



**SUBSISTENCE AFTER RESETTLEMENT: OBSERVATIONS FROM  
GUCCHAGRAM PROJECT IN NARAIL DISTRICT, BANGLADESH**

**Rhyme Rubayet Rudra, Md. Shahriar Sharif, Mahdi Mansur Mahi\***

*Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (KUET),  
Khulna-9203, Bangladesh.*

KUS: ICSTEM4IR-22/0028

Manuscript submitted: June 21, 2022

Accepted: September 26, 2022

**Abstract**

Environmental degradation and its impacts for islands and coastal nations have prompted policymakers and academics to focus on resettlement of individuals residing within those risky areas. Similar initiatives have been introduced in Bangladesh in 1972 named "Cluster Village Project", and individuals who are landless or have been displaced as a result of river coastal erosion, storms, or flooding have been relocated as part of the scheme. Due to economic and political complexity of the subject, several ruling parties gave it different titles, although none of them changed dramatically from the basic targets and strategies of resettled populations and the welfare of the landless and harsh weather victims. This research focuses on how and to the what degree moved households' livelihoods have altered, including the opportunities and restrictions of relocated settlements. According to an empirical study conducted in four Guchchhograms of Narail District's Lohagara Upazila, the migrated people's livelihood conditions have improved significantly, but location specific drawbacks and link to productive resources, the local labor market, and a number of the project's specific goals have not been met. Rehabilitated households face some of the same hazards as before; however, adequate agricultural lands and good distribution can help to mitigate such risks.

**Keywords:** Resettlement, migration, Guchchagram(GG), Bangladesh

**Introduction**

The procedure of increasing the living quality and financial well-being of individuals living in relatively remote and sparsely inhabited places is known as rural development (Black et al., 2013). Rural development is important not only for the general Public residing in a rural area but the growth of rural activities is necessary to stimulate the speed of overall economic expansion of the nation (Takhumova, 2020). Bangladesh's rural development is among the most crucial characteristics in the country's economic development. Bangladesh's economy is mostly depending on agriculture. Agricultural production accounts for roughly a fifth of Bangladesh's total GDP (Dastagir, 2015). Bangladesh's LGRD is the highest agency for

\*Corresponding author: <mmmah.614@gmail.com>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53808/KUS.2022.ICSTEM4IR.0028-se>

developing policies, rules, and laws related to rural advancement. The vital contributors of the rural economy include farming, crafts, fishery, livestock, and dairy (Plan et al., 2005).

Poverty reduction is connected to poor relocation and land distribution and this is among the most pressing issues confronting authorities throughout the globe. (Powelson, 1987). Land reform is a component of alleviating poverty and the social development initiative, according to studies led in Africa (Peters, 2009), Southern Asia (Niroula & Thapa, 2005), India (Oldenburg, 1990), Nepal (Thapa & Niroula, 2008) The Philippines (Otsuka, 1991), China (Ding, 2007), Thailand (Wannasai & Shrestha, 2008), Scotland (Bryden & Geisler, 2007). This is also true in Bangladesh. Land is the rarest resource in a developing nation like Bangladesh, which is amongst the largest and most populous countries. Its possession entails socioeconomic power (Das et al., 2012). The rules governing landholdings and the framework of landholdings have a long history. In Bangladesh, there is no traditional land ownership; only constitutional land ownership exists (Hossain, 2015). The characteristics of social class hierarchy show a general deterioration of the low and middle classes, as well as a consolidation of property as well as other resources among a small number of wealthy individuals. 49.6 million (31%) of the 150 million people lives below the poverty level of US\$ 2 each day and In 2016, a total of 4.5 million fully landless households were recorded in the country (USAID, 2013). In 1960, 1 percent of big property individuals controlled over 4.7 percent of the land; by 1996, that number had risen to 8.2 percent (Sen & Ali, 2015). Despite many land redistribution projects, just 39% of Bangladeshi families possess more than 0.5 acres of property (Hasan et al., 2015). Crop land, on other side, is dwindling as it is shifted to non-agricultural property (Guchchogram, 2017).

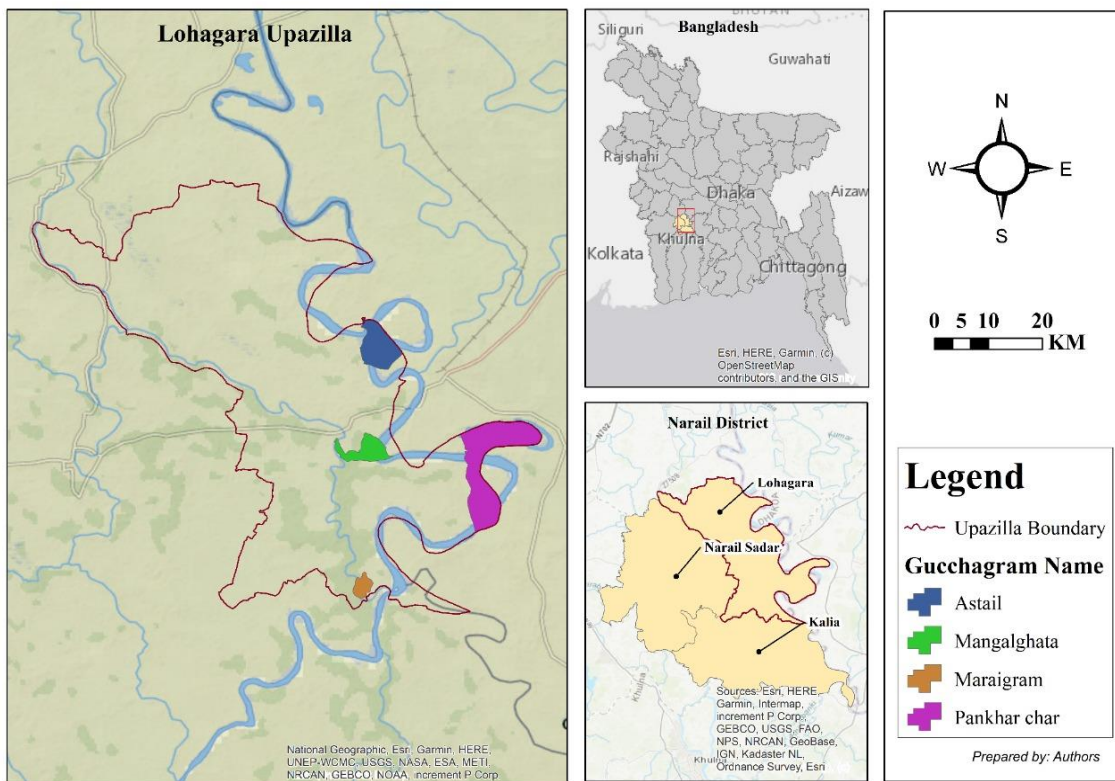
As a result, the country's government has been conducting several property reforms programs in order to alleviate poverty (Maier et al., 2016). Amidst the failings of long property restructuring, which ultimately results in the reinforcing of unofficial regional governments and expressed questions about effective application of legal prescription objectives, Bangladesh's government continues its efforts to allocate residences to the dispossessed in order to reduce poverty and decrease socioeconomic inequalities (Das et al., 2012; Hossain, 2015; Rahman & Rahman, 2015). One of the key schemes conducted since the country's independence in 1971 is the building of 'cluster villages' or 'Gucchagram (GG)' for the landless and climatic sufferers (Barkat et al., 2000). There is room to investigate whether certain programs meet the requirements of specific groups in the nation. This initiative has both short-term and long-term implications for the impoverished and impoverished people's livelihoods, as well as long-term implications for the country's general socioeconomic development (Laurson & Møller, 2013). This study focuses on GGs and aims to investigate the threats to subsistence in newly founded GGs.

The social component of standard of living, as well as shifts in socioeconomic infrastructures, are the subject of this research. Metrics for determining a person's level of life before and after relocating are used to implement policies. The observed differences in lifestyle are known as consequences. Lastly, the elements' explanations are given. As a result, 130 homes from four GGs in coastal areas, especially in Bangladesh's Narail district, were surveyed. The findings of home surveys were further developed using qualitative approaches including such FGDs as well as in conversations. Water and food safety, employment opportunities, accommodation, social networks, stability, utilities and amenities, as well as general impressions a variety of life changes all recorded. The results were subsequently assessed using data collected prior to and thereafter to the migration period in order to ascertain the essence of the hazards to one's livelihood. The purpose is to gather meaningful data to aid in the planning of future policy initiatives related to these alleviating poverty and reintegration projects.

## Materials and Methods

### *Study area*

Since 1971, Bangladesh has built over 3400 GGs under various initiatives (Mallick & Sultana, 2017). It is not feasible to assess all of GGs. Four cluster villages located in Narail District's Lohagara Upazila have been chosen, namely- i) Mangalhata, ii) Maigram, iii) Pankhar Char, iv) Astail as our study area (Figure 1. Study Area) to compare the subsistence (before and after) of the resettled people.



### *Data collection*

The research used both sources of information. In the fieldwork, primary data was gathered using designed questionnaire interviews and surveys, as well as inspections and scholarly articles. According to a list of names provided by the local administration office, a total of 150 households were relocated in the four GG villages (Union Parishad). Almost 60% families were randomly interviewed individually using a standardized questionnaire in Bengali.

### *Objectives and methodology*

The purpose of this research is to determine how often sociodemographic transformation has happened as a result of the implementation of these projects. As a result, the goals were structured as follows: to assess these initiatives from a socioeconomic standpoint and to make suggestions for making sure the efficiency of

the projects. The explorative research method was used to conduct this study. Personal surveys and Focused Group discussions were used to acquire raw data. Yamane sampling examined 29, 13, 33, and 25 homes in the Mangalhata, Maigram, Pankhar Char, and Astail areas, respectively. Male and female citizens of varying ages were engaged in FGD. Concerned authorities from the Gucchagram Project's local center were contacted. As secondary sources, previously published and unpublished studies, as well as government and independent materials were used. The entire methodological framework is shown in (Figure 2).

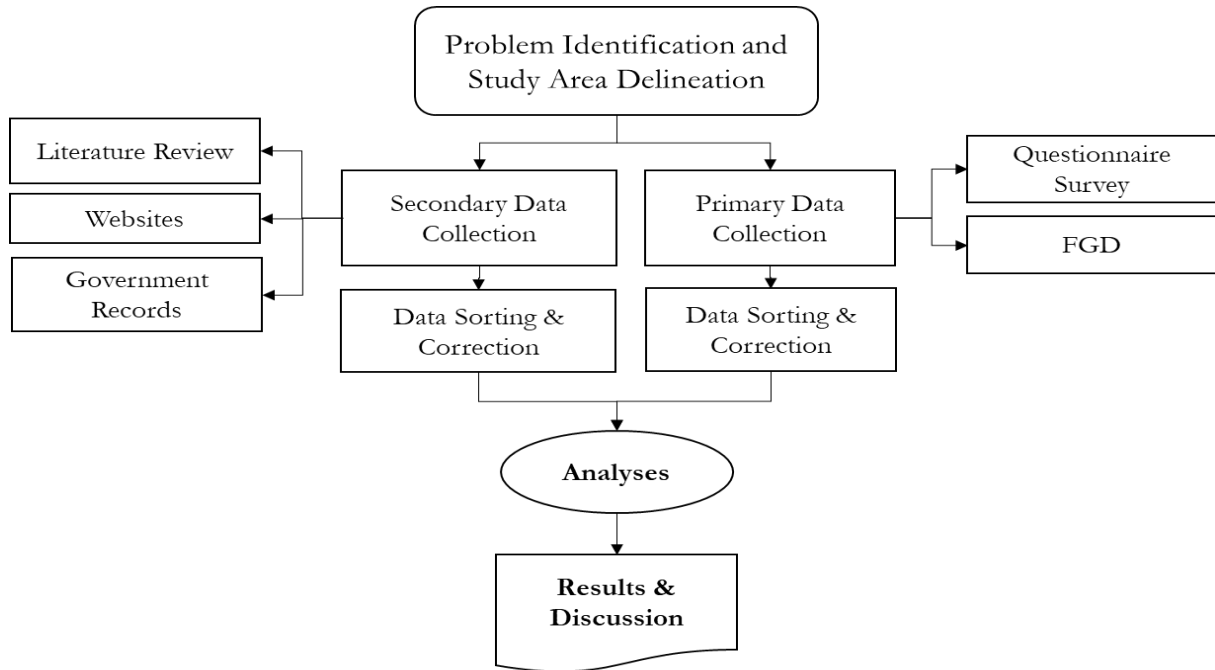


Figure 2. Methodological Framework of the Study.

## Results

### *Causes of relocation*

Relocation does not occur in a vacuum when people move, it affects both the place they leave and the place the move into, and relocation also can be seen as temporary (short-term) or permanent (Mallick & Sultana, 2017). In this study, we dealt with 'relocated settlement', which indicates the recipients who were repositioned to GGs are 'permanent migrants'. The procedure of GG formation typically begins with an initial statement made to the corresponding local authorities by the Land Ministry. The local authorized officer for territory then provides the GG building news and requests that local representative bodies (e.g., the neighborhood chairman) to compile a number of qualified families. Local representative bodies will then solicit applications, typically from landless or agitated families in their jurisdiction. According to our research, landlessness is the most important reason for resettlement (Figure 3). Lack of employment and social security were also significantly responsible for relocation.

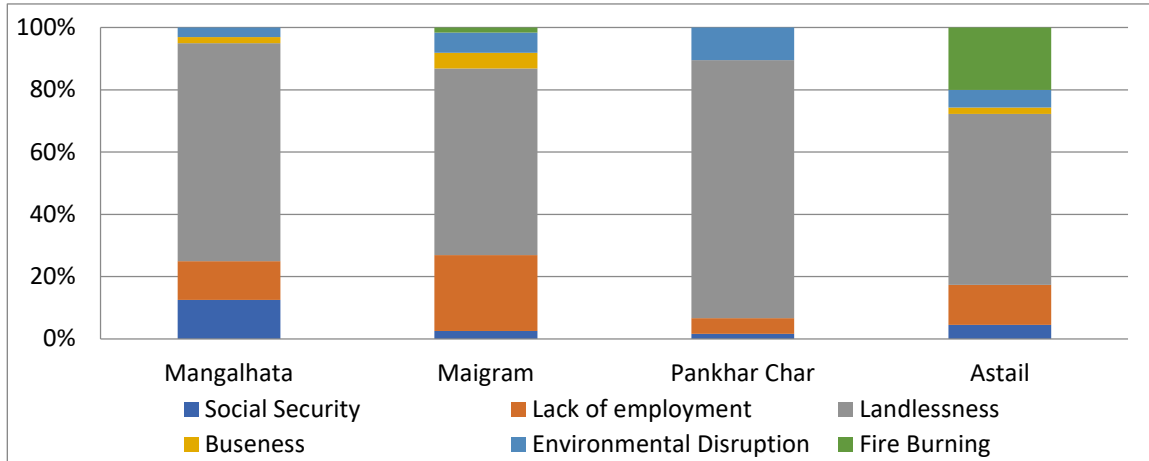


Figure 3. Causes of Relocation.

***Assessment of rehabilitation projects from a socio-economic and demographic point of view***

The landless individuals were rehabilitated in two stages within the initial three communities. At Maigram, 23 families were rehabilitated in 2008, followed by 10 families in 2009. In addition, at Mangalhata Guichagram, 40 families were rehabilitated in 2007, and another 10 families were rehabilitated four years later.

In 2010 and 2011, 25 families have been relocated to Pankhar Char Guichagram, respectively. There were supposed to be 50 households, but there are now only 36. The rehabilitation venture at Astail Guichagram was accomplished in 2016 only for 35 families. However, there are currently only 24 families. And over half of the Pankhar Char and Astail communities' households left. And there has been a significant shift in family structure (Figure 4) due to rehabilitation.

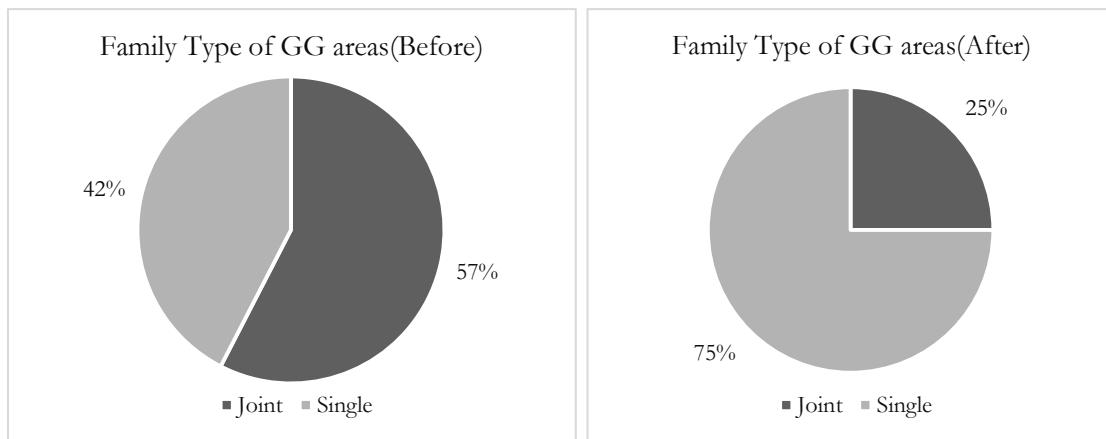


Figure 4. Average Impact on Family Type (Source: Survey Data).

### Income level

(Table 1) suggests that there was a substantial shift in monthly income after relocation when compared to monthly income before relocation. Some people had shifted occupations following relocation, but the majority of those who were evacuated from nearby locations had not. One key source of changes in family earnings and profession after relocation is variations in household size.

Table 1. Monthly Income in US \$

	Mangalhata		Maigram		Pankhar Char		Astail	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
< 2\$ (Extremely poor)	13	0	14	0	18	12	25	9
2-5\$ (Lower poor)	54	18	76	87	30	75	71	59
5-10\$ (poor)	35	62	6	0	51	13	0	22
11-20\$ (Middle class)	0	21	13	12	0	0	0	0

A considerable number of extremely poor households has been lowered in each project region, and it has been completely eliminated in two as shown in (Table 2). Following the land reform initiative in Maigram cluster village, 22% of families became middle class. Although households' perceptions of their income level vary varied from community to community because of numerous factors like the distance to the nearest workplace, the accessibility of agricultural land, etc., there are beneficial effects on their income.

Table 2. Poverty Condition in the Study Area (% of Household)

	Mangalhata		Maigram		Pankhar Char		Astail	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Minimum	26	92	50	85	45	45	45	45
Maximum	56	140	290	300	145	125	115	145
Mean	41	116	170	135	110	115	85	90

### Education facility

The education institutions in and around the settlements were unsatisfactory (Figure 5). Poverty was once again a significant barrier to education. Only a few students were able to study following class-v.

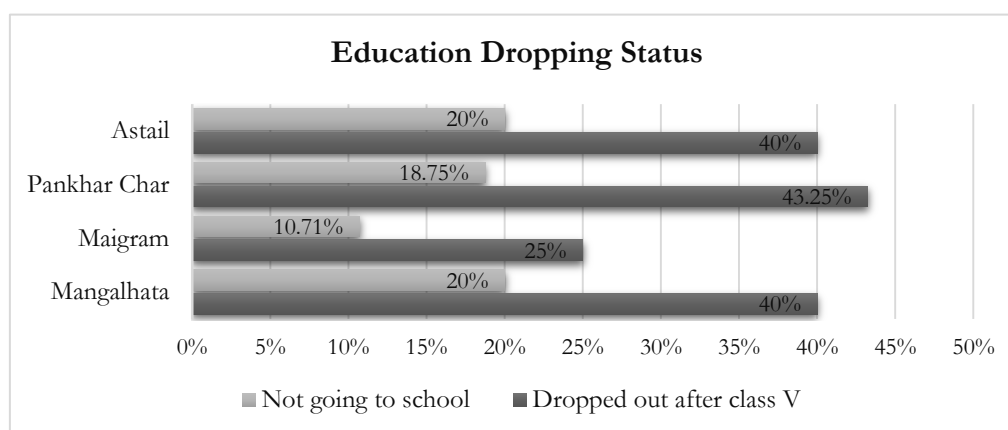


Figure 5. Households Dropping Out from Education

Due to poverty, several families' entire children were denied access to a basic education. Similarly, numerous families have at least one child who drops out of school after class V because they are unable to afford to send them to school.

#### **Availability of sanitation facilities**

The government provided individual toilets (pit latrines) to every household. The rings were constructed of concrete mixtures, while the encircling wall was constructed of tin. They were usually about 7 feet below the surface. Poor materials and workmanship caused about 70 per cent of toilets to be destroyed after five years. The first two villages saw a dramatic improvement in the state of sanitation, as 97% and 100% of their sanitation facilities are included rather than that of the others 68% and 50% (Table 3. Percentage of Sanitation Facilities (Before and After Resettlement). In the other communities the situation is not satisfied due to poverty and lack in knowledge.

Table 3. Percentage of Sanitation Facilities (Before and After Resettlement)

Households having personal latrine	Mangalhata		Maigram		Pankhar Char		Astail	
	Before	Present	Before	Present	Before	Present	Before	Present
	20%	97%	33%	100%	29%	68%	30%	50%

#### **Income-generating activity training (IGA)**

The majority of individuals are unhappy with the training because it is clear that the resettled guys received very little instruction. They asserted that the training was completed promptly and in a very short amount of time. The training exercises were separated by a small pause. The majority of the beneficiaries are dissatisfied with the training that the relocated guys received because it covered only a small number of general themes. There hasn't been enough education on important subjects like non-farming activity. The training exercises were finished in a surprisingly brief period of time. There were brief breaks in between the training phases. Only at Mangalhata, 25 women received two months of training in tailoring, and at Maigram, 20% of women received a week of training. Only about 5 women received instruction in tailoring at Pankhar Char. However, Astail did not offer such instruction.

#### **Food security**

Narail has been least affected in terms of food security. Moreover, due to relocation rice production, vegetable production increased on the contrary the safe drinking water condition deteriorated as seen in (Table 4).

Table 4. Households (in %) on Food Security Levels of the Communities

Food options	Mangalhata		Maigram		Pankhar Char		Astail	
	Before	Present	Before	Present	Before	Present	Before	Present
Rice production	37	47	14	22	18	6	30	10
Vegetable gardening	17	27	43	22	24	0	20	10
Fruit tree	30	47	21	14	24	0	30	0
Safe drinking water	100	36	100	64	35	29	40	50
Poultry	46	47	54	36	41	18	50	30
Livestock	64	47	29	18	35	12	40	40

### ***Areas of employment***

The men of the families (heads of the home) who live in the village have seen a dramatic change in their earning trends. Agriculture had become less important in all of the settlements. Agricultural employment declined as more people flocked to Dhaka as well as other urban regions, and others turned to day work. Minimum one member worked in urban or industrial regions in the homes whose income grew. The majority of people earn money by working various jobs; they may pull rickshaws, farm, or work as day laborers. They could not really farm land throughout the year because most of them didn't have any. They had to borrow others' land in terms of condition. As a consequence, their income varies occasionally. (Figure 6) depicts the dependence of families on various income sources. Mangalhata is located near an industrial zone, employment in the surrounding area has increased, and there are a variety of jobs available. Agriculture wage employees are often the lowest professional category, according to previous research in Bangladesh (Ramesh, 2018).

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The GG projects are making a substantial contribution to providing shelter to landless families. The study was conducted to determine how successfully the project aims were met as evidenced by influence on the lives of households following resettlement.

It is difficult to recollect all elements of their previous livelihood in order to assess the condition of their household prior to relocation. As a result, the analysis is focused on the respondent's viewpoint, which includes their emotions, beliefs, and activities to alleviate their dissatisfaction with their prior or current living condition. This study shows that the GG program has improved the lifestyles of impoverished people in particular, based on an analysis of their position over two points in time. Aside from owning land as well as a residence, there are a few more factors that have improved their economic situation. Landless persons have more opportunities to cultivate at home. However, the recipients require some basic assistance in order to improve their sustainable livelihoods (Islam et al., 2014). When examining the worth and significance of land, it has been shown that farmsteads, vegetable gardens, and reservoirs give the recipients the chance to produce money and also give their relocated families financial security. Given their constraints and inadequacies, receivers helped by the aforementioned GG initiatives have been able to generate revenue, but their economic situation has been deteriorating, showing that the project's execution stage hasn't always appeared to be significantly correlated with its success. The goal of this study was to see how far and how much the macroeconomic situation in the cluster communities had improved.

As the government attempts to integrate people into mainstream society, various strategies, such as location selection, household area, work possibilities, vocational training, and oversight, are inadequate. A methodology for analyzing sustainable livelihoods approaches based on capital assets can be implemented for policy level implications. The capital assets framework has the benefit of putting the actuality of domestic communities (typically referred to as households) at the center of assessment and policy, even without neglecting the context - specific financial, institutional, and sociocultural factors that influence their ability to build self-sustaining livelihood strategies (Rakodi, 1999). The conceptual aims have proven harder to attain massive corruption in the implementation and creation of such settlements. Self-help techniques and government programs that rely on local conditions are viable in our country's setting (Mitlin, 2012). The primary setting for the newer suggested cluster settlements should be dependent on income production instead of housing facilities. The results of this analysis will aid in the development of impoverished people as well as future resettlement programs.

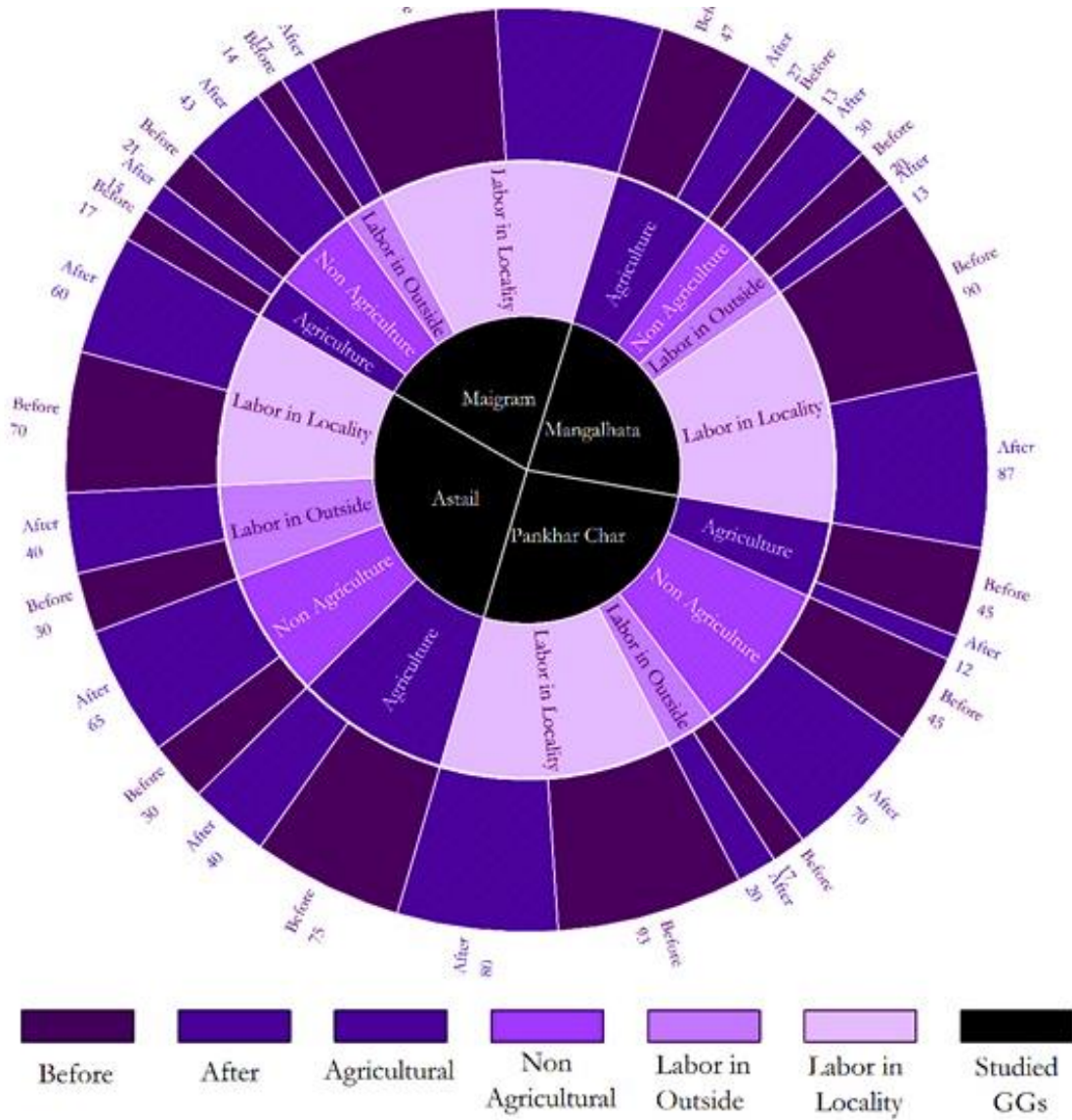


Figure 6. Dependence of Families on Various Income Sources (in %).

**Acknowledgement**

The authors thankfully acknowledged the Local Authority for giving the data required for the study. Their willingness to give their valuable time so generously has been very much appreciated. The respondents who participated in survey were credited as another source of data by the authors. Those who directly and indirectly encouraged the writers have been acknowledged. The editorial team is also thanked by the authors.

## References

- Barkat, A., Zaman, S. Uz, & Raihan, S. (2000). Khas Land: A Study on Existing Law and Practice. *System*, November, 1–13.
- Black, R., Arnell, N. W., Adger, W. N., Thomas, D., & Geddes, A. (2013). Migration, immobility and displacement outcomes following extreme events. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 27, S32–S43. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2012.09.001>
- Bryden, J., & Geisler, C. (2007). Community-based land reform: Lessons from Scotland. *Land Use Policy*, 24(1), 24–34. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2005.09.004>
- Das, D., Mallick, B., & Vogt, J. (2012). Social Process Analysis in Poverty Alleviation Program: A Study of Khas-Land Distribution in Rural Bangladesh. *Journal of Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP)*, 5, 25–36.
- Dastagir, R. (2015). *Sustainable Rural Development in Bangladesh by Education Loan and Graduate Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of RCE Greater Dhaka*.
- Ding, C. (2007). Policy and praxis of land acquisition in China. *Land Use Policy*, 24(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2005.09.002>
- Guchchogram. (2017). *About Guchchogram – Guchchogram Phase 2 (CVRP) Project*. <https://www.guchhogram.gov.bd/about-guchchogram/>
- Hasan, M., Rose, J., & Khair, S. (2015). *Background Paper for the 7th Five Year Plan of the Government of Bangladesh: Governance and Justice*.
- Hossain, M. (2015). *Improving Land Administration and Management in Bangladesh*.
- Islam, M. M., Sallu, S., Hubacek, K., & Paavola, J. (2014). Migrating to tackle climate variability and change? Insights from coastal fishing communities in Bangladesh. *Climatic Change*, 124(4), 733–746. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-014-1135-y>
- Laursen, L. H., & Møller, J. Ø. (2013). *The concept of cluster- villages as planning tool in the rural districts of Denmark*.
- Maier, S. D., Beck, T., Francisco Vallejo, J., Horn, R., Söhlemann, J.-H., & Nguyen, T. T. (2016). Methodological Approach for the Sustainability Assessment of Development Cooperation Projects for Built Innovations Based on the sdgs and Life Cycle Thinking. In *Sustainability* (Vol. 8, Issue 10). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su8101006>
- Mallick, B., & Sultana, Z. (2017). Livelihood after relocation-evidences of Guchchogram project in Bangladesh. *Social Sciences*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci6030076>
- Mitlin, D. (2012). Housing Policies in Developing Countries. In *International Encyclopedia of Housing and Home* (pp. 579–584). <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-047163-1.00238-1>
- Niroula, G. S., & Thapa, G. B. (2005). Impacts and causes of land fragmentation, and lessons learned from land consolidation in South Asia. *Land Use Policy*, 22(4), 358–372. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2004.10.001>
- Oldenburg, P. (1990). Land consolidation as land reform, in India. *World Development*, 18(2), 183–195. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X\(90\)90047-2](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(90)90047-2)
- Otsuka, K. (1991). Determinants and consequences of land reform implementation in the Philippines. *Journal of Development Economics*, 35(2), 339–355. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-3878\(91\)90054-Y](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-3878(91)90054-Y)
- Peters, P. E. (2009). Challenges in Land Tenure and Land Reform in Africa: Anthropological Contributions. *World Development*, 37(8), 1317–1325. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2008.08.021>
- Plan, R., Subproject, N., Stage, D., Number, F. P., & Board, D. (2005). *Resettlement Planning Document BANGLADESH: SOUTHWEST AREA INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES PLANNING AND. June*.

- Powelson, J. P. (1987). Land tenure and land reform: past and present. *Land Use Policy*, 4(2), 111–120. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0264-8377\(87\)90045-7](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0264-8377(87)90045-7)
- Rahman, S., & Rahman, M. A. (2015). Climate extremes and challenges to infrastructure development in coastal cities in Bangladesh. *Weather and Climate Extremes*, 7, 96–108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wace.2014.07.004>
- Rakodi, C. (1999). A capital assets framework for analysing household livelihood strategies: Implications for policy. *Development Policy Review*, 17(3), 315–342. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7679.00090>
- Ramesh, B. (2018). Concept of Smart Village and it's Impact on Rurbanization. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development*, Volume-2(Issue-3), 1948–1950. <https://doi.org/10.31142/ijtsrd11123>
- Sen, B., & Ali, Z. (2015). *Ending Extreme Poverty in Bangladesh During the Seventh Five Year Plan : Trends , Drivers and Policies Background Paper for the Preparationof the Seventh Five Year Plan. January*, 1–76.
- Takhumova, O. (2020). *Rural Development as a Leading Factor in Economic Growth*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200526.040>
- Thapa, G. B., & Niroula, G. S. (2008). Alternative options of land consolidation in the mountains of Nepal: an analysis based on stakeholders' opinions. *Land Use Policy*, 25, 338–350.
- USAID. (2013). *USAID Country Profile: Property Rights and Resource Governance Dominican Republic*. 1–40. [http://www.usaidlandtenure.net/sites/default/files/country-profiles/full-reports/USAID\\_Land\\_Tenure\\_Dominican\\_Republic\\_Profile.pdf](http://www.usaidlandtenure.net/sites/default/files/country-profiles/full-reports/USAID_Land_Tenure_Dominican_Republic_Profile.pdf)
- Wannasai, N., & Shrestha, R. (2008). Role of land tenure security and farm household characteristics on land use change in the Prasae Watershed, Thailand. *Land Use Policy*, 25, 214–224. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2007.07.003>