The practice of the share-cropping system is identified as a pre-capitalistic method of production, which is the principal form of tenant cultivation in Dugasi mouza. In the year 2013, 72 percent of the total cultivable rented-out land was in the form of share-cropping on the basis of 50:50 of the produce from a land. In the same year, of the total share-cropping land, 93 per cent was on the basis of 50:50 of the produce, and the share-cropper had to bear the entire cost of cultivation. In some areas, the land owner and the share-cropper equally shared the cost of seeds. In the case of high-yield varieties of rice, the owner shared the cost of fertilizers and irrigation or the owner bore the cost of irrigation, and the share-cropper bore the cost of fertilizers, in such cases, the produce was shared between the two on the basis of 50:50. The process still continues. In some ways, the middle class differs from the poor, simply because many household characteristics are strongly correlated with living standards, which, by construction, are higher among the middle class. Likewise, the middle class will probably differ from the upper class because its lower standard of living lacks the attributes strongly correlated with affluence. It is almost a standard demographic fact that economic development generally brings about a preference among couples for fewer children. Figure 4 shows that Mr. E, Mr. F, Mr. G, Mr. H and Mr. I, maximum all persons main profession is farmer and they all have side business too.
5.1. Upper, Middle and Lower class socio economic status in Dugasi mouza

Table 1: Upper, Middle and Lower class socio economic situation in study area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of the family (Name)</th>
<th>Family member</th>
<th>Land (Acres)</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Income per month (tk)</th>
<th>Electronics equipment</th>
<th>House structure</th>
<th>Toilet inside/outside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. A</td>
<td>Wife, 3 children, old mother</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Primary school teacher</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>TV, PC</td>
<td>Metallic</td>
<td>Metallic inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. B</td>
<td>Wife, 2 children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>University teacher</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>TV, PC Refrigerator</td>
<td>Metallic</td>
<td>Metallic inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. C</td>
<td>Wife, 3 children</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>TV, Refrigerator</td>
<td>Metallic</td>
<td>Metallic inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. D</td>
<td>Wife, 2 children, old father</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>TV, Refrigerator</td>
<td>Metallic</td>
<td>Metallic outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. E</td>
<td>Wife, 1 child</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>H.S.C</td>
<td>Farmer, grocery shop,</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Semi Metallic</td>
<td>Semi metallic outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. F</td>
<td>Wife, 5 children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>S.S.C</td>
<td>Farmer and fishery business</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Semi Metallic</td>
<td>Semi metallic outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. G</td>
<td>Wife, 2 children</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>H.S.C</td>
<td>Farmer, grocery shop,</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Semi Metallic</td>
<td>Semi metallic outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. H</td>
<td>Wife, 2 children, old father and mother</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>H.S.C</td>
<td>Farmer, doing job in electricity office,</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Semi Metallic</td>
<td>Semi metallic outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. I</td>
<td>Wife, 2 children</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>S.S.C</td>
<td>Farmer, small business</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Semi Metallic</td>
<td>Semi metallic outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lower class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. J</td>
<td>Wife, 3 children</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Day labor</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Muddy</td>
<td>Kutcha outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. K</td>
<td>Wife, 4 children</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>Hilarate</td>
<td>Day labor</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Muddy</td>
<td>Kutcha outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. L</td>
<td>Wife, 3 children, old father</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>Hilarate</td>
<td>Day labor</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td></td>
<td>Muddy</td>
<td>Kutcha outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. M</td>
<td>Wife, 1 child</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Labor in rice mill</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Muddy</td>
<td>Kutcha outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. N</td>
<td>Wife, 5 children</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>Hilarate</td>
<td>Day labor</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thatch</td>
<td>Kutcha outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. O</td>
<td>Wife, 2 children</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>Hilarate</td>
<td>Day labor,</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thatch</td>
<td>Kutcha outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. P</td>
<td>Wife, 3 children, old mother</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>Hilarate</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thatch</td>
<td>Kutcha outside</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: by author

Note: BA (Bachelor’s degree), MA (Master’s degree), H.S.C (Higher secondary certificate), S.S.C (Secondary school certificate).

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of respondents with respect to their income level and
asset status as well as table 1 shows the sample of villager’s socio economic condition by their social classes. Different classes of people have different socio economic condition like as income, living status, educational status and agricultural land. Several socioeconomic factors lead to landlessness in the village, such as inheritance, climate change and economic pressure. It can also occur as a consequence of loan payments or merely the pressure to cover family expenses lower class farmer are landless, they have one small land and they lived that land. The landless workers do not own land and represent around one-third of the study area’s households. They earn their livelihood as agricultural workers and share-croppers. They are mostly a pauperized lot, often finding themselves incapable of maintaining their families in the study area, the main source of income for the landless people is the service sector that is 54.12 percent of the total landless households. Finally it is seen that within these two time periods, the total landless households have increased while the level of income is decreased. That is, there is a negative relationship between the quantity of landless people and the level of income earnings. It has been observed that the poor suffer the most and are more affected by any disaster. Since land resources are scarce and population density is high in Bangladesh, people, especially the rural poor, are forced to settle in the flood-prone areas. Maximum lower class person live in the border of the village. In rainy season they fall in a big trouble, their houses go under the water. This contrasts with those in the lower social classes whose life chances are affected by this type of stratification. For example, those in the lower social classes in the study area tend to live in very small house that is unhealthy and overcrowded, their children don’t get proper education and they experience poor health and I found that although lower class people no land for crop production but they have very small pieces of own land to live there. In our village level community survey, we attempted to ascertain whether the conditions of the agricultural laborer’s and sharecroppers have improved, deteriorated or remained the same. For most of them, the condition remains more or less unchanged. The issue of landlessness is therefore serious as it poses a threat to socioeconomic development. An increase in landless people means an increase of people unable to meet their livelihood requirements, which in turn leads to bigger issues such as urban migration or conflicts over land. The whole country is therefore affected by it.

5.2. Housing conditions in the study area

Housing is the symbol of position and status of the rural inhabitants in Bangladesh. A traditional rural “Bengali house” in its basic form is a cluster of small shelters of huts around a central yard, locally called the “Uthan”. The huts are usually single roomed, detached and loosely spaced around the central courtyard. Extensive landscaping is done to define the house in the larger landscaping and the surrounding environment. The house interior accommodates a number of different uses side by side. An improper use of inherited lands is another reason for agricultural land conversion to non-agriculture use. The heirs do not inherit all types of land which serves for all purpose e.g. housing. This is how they bound to use land for different
purposes. A farmer in the study area (45 years old, resident of Dugasi mouza) who has five brothers in his family and his father distributed land among them mention that “We are five brothers and my father distributed land among us. You see (indicating author) one of my brother has built a house on his land”. I found that the house was built on typical agriculture land. The uses pattern of inherited land was non-sustainable and it was hampering routine agriculture for other farmers.

The household asset base is an important component of physical capital and serves as a key indicator in profiling livelihoods. This study found asset ownership to be highly correlated with income and food security indicators. An asset ownership variable was used as one of the key variables in creating socioeconomic groups. The study examined a number of different categories of assets, including livestock, household appliances, land, transportation, as well as other productive and non-productive assets. The most essential productive asset in Dugasi mouza is land.

Living space is an important factor in attaching socio-economic status in our society. Bangladesh has an agriculture-based economy and most of its rural population is dependent on agriculture. There is a huge surplus of labor in the rural areas as only farming cannot support all the population of study area. As a result, they remain unemployed or underemployed for most of the year. Housing market in Bangladesh is characterized by a surplus of upper-income group housing stock and shortage of affordable housing for the great majority of middle and lower-income population. Ownership of assets was used as an indicator of the socioeconomic status of the household. As discussed 131 houses in Dugasi mouza, of those houses, 35 percent are less than 5 years old, 40 percent houses are between 5 to 10 years old and only 25 percent houses were found to be older than 50 years. So it can be said that the rate of housing development in the study area was quite low. Other materials used in study areas in making fences for rooms or houses include tin, wood and mud or mud bricks. In the study area, room as well as house occupancy in to be high. Average room and house occupancy in the study
respectively 6.5 persons and 3.1 persons. 50 percent of the houses had one room, 40 percent had two rooms and the rest 10 percent had more than two rooms. In the surveyed households, 65 percent toilets were found to be sanitary. The rest of the toilets are non-sanitary or kutchha. From the study, it is found that maximum houses had their toilet facilities separated out from the main houses. Only upper classes person had their toilets facilities in the main houses. Figure 5 shows that average middleclass household size is smaller than among the rich (and larger than among the poor). However, average household size varies considerably across countries.

6. Conclusion

According to my survey results, farmers follow the traditional land use system that their ancestors used in the past, however they do change their land use in the form of one crop to another whenever they find it beneficial. In the village areas land were observed for use as homestead, agriculture, trees, bamboos and fisheries. Farmer's living standard was not very impressive and a majority of the respondents were live in a medium condition. The living standard was found to be dependent on household's types, family income and percentage of educated family members. Life styles in Dugasi mouza are different that those in urban areas, mainly because limited services are available. Government services like law enforcement, school, fire department, hospital and libraries are distant, limited in scope or unavailable. Utilities like water, sewer, street lighting and garbage collection are not present. Public transportation or the communication system of Dugasi mouza is not so developed. The sources of communication of people are bus, truck, rikshaw, cng etc. Population growth and indiscriminate use of land resources have emerged as a serious threat to socio-economic development and environmental conservation of Dugasi mouza. But reality is that there is not existing a land use related policy in Bangladesh. In this critical situation, Bangladesh has no other choice except to adopt a national land use policy to guide its land use and solve conflicting land use. The government of Bangladesh should take a proper initiative to formulate a national land use policy. Government should consider the interest of the majority of the population and not only a few elites who virtually own and control most of the land resources. So, there is a need for firm commitment and mass general consensus among the political leaders, both government and opposition, and a strong coordination among different government and non-government organizations, to implement the policy for the benefit of the poor masses.

The present study has been conducted with some shorts of limitations. One of the limitations of the study was that the study was in a single village. The findings may not represent the whole scenario of rural society of Bangladesh but can be a case of that. Lack of any government or non-government department that is responsible for recording all aspects of land use at national and particular regional level. Lack of detailed land use maps in Bangladesh for at least two time periods to identify the causes of land use change in different locations. The
map we used for survey was too old. The plot number of the respective area was changed also with the time. As a result we faced many problems to identify the real plots.

REFERENCES


Land Use, Social and Economic Status of Rural Households in Bangladesh: A Case Study of One Village (Dugasi mouza)

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Abstract: Bangladesh has about 87,316 villages that reflect Bangladesh past and present. According to the World Bank collection of development indicators from officially recognized sources, the rural population in Bangladesh was 64.96 percent in 2016. In every respect, then, the future of Bangladesh is very much linked with village development. Therefore, this study examined Bangladesh rural households socioeconomic status and social classes to identify factors influencing family members income, with a major focus on the area’s general land use pattern. The study area was selected purposively—one village of Dugasi mouza in the Phulpur district, an area typical of rural Bangladesh. Within the village, respondents were selected randomly for a field survey of 131 households. Data were collected in two phases in the winters of 2013 and 2016. Results showed that respondents age, family size, housing condition, and landholding significantly influenced family income. Hopefully, this survey will serve as a conceptual framework for Dugasi mouza’s future planning.

Key words: land use, social classes, rural household, Dugasi mouza, Bangladesh