

## Abstract

### **Socio-economic Condition and Poverty Situation in Rural Southern Part of Bangladesh: A Household Level Study**

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This paper reflects the socio-economic condition and extent of poverty of the rural people of southern part of Bangladesh. The data for this study has been collected during June-July 2000 under the auspices of Patuakhali Barguna Aquaculture Extension Project (PBAEP). The study covered 997 households in three villages of Amtoli thana of Barguna district.

Over half of the households were involved in agricultural activities - farming and farm labour. More than two-fifths of the households were landless (<50 decimals); one-third held land between 50 to 200 decimals and, about one-quarter held 200 decimals and more. Only 5% of the households were headed by women. Tin and thatch are the most common materials used for roofing in the areas. About 30% households owned pit or sanitary latrines.

The study computed the average income from major sources including agriculture, poultry & livestock, job/trade/business, fish farming in pond. The overall average annual income, combining all sources, stood at Tk48,871 (approximately US\$ 857) per household, which gives a per capita income of Tk9,639. The overall expenditure pattern shows that expenditure on food accounts for more than half of the total expenditure. The average expenditure for a household was estimated as Tk37,897. Most households, for this or that reason, relied on borrowing from different sources: about one-third from NGOs/society, over one-quarter from banks and the rest from relatives or friends (16%) and money lenders (11%). The average size of the loan was about Tk5,000.

A self assessment by the respondents suggests that majority of the households wanted to put themselves in the lower middle class; about one-third saw themselves as poor; a little above one-fifth placed them in the middle class rank. Self-

assessed income status closely corresponded with that of objectively assessed socio-economic conditions. An index for standard of living has been computed by providing appropriate scores to the factors: landholding size, income, highest educational level of the households, main occupation of the household, ownership & use of toilet, main house and household assets. According to the standard of living index, more than half of the study households belonged to extremely low or low standard of living, another about 44% belonged to lower medium or medium standard of living.

The incidence of poverty has been studied by using cost of basic needs method. The study indicates that about 43% household lies below the “lower” poverty line and about 63% household lies below the “upper” poverty line. The incidence of poverty was found inversely related with education, family size and standard of living index.