

Agrarian Class Structure and Mode of Production
in a Bangladesh Village

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Ph.D Dissertation

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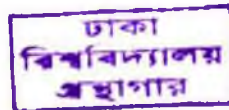
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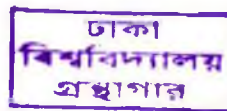
Agrarian Class Structure and Mode of Production in a Bangladesh Village

A Thesis Submitted to the University of Dhaka in
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By

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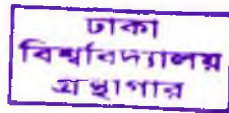
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Declaration

The materials embodied in the thesis are original and have not been submitted partly or fully for any other diploma or degree of any University.

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Moshfeka Khatun

Abstract

The agriculture emerged at the last part of the Pleistocene period or between the beginnings of the Holocene period to 3500 BC. From that period agriculture has kept its position till the modern technological era. Technology has proved many phenomena of the past invalid, but this is not true for agriculture. Despite industrialization and urbanization a large part of the population of the modern world live in villages. Bangladesh is a developing country where villages are at the heart of the country. In this regard the present study titled **“Agrarian class structure and mode of production in a Bangladesh village”** has been conducted with a major objective to identify the agrarian classes and their interrelationships as well as to investigate into the forces of production and relations of production in an agrarian community. So, this is basically a village study based on intensive fieldwork conducted in Char Dumla (a pseudonym used for the village under study) of *Suborna Char upazila* in *Noakhali* District. In this study an attempt has been made to determine the predominant mode of production in the agrarian society of the country.

The agriculture sector is the jewel in the crown of Bangladesh. Despite the onslaught of recurrent floods, droughts and cyclones, this sector has been producing different types of bumper crops one after another. To accelerate the development of this sector basic knowledge of agrarian class structure and mode of production in a Bangladesh village, especially the *char* land, is essential. With the overall socio-economic and political context of the country, *char* land remains as an ignored national resource. Although *char* land people have got into a trap of distress distribution and deprivation, conflict, violence and bloodshed seem to be a never ending dilemma in the lives of the *char* people. So agrarian question i.e. their class structure and mode of production in a *char* area is very important in its own aspects.

The study begins with the proposal for conducting the research on agrarian class structure and mode of production in a Bangladesh village. The main emphasis has been to make a critical study of the nature of agrarian class structure, social structure and mode of production in Bangladesh, particularly in the village under study, because these are crucial to the understanding of rural economic structure. Along with major objectives and research questions and aspects this study has been initiated to conduct the research on the ground that in the early studies the subject of mode of production has not been taken as the main focus of interest. In this regard the present study is a unique one for taking both class structure and mode of production in rural Bangladesh both synchronically and diachronically. However, a concrete methodology has been followed to conduct the study and apart from secondary sources, primary data collection instruments were used, which included intensive fieldwork to analyze empirical and qualitative data, past historical records (oral records as well), informal interviews and case studies among others.

With this view this study has encompassed a wide ranging research among the *char* people, their production relations and socio-economic formation located in the village Char Dumla. Initially the study began with a brief description of regional background. The basic aspects of *Noakhali* district and Char Dumla including their location, geographical and ecological settings, socio-cultural history, administrative settings, demographic characteristics, socio-economic profile, social organization, its function and importance, agrarian structure, cropping pattern and relations of production, etc. have been discussed briefly. Class structure and mode of production and its related phenomena such as various theoretical explanations, facts and variables have also been analytically presented. Because these portray the overall condition of the agrarian classes and mode of production system of the region.

The study area belongs to a *char* of southern coastal belt of the country. In this regard some basic concepts and meanings of *char*, types of *char*, *char* land laws (pre-partition laws, laws of Pakistan and Bangladesh period) and land ceilings with a historical background (British colonial, Pakistan and Bangladesh period) have been incorporated to understand the nature and geography of the village. Based on some basic characteristics of *char* some illustrations are made about the cropping pattern, intensiveness of productivity, fisheries, cattle herding, riverbank erosion, flood, drought, storm, excessive rainfall and natural resources of the village. Finally, *char* people's interactions and disputes, unity, local government, responsibilities of different institutions, health and sanitation facilities, use of technology, and role, activities and participation of women in both the agriculture and decision making process of the *char* livelihood have been analyzed to understand the nature of rural class structure and other related modes of the *char* based rural community.

The socio-economic profile of Char Dumla shows different dimensions of social and economic aspects of the village people. In terms of the settlement history of Char Dumla, it is said to be appeared from the river bed people from *Ramgati*, led by some *jotdars* and occupied most of the lands claiming it as their ancestral land. In this regard the physical settings of the village are crucial taking land settlement pattern because land is treated as gold by common people in the village. Moreover, the composition of households and population by *para* and the age-sex distribution of the members of these households demonstrate the peoples' socio-economic profile where education is considered as one of the key indicators for bringing socio-economic change and development. But considering the village Char Dumla, the status of education or literacy rate is very low in comparison to the other parts of the country.

Eventually the study revealed that different modes of exchange and transactions are centered on the land and agriculture in the village because due to the favorable environment, agriculture is the dominant mode of economy. Here the agro-ecological conditions of the village people addressed the land based classes in Char Dumla. It has been observed that the village people can be classified into

different land based classes such as high or *uchu*, middle or *majbari* and low or *nichu* land classes where, depending on crop production, the constraints are different in degree and effectiveness. The reason for this is that as a coastal *char* the crop intensity depends on various factors like stability of land, size of land holdings and tenancy, soil properties, rainfall distribution, soil moisture availability, seasonal temperature and length of growing seasons among others where all these portray the nature of socio-economic conditions of the people of Char Dumla.

The social organization of the Char Dumla illustrates different social and community organizations of the village with several issues of formation, function and role of social organizations including *kehana* (household), *paribar* (family), *bari* (homestead), *gusthi* (lineage) and *samaj* (society) with reference to the rural communities of Bangladesh. Like many other villages studied by different social scientists, the physical structure of Char Dumla is internally differentiated by its inhabitants and it reflects, to some extent, their social structure and pattern of stratification. The physical structure of Char Dumla consists of five *paras* and these are partially uniformed and scattered over. The village is totally inhabited by the Muslims. So called *khandan* families of the village live in respective *paras*. Despite status differentiation, the settlement pattern of the village shows differentiation among its population on the basis of unequal distribution of landownership, power and status. This means that the population of the village is not distributed randomly irrespective of status, power and wealth.

The agrarian relations in Bangladesh give a comparative picture of the agricultural groups in Bangladesh categorizing them among owner, owner-cum tenants and tenants or sharecroppers from a time perspective. In Bangladesh, on the contrary, while the landlords' power over the tenant is institutionalized by the state itself, the landlord may not feel tempted to resort to inter-linkages of various markets to exploit the tenants from other markets. As a result if a larger amount of surplus is extracted in the form of ground rent, the tenants will be left with lesser amount of residual surplus for which landowners' temptation to extract will not be large. The more striking finding is that savings and surpluses are substantially higher for larger farmers than the smaller ones who utilize significantly a larger portion of their surplus or savings for productive investment compared to their larger counterpart in the country. The subjects on the terms and conditions of various formal and or informal contracts in land, labour, and credit markets and their inter-linkages along with the act of productive investment and surplus appropriation may provide some points towards the process of capitalist transformation and its limits in the country. In the absence of political solidarity of the vast majority of peasants against the exploitation by a minority group of property-owner, the path ahead in the country is likely to be harder than ever before.

The agrarian class structure of Char Dumla shows the nature of class conflicts and relations of exploitation in the agrarian society on the basis of the findings from both the micro-level study and macro-level (national) data. The agrarian

social structure of rural Bangladesh consists of three agrarian class hierarchies and this is also the same in case of Char Dumla. Based on the ownership and non-ownership of means of production (land) and their position in the organization of production these classes are: landowner, sharecroppers or tenants and the landless labourers.

The power structure of Char Dumla demonstrates not only the existing power structure of the village but also power relations at the local level. It reveals that those leaders are the power wielders who exercise full economic and political control and influence in the *char* land. They are the big landowners, thus, class dominance corresponds to political dominance. It has been observed that these power wielders are the rural exploiters where patron-client system, for instance, serves to organize the political and economic order within the village.

Land is treated as a symbol of social position and honour for the rural elites and enables them to practice rural power. The villagers are competing for control of land within an unequal atmosphere. In this village, those who are rich farmers (owning 7 and above *acres* of land) or those who own comparatively a large amount of production and resources, have access to power which is why they employ poor and landless villagers. Moreover, landowners often rely on their sharecroppers for political support and many of them are reluctant to break the economic ties which ensure their clients' loyalty. In these relations, the landowners' consideration to make their choice of tenants (*bargachashi*) is of a political in nature. Often the landowners recognize they can gain political support from their tenants. The political support may be support in village affairs, *shalishes* or perhaps physical protection from attacks (*latbiyal* or *muscleman*) by enemies.

The mode of production in Char Dumla illustrates the relations of exploitation and dominant mode of production in agriculture. It is seen that the mode of production in this village is much more complex and represents a combined and mixed form of different modes of production. In course of time and with the intervention of different influencing factors in the production system of the village, it has not been possible to develop any single type of mode of production. It is seen that the peasants of this village are largely integrated with sharecropping system in their production relations where sharecropping is a major component of mode of production. Again the village production indicates that over the years wage labour and family labour have become more influential factors in the existing production system. These features show that the mode of production in the village is dominated not only by sharecropping but also by wage labour and family labour. Thus it has become a common aspect of the village Char Dumla where the agrarian communities have not tied them with any single trends of mode of production. So the nature of mode of production in the study village can neither be addressed as "peasant mode" nor "feudal mode" nor even "capitalist mode" of production. Therefore, the overall picture reveals that the predominant mode of production of Char Dumla is a complex one, such as the combination of different modes that the "peasant mode", "semi-feudal mode" and "semi-capitalist mode" of production.

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Abbreviations

AC (L)	Assistant Commissioner (Land)
AD	After Death (Jesus Christ)
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADC	Additional Deputy Commissioner
ADP	Agricultural Development Programme
APB	Actionable Policy Brief
BADA	Bengal Alluvion and Diluvion Act
BADC	Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation
BARI	Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BC	Before Christ
BCIC	Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation
BDHS	Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BINA	Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture
BKB	Bangladesh Krishi Bank
BR	Bangladesh Rice
BRRRI	Bangladesh Rice Research Institute
CDSP	Char Development and Settlement Project
CHTs	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CLF	Civilian Labour Force
DAP	Di-Ammonium Phosphate
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DCR	Deputy Commissioner of Revenue
DLRS	Directorate of Land Records and Surveys
DOL	Department of Livestock
DS	Decennial Settlement
DTW	Deep Tubewell
EBSATA	East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act (1950)
EIC	East India Company
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FAQ	Fair Average Quality
FD	Food Department
FY	Fiscal Year
GB	Grameen Bank
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
GOEP	Government of East Pakistan
HH	Household
HHH	Household Head
HYV	High Yield Variety

IRR	Internal Rate of Return
ISPAN	The Irrigation Support Project for Asia and the near East
LA	Local Administration
LCS	Labour Contracting Society
LDT	Land Development Tax
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGB	Local Government Body
LLP	Low Lift Pump
LRO	Land Reform Ordinance
LRP	Land Reform Programme
LV	Local Variety
ML	Muslim League
MMIS	Market Monitoring and Information System
MOP	Muriate of Potash
MP	Member of Parliament
MP	Mode of Production
NAP	National Agricultural Policy
NCC	National Coordination Committee
NGO	Non Government Organization
NPKS	Nitrogen, Phosphate, Potassium, Sulphate
NRAS	<i>Noakhali</i> Rural Action Society
NRDS	<i>Noakhali</i> Rural Development Society
OC	Office in Charge
PFDS	Public Sector Food Distribution System
PO	Presidential Order
RAKUB	Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank
SDO	Sub Divisional Officer
SPRRSO	Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization
STW	Shallow Tubewell
T-Aman	Transplanted <i>Aman</i>
TDR	Tahsilder
Tk	Taka
TNO	Thana Nirbahi Officer
TRO	<i>Thana</i> Revenue Officer
TSP	Triple Super Phosphate
UF	United Front
UFO	United Food Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNO	<i>Upazila</i> Nirbahi Officer
UP	<i>Union Parishad</i>
UWDO	<i>Upazila</i> Women Development Organization
UYDO	<i>Upazila</i> Youth Development Organization
VS	Village Society
WAPDA	Water and Power Development Authority
WDB	Water Development Board

Glossary

<i>Abadi</i>	Newly reclaimed
<i>Achra</i>	Rake; this is also known as <i>bidba</i> , <i>bindba</i> , <i>nangala</i> , <i>nangula</i> , <i>batnangula</i> , etc.
<i>Adhiar</i>	Sharecropper
<i>Adhi</i>	Half share
<i>Ajlaf/ Atraj</i>	Middle strata of the Muslims status group
<i>Aman</i>	Winter paddy crop
<i>Amin</i>	Surveyor
<i>Aratdar</i>	Warehouse man (commission agents)
<i>Arjal</i>	Lowest strata of the Muslims status group
<i>Ashraf</i>	The noblest and strata of the Muslim strata group
<i>Aus</i>	Autumn paddy crop
<i>Badla</i>	Agricultural labourer who work for part-time basis
<i>Bandak</i>	Mortgage
<i>Baniar</i>	A person who formed a community by caste
<i>Barga</i>	Sharecropping
<i>Bargacashi</i>	Sharecropper or tiller (households receiving share of land)
<i>Bargadar</i>	Sharecropper or tiller (households offering share of land)
<i>Bari</i>	Homestead
<i>Batai</i>	Sharing of crops
<i>Bazaar</i>	Market place
<i>Beels</i>	Small canals
<i>Benami</i>	Usually a traditional method of acquiring land or property by using others' name
<i>Bepari</i>	Small trader
<i>Bhadralok</i>	Gentleman
<i>Bhagchashi</i>	Sharecropper (households receiving share of land)
<i>Bichchinnya</i>	Detached
<i>Bigha</i>	Measure of land or indigenous unit of land area
<i>Bodollia</i>	Day labourer
<i>Boro</i>	A kind of paddy
<i>Bundba</i>	Attached
<i>Chalon</i>	Traditional threshing tool; this is also known as <i>kula</i>
<i>Char</i>	Alluvial land (Newly accreted land)
<i>Char Dumla</i>	A pseudonym used for the village under study located in <i>Noakhali</i>
<i>Chira</i>	Stippled rice
<i>Chula</i>	Open hearth
<i>Chaura</i>	People living in <i>char</i> are locally known as <i>chaura</i>
<i>Chukti</i>	Contractual
<i>Dadan</i>	Mode of transaction in advance
<i>Dadni</i>	Money lending
<i>Daishudi</i>	A Person who takes interest from the loaned

<i>Dalal</i>	Broker
<i>Dao</i>	Traditional tool used for cutting purposes; this is also known as <i>bagi, baisa, molon, seni dao, jat</i> , etc.
<i>Dewaniya</i>	Village leader
<i>Dhan</i>	Paddy
<i>Dhenki</i>	Local threshing machine or tool used for husking paddy
<i>Dhone</i>	An indigenous tool used for irrigation or water lift; this is also known as <i>durf, kerka, tara</i> , etc.
<i>Diara</i>	Land survey
<i>Dinmajur</i>	Day labourer
<i>Doon</i>	Manually or hand operated country boat; this is also known as <i>donga, kon, kunda, junt</i> , etc.
<i>Doloin</i>	A traditional husking device
<i>Fakir</i>	A religious priest
<i>Farias</i>	Assembly traders or small traders
<i>Gabur</i>	Day labourer
<i>Garur gadi</i>	A local vehicle driven by cow
<i>Ghar</i>	Hut or room
<i>Ghodar gadi</i>	Horse cart
<i>Ghonta</i>	Locally a part of <i>sharee</i> used as scarf
<i>Godawon</i>	Warehouse
<i>Gola</i>	Granary
<i>Gram</i>	Village
<i>Gram Sarkar</i>	Village administrative and judicial body
<i>Gribasthi</i>	Householder
<i>Gribastha</i>	Middle or low status cultivators owning a small portion of land
<i>Gur</i>	One kind of sweet prepared locally from sugarcane
<i>Gushti</i>	Patrilineage
<i>Hal</i>	Plough
<i>Haoladar</i>	Type of tenure holder
<i>Haat</i>	Village market (Usually held once or twice in a week)
<i>Haors</i>	Small canals
<i>Hemanta</i>	Autumn season
<i>Ichuni</i>	A sowing basket made locally; this is also known as <i>dobki, duri, beat, bocho, jhajra, ucha, unu</i> , etc.
<i>Idurer fand</i>	Rat trap
<i>Imam</i>	Leader of Muslim congregation and a lineage title
<i>Izzat</i>	Prestige or honour
<i>Izara</i>	Lease of land
<i>Jamat</i>	Gathering of people
<i>Jati</i>	Nation
<i>Jheels</i>	Small canals
<i>Jhum</i>	Shifting cultivation
<i>Jotdar</i>	Holder of cultivable land or big landowner
<i>Kabala</i>	Sale of land

<i>Kabiraj</i>	Local healer and paramedic doctor
<i>Kacha</i>	Raw (underdone)
<i>Kachari</i>	Frontier house of landlord (sitting room)
<i>Kachi</i>	Traditional harvesting tool used for cutting paddy; this is also known as <i>chasi</i> , <i>chakrey</i> , <i>kaicha</i> , <i>kanchi</i> , etc.
<i>Kajashail</i>	Autumn or winter rice
<i>Kalbaishakhi</i>	A storm usually appear in summer season
<i>Kamla</i>	Wage labourer
<i>Karbar</i>	Business
<i>Karja</i>	Loan
<i>Katha</i>	A kind of blanket traditionally made by village women
<i>Kazi</i>	Marriage registrar
<i>Khai-khalashi</i>	Usufruct
<i>Khajna</i>	Revenue
<i>Khal</i>	Canal (inland waterway)
<i>Khali</i>	Canal
<i>Khamar</i>	Personal demesne or threshing yard
<i>Khana</i>	Eating group
<i>Kbandan</i>	Aristocratic descent
<i>Khar</i>	Dry part of stippule crops
<i>Kharif</i>	Summer crops
<i>Khas</i>	Government owned land
<i>Khatiyani</i>	Settlement document
<i>Khesari</i>	Pulse
<i>Khetmajur</i>	Farm labourer
<i>Khola</i>	Threshing floor
<i>Khudkasta</i>	Residential <i>raiya</i> ; they are also known as <i>mukariari</i> and <i>mirasi raiyats</i>
<i>Kodal</i>	Spade
<i>Korta</i>	Head of the family
<i>Kulaks</i>	Aristocrats
<i>Kutials</i>	Local traders
<i>Lagni</i>	Money lending or investing
<i>Langal</i>	Indigenous country plough
<i>Lathiyal</i>	Physical protector of the landlords (muscleman)
<i>Lathiyal bahini</i>	Physical protectors' force
<i>Lungi</i>	Lower garment worn by Muslim male peasants
<i>Macha</i>	High shelter (usually made of bamboo)
<i>Maddhyam</i>	Land in medium height (neither high nor low)
<i>Madrassa</i>	Islamic educational institution
<i>Mahajan</i>	Creditor; literally great man
<i>Mahajani</i>	Money lending
<i>Majhari</i>	Middle
<i>Majbi</i>	Country boat driver
<i>Majur</i>	Labourer
<i>Maktab</i>	Islamic educational institution

<i>Malik</i>	Proprietor
<i>Masjid</i>	Mosque
<i>Matabbar</i>	Village leader
<i>Maund</i>	Weight measure
<i>Mauza</i>	Local level revenue unit
<i>Miab</i>	Patronymic title
<i>Mohiser gadi</i>	A local vehicle driven by ox
<i>Moi</i>	Ladder; this name also varies in terms of locality such as <i>basoi, chongha, dolon, bapta, keyai, septa</i> , etc.
<i>Mollah</i>	Learned Muslim
<i>Motka</i>	Large earthen pot
<i>Moulavi</i>	Learned Muslim
<i>Mugur</i>	Mallet (hammer); this is also known as <i>kurish, shappaya, nja</i> , etc.
<i>Munsi</i>	Learned Muslim
<i>Muri</i>	Stippled rice
<i>Natun</i>	New
<i>Nichu</i>	Low land
<i>Nirbahi</i>	Executive
<i>Noa</i>	New
<i>Notbi</i>	Settlement case
<i>Pacca</i>	Solid or hard (durable)
<i>Padabi</i>	Title
<i>Paikasta</i>	<i>Raiyats</i> never settled in a village and migrate regularly
<i>Pan</i>	Betel leaf
<i>Panchayat</i>	Village level government
<i>Para</i>	Neighbourhood
<i>Panta bhat</i>	Soaked rice
<i>Paribar</i>	Family
<i>Patit</i>	Fellow land
<i>Pichkary</i>	A pest control device made locally
<i>Pir</i>	Muslim saint
<i>Piyaj</i>	Onion
<i>Poli</i>	Riverside soil
<i>Pramanik</i>	Village elder
<i>Proja</i>	Tenant
<i>Punjabi</i>	Shirt worn by male people in Bangladesh
<i>Purdah</i>	Veil; the seclusion of Muslim women from outsiders
<i>Rabi</i>	Crops cultivated in the dry season
<i>Raiyat</i>	Peasant
<i>Saf kobla</i>	Giving of land forever
<i>Salami</i>	Revenue
<i>Salish</i>	Mediation
<i>Samaj</i>	Traditional association of village institution
<i>Sangjukta</i>	Connected
<i>Sarder</i>	Holder of demesne land; leader of <i>lathiyal</i> group

<i>Sardari</i>	Power holder in the locality
<i>Sarkar</i>	Patronymic title
<i>Sari</i>	Women dress
<i>Sat gerastha</i>	Low-middle status; cultivators
<i>Seer</i>	Weight measure
<i>Seet</i>	Winter season
<i>Seni kachi</i>	Used for Weeding; this is also known as <i>dahuki, kurmi, nini kachi, pashri, seni pachoon, tana kodol, tengi, etc.</i>
<i>Shabek land</i>	Old land
<i>Shalish</i>	Village mediating
<i>Shalisher</i>	Village mediator
<i>Sheikh</i>	Common Muslim family title
<i>Shila bristhi</i>	Icy rainfall
<i>Tahsil</i>	Lowest level revenue unit
<i>Tahshildar</i>	Revenue official at the <i>tahsil</i> level
<i>Taka (Tk.)</i>	Local currency of Bangladesh
<i>Taluk</i>	The owner of a landed estate
<i>Tebbagha</i>	A System of three shares
<i>Thana</i>	Administrative unit of Bangladesh
<i>Thela gadi</i>	A local vehicle or push cart driven by humans
<i>Uchu</i>	High land
<i>Union Parishad</i>	Local government at the union level comprising of several villages
<i>Upazila</i>	Local government unit comprising of several unions
<i>Van gadi</i>	A local vehicle or rickshaw van
<i>Vella</i>	One kind of boat made of banana tree
<i>Zamindar</i>	Landlord
<i>Zamidari</i>	Revenue power holders

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1.1 Proposal of the Research

Bangladesh is predominantly a rural society and agriculture is its main economy. The aim of the present research is to investigate into the agrarian class structure and mode of production in a village of Bangladesh. Agriculture is the main mode of living of the people living in the villages and this is very typical in case of the people living in the villages of *char* region where the mode of production is based on the *char* based livelihood pattern. However, in this research special emphasis will be given to the understanding of agrarian class structure and mode of production in a rural community located in *Subarna Char Thana* under the *Noakhali* region of Bangladesh. It has a population of about 140 million in an area of about 56,977 square miles, making it the most densely populated country in the world. About 76.99% of the people live in the rural areas and 5% to 7% of the people live in the *char* villages (BBS, 2002). It is important to note that the overwhelming majority of these people depend mainly on agriculture for their subsistence. Pressure on land is very high resulting in miniature farm holding and rate of landlessness. Another point deserves to be mentioned here is that in Bangladesh the average density of population per square mile including river areas (3503 square miles of river areas out of a total area of 56,977 square miles) is 1566 people and 1675 people when river areas are being excluded (Ibid).

Agriculture is the main economy of Bangladesh and near about 80% of its population are directly or indirectly associated with it. It is the dominant sector of the country's economy (60% of the GNP) and these will remain so for many years to come. Though agriculture is the backbone of the nation, still Bangladesh remains as the 'Poverty-pocket' of the world considering the per-capita income. The bulk of this poverty is concentrated in the 68,000 villages including the *char* villages of the country as well (BBS, 2004). The gap between the rich and the poor has been on the rise at a fastest rate than ever before and the economic condition of these poor people has been deteriorating faster than it can be imagined. We therefore, need more systematic studies on village social structure, agrarian class structure and the mode of production in Bangladesh. A few sporadic studies conducted in recent times have so far been reported as suffering from various limitations such as dependencies on unidisciplinary approach whereas rural life, agrarian class structure and the mode of production may be best understood as an organic whole requiring for its understanding as a multidisciplinary frame of study. The survey research approach characterizing most studies does not usually make them manageable to depth and cause analysis for understanding the social processes and social structure including class structure and mode of production. In fact, scientific studies of the villages focusing present socio-economic conditions along with rural population's class structure and mode of production cannot be achieved

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without a careful and close enquiry into the life and problems of the teeming millions living in innumerable villages of rural Bangladesh. In a word the focus of the study will be to understand the class structure and the mode of production in Char Dumla, a pseudonym used for the *char* village situated in *Noakhali* District.

Among social scientists, particularly sociologists and anthropologists, the concept 'mode of production' constitutes a fundamental or major problematic issue in their efforts to analyze the social structure and mechanisms of a particular society. This concept is first and foremost associated with the writings of Karl Marx who used this concept very often, but not always in a single or consisted sense. Indeed one is "likely to be struck by the controversies and debates going on between participants who would all probably claim to be in some sense Marxist, but who appear deeply and perhaps increasingly divided over fundamental issues" (Carter, 1978: 47). The controversies about mode of production, however, bear upon the function of the concept itself which may be taken as being two-folds: one is the unrevealing of the basis of a society i.e. the economy in its structural and interrelated features viz. the force, the means of production, the relations of production, the technique of production; and the other is the direction of the political actions at the class structure, party and the state policy level. In Bangladesh the controversies over the mode of production have many dimensions. Those who involved in the controversy have variously designated the mode of production in Bangladesh. Determination of agrarian class structure and mode of production is a careful issue in any analysis of social structure in Marxist framework whenever it has been applied to understand a given society and its stages of historical development. There is a major controversy among Marxist scholars centering on definition of mode of production. However, the purpose in order to enter into that controversy, it is mentionable that by mode of production it is meant an agricultural combination of forces of production and relations of production (Hindess & Hirst, 1975). Recently there were major academic debates on production in Bangladesh agriculture. Drawn from different disciplinary orientations such as economics, history, sociology and anthropology more than a dozen of scholars have contributed to the debate.

However, the main emphasis of this study is to make a critical study of the nature of agrarian class structure and the mode of production in Bangladesh. Because its pattern is very important in understanding the economic structure of rural Bangladesh. The origin of rural research in Bangladesh is the most recent phenomenon. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, there has been extensive collection of information on how the society is organized and how the Indian people live in villages. Accordingly, the company requisitioned

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the services of Francis Buchanan Hamilton and William Adam and commissioned the civil servants and civil surgeons in different districts to undertake studies on rural society under their jurisdiction. The areas where most of these studies undertaken were in Eastern Bengal, now forming a part of Bangladesh (Hye (ed.), 1985).

The first manifestation of the socio-economic problems of village life is found in the literature of the later half of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries. In his famous drama *Nil Darpan* Mitra (1861) has depicted the physical and economic oppression from which rural Bengal suffered by the Indigo planters vividly. Again *Alaler Gharer Dulal* and *Agriculture in Bengal* of Mitra's (1881) are the realistic account of the economic serfdom where serfdom has been observed to which peasants were reduced as a result of the oppressive policy of the planters in Bengal.

In *Bangla Desher Krishak* Chatterjee (1872) presented the injustice in a number of essays that meted out to the peasants of Bengal by the tyrannical *Zamindars*.

In 1906 Dey published his well-known book *Bengal Peasant Life* in which he described the social and domestic life of the peasantry of Bengal alongside with a graphic picture of the oppression of the European planters and the Bengal *Zamindars* towards the peasantry.

A. C. Sen (1897) did one of the earliest intensive studies of the rural economy of Bengal nay India. It contained the economic survey of a village in the district of Burdwan and was published in 1897 titled "Report on Agricultural Experiments and Enquiries in Burdwan District". However, the most well known study on the *Economic Life of a Bengal District* was undertaken by Major J.C. Jack, a settlement officer of Faridpur. His survey during 1906-1910 was inspiring and it had helped in the growth of realistic study of rural economy of Bengal. Tagore's "Vishla-Bharati Rural Reconstruction Board" also inspired the socio-economic surveys of village life in Bengal, which with the initiative from Kali Mohon Ghose, surveyed in an extensive manner of the village of *Ballavpur* near *Santinikatan*. The works by Jshague, Bhattacharyya and Natsan were also important. In these studies the focus of interest was on the economic life of the people and the primary objective was the exposition of the pressing problems of the rural society (Ibid).

Mukharjee (1957) was one of the first scholars to make a systematic study of Bangladesh society where the effort and publications done before the Independence of Bangladesh built the "monumental gateway to the path of development of village studies" in the subcontinent. Through these studies he tried to show both the economic differentiation and stratification in the village.

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Another major work by Bertocci (1970) titled *Evasive Villages: Social Structure and Community Organization in Rural East Pakistan* focused attention on rural community organization and social structure in Comilla District of Bangladesh. Analytically one pertains to the Marxian academics and the other to the Marxian praxis. The controversies over the issue of mode of production in Bangladesh have had different dimensions as also seen in other contexts. Those, who are involved here, have variously designed the mode of production in Bangladesh, for example, as 'petty peasant mode' (Abdullah, Hossain; Nathan, 1976), 'semi-feudal' (Haq, 1978; Alamgir; 1978; Arens and Beurden; 1979), 'capitalist' (Patnaik; 1972; Rahman, 1974; Westergaard; 1978; Jahangir, 1978; Omar, 1985; Alam, 1987) and 'semi-feudal semi-colonial' (Chowdhury, 1982), etc.

Jhagrapur: Poor Peasants and Women in a Village in Bangladesh is a pioneer study of a village in Kushtia of Bangladesh by Arens and Beurden (1977) which is an analysis of socio-economic and political life of a village in contemporary Bangladesh. *A Bangladesh Village: A Study of Social Stratification* is another work by Chowdhury (1978) in the district of Dhaka which discussed about the social life in the village with a focus on its social stratification pattern. *Baringram: Social and Economic Analysis of a Village in Bangladesh* by Westergaard (1978) is a study conducted in the Bogra district where the author has tried to show the socio-economic profile of the village. The work by a Marxian economist, Rahman (1974) titled *Bangladesher Krishite Dhonotontorer Bikash* was the first to claim the existence of capitalism in the domestic mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture. In his work Jahangir (1978) has admitted the existence of capitalism in the domestic mode of production of Bangladesh agriculture. Chowdhury (1984) has opined that the agriculture of Bangladesh cannot be described either as the 'peasant mode of production' or as 'capitalist mode of production' or even as 'feudal mode of production', rather this should be described as 'semi-feudal and semi-colonial mode of production'. Arefeen (1986) has made his mark in this debate based on the data collected from a peri-urban village '*Shimulia*' near Dhaka and he has observed that capitalist relations are developing fast in agriculture in Bangladesh. The next major contribution to this debate has been made by Alam (1987) based on his study in two villages (*Shobagpur* and *Teligram*) of Comilla district. He opined that capitalism is the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture today.

Several micro-level village studies showed that the agricultural population of the rural society is divided hierarchically on the basis of ownership and non-ownership of land and production is organized by wage labour, sharecropping, family labour and other means. But none of these studies are systematic and full-length intensive investigation on the class structure and mode of

production although these studies provide us with some valuable information. It is in this context that here I propose to undertake the present study on the class relations and mode of production. In this regard a *char* village has been selected where agrarian hierarchy is sharp and, thus, the study investigates into the class relationships of the agrarian populations. An attempt has been made to make an in-depth investigation into the organization of production in that *char* village. It is needless to say that mode of production cannot be fully understood without the analysis of class relationships. Therefore, it has been decided to deal with the issues of means of production, relations of production and organization of production at the micro-level in the present study.

The rural society of Bangladesh is highly stratified especially in *char* areas. The ownership and non-ownership of land is the main basis of class structure and class distinction. Even the small differences in the ownership of land lead to the significant social cleavages in the village communities. Different social classes play their respective roles in the organization of production. They enter into the multifarious relations in the process of production. The main aim of the present research is to analyze and understand these (class) relationships and to reveal the nature of mode of production in a rural community. There are some information existed on the above mentioned issues in the village studies conducted so far on the rural society of Bangladesh. Basing on this information more empirical data have been collected from a *char* village to examine the existing production relations and to determine the existing and predominant mode of production in the agriculture of Bangladesh.

1.2 Objectives of the Research

The contemporary Bangladeshi agrarian structure, as conceived in terms of ownership of land, relations of production, tenurial condition and the relation of the land, labour and credit, is the outcome of the process of historical evolution of a given system pertaining to property rights. In this system land plays the most distinct and dominant role in the agrarian sector. In view of the above conditions the overall objective of the study provides an analysis of agrarian class structure and determination of mode of production is one of the crucial issues. In any analysis of the class structure and class relations it is Marxian framework that has been capitalized more. Whenever it is applied to understand a given society its stages of historical development is of immense value. In the present context, however, by mode of production it is meant “an articulated combination of relation and forces of production structured by the dominance of the relations of production” (Hindess & Hirst, 1975: 9). It is also mentionable that the question of mode of production cannot be separated from that of the relations between classes in the context of organization of production. However considering all these issues some of the major specific

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objectives that are significant in conducting the present study are mentioned below:

- i) *To identify the agrarian classes and their interrelationships in the rural community under study; and*
- ii) *To investigate into the forces of production and relations of production in that agrarian community.*

However, the following research questions and aspects will be investigated to fulfill the major objectives of the study:

- i) *To determine the socio-economic aspects of the farmers in the village agriculture of the chars;*
- ii) *To illustrate the pattern of land ownership and mode of production in the village agriculture;*
- iii) *To identify the status of land tenure system and commodity based production system in the agriculture;*
- iv) *To demonstrate the pattern of sharecropping, mortgaging and other forms of tenure in the village;*
- v) *To analyze the issue of class relations in terms of mode of production in the village agriculture;*
- vi) *To observe the pattern of mobility in agricultural production and interpersonal relations;*
- vii) *To illustrate the agrarian class structure, organization of production and social relation from a historical perspective;*
- viii) *To examine the nature of the process of agrarian structure in relation to technological change in the village;*
- ix) *To understand the participation of women in the char based agricultural production and consumption besides domestic work; and*
- x) *To demonstrate the implication of politics in the agriculture and among the farmers; i.e. the role of farmers in both the local and central political affairs.*

1.3 Rationale and Importance of the Research

Despite the onslaught of recurrent floods, droughts and cyclones our agricultural sector has been producing different types of bumper crops one after another. To accelerate the development of this sector basic concepts regard in the agrarian class structure and mode of production in a Bangladesh village especially the *char* village is essential. The present research problem 'The Agrarian Class Structure and Mode of Production in a Bangladesh Village' is very much important in its own aspects. Over the last twenty-odd years, the nature of agriculture especially agrarian class structure and mode of production in Bangladesh has undergone a profound transformation. It is in a longer possible to speak about "Traditional Agriculture for the Green Revolution" has now become institutionalized.

In Bangladesh due to rapid growth of population and changes in socio-economic and politico-cultural pattern, substantial changes have occurred in agrarian sector. Agriculture accounts for nearly half of the gross domestic product of Bangladesh. In the country 51.7% labour force are engaged in agriculture sector (BBS, 2002). Hence the overall economic and political development of the country depends largely on the performance of the agrarian sector. Considering the above aspects of agriculture in the country it is important to understand the significant role played by the agrarian class structure and mode of production to our national economy. From this it can be said that determining the predominant mode of production in our agrarian society has its own significance as well as importance. Agrarian class structure is also more important because it relates with mode of production and social structure or to say with socio-economic formation.

The most significant feature of Bangladeshi rural life is the inequality in social status and standards of living. Almost every village of Bangladesh contains a large number of families and population. Around 140 million people can be categorized or can be classified by their role in mode of production (Ibid). Hence the significance of the analysis of agrarian class structure, how they participate in the production, production relations, use of technique of production and marketing, etc. are of much more importance. So besides determining the agrarian class structure it is also significant to determine the dominant mode of production in agriculture.

Land is very limited in Bangladesh in proportion to the population and its pressure on land is constantly on the increase. In previous century it has been prevailed in Bangladesh that there was only one person per every 2.5 hectare of land and, today, the scenario entails that there are about four persons living in the same limit of area (BBS, 1984). This prevails that land is not changing but

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the increasing population is itself becoming a dire problem for the existing land area of the country. Peasants with small land holdings will gradually lose the land they own and the rich will eventually gain control of the land left by the poor. In rural Bangladesh the more land a farmer own, the greater of degree of influence he wields in society. Social status, in turn, leads to a commanding position in local politics, which again provides greater access to other resources such as the *char* village lands. With these aspects the present research can help in examining following certain issues based on empirical data collected from the field.

- i) *Defining class in agrarian system;*
- ii) *Featuring the class-based society;*
- iii) *The nature of the development of agrarian class structure;*
- iv) *Identifying any class consciousness or class conflict in agrarian system particularly in char villages;*
- v) *Changing pattern of agrarian class structure;*
- vi) *The nature of the emerge of capitalization in agriculture;*
- vii) *Recent development of theoretical framework regarding the agrarian class structure and mode of production of Bangladesh in general;*
- viii) *Determining the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture;*
- ix) *Identifying the criteria in establishing the dominant mode of production in the land; and*
- x) *Understanding the possibility in characterizing the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture on the basis of an empirical study conducted in a particular area such as char village.*

1.4 Justification and Focus of Investigation of the Research

Bangladesh is an agrarian society where most of the people are directly or indirectly involved in agriculture. The “different categories of persons associated with agriculture and their interrelationships constitute the agrarian class structure” (Beteille, 1974: 103). In this aspect the most sets of issues in the contemporary world is the agrarian question. The principal means of production in Bangladesh is land and, therefore, the agrarian population is

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divided into classes on the basis of ownership and non-ownership of land (Chowdhury, 1982). In this context an attempt has been made in the present study to understand the interrelationships between the nature of agrarian class structure and mode of production in Bangladesh. Thus few points of justification to these issues of this study are:

- i) *In the earlier studies conducted so far the issue of mode of production has not been taken as the main or central focus of interest and as a result there has not been any specific and complete study on this issue. For this reason the present study is a unique one because its focus is mainly on the agrarian class structure and mode of production; and*
- ii) *There has not been any study conducted so far in the char areas particularly focusing on this issue.*

1.5 Selection of the Study Area

The selection of the study area for the present study is virtually based on a rural area of Bangladesh and in particular in the village of Char Dumla at the *Suborna Char Thana* under the District of *Noakhali*. The nature of this study is to assess different issues of the village people with a view to understand their livelihood pattern based on their agrarian class relations and existing as well as dominating mode of production. However, some of the most striking issues worked in selecting the study area are- rural environmental and geographical atmosphere, categories of the villagers, location of the study area, existence of different types of agrarian strategies and production systems, chance for the mobilization as well as production for capitalization, and several other purpose serving issues.

In terms of criteria for the selection of the study area some of the most rationale and important points have been taken into consideration. For the purpose of the study it has been carefully maintained that the selected study area should fulfill the objectives of the study and should also support in collecting reliable and meaningful data, easy access to the study area, time, and budget accessibility respectively. However, the criteria for the selection of the study area can be mentioned in following terms:

- i) *In selecting the study area it is maintained that the areas for the study must support the objectives of the study taken into consideration.*
- ii) *Easy accessibility to the study areas is also kept in mind.*

- iii) *Time and money or budgets are the two vital factors in selecting the areas. Because the researcher has to conduct the research work with limited budget and within a certain period of time. The study areas are close to the researcher's easy access and more the chance is to complete the task properly within the given time period.*
- iv) *Finally and most importantly the area selected particularly for the issue that in this area the village life is mostly based on the char based agrarian production system. Here it has also been observed that the villagers use different types of tools and technologies for production with the combination of some modern technologies. Moreover, the village is located in the rural area with char based economic activities that helped the researcher to figure out the data and observation in an organized way.*

1.6 Unit of the Study

The unit of a study refers to any individual, group, household, farms, market places, institutions or any other group or sub-group of people of the society upon whom the study is based on and this is very important for any kind of research. The unit of the present study is the people of the village of Char Dumla in the district of *Noakhali* where their life is based on the *char* based agriculture and production system and these supported to fulfill different objectives of the research work.

1.7 Phases of the Study

The present study has been an indepth work among the agrarian people of Char Dumla. Considering the overall situation and in terms of time period this study has been conducted in three broad phases:

Phase 1: Review of all relevant legal documents, literatures and other research works: discussions and rapport building with legal and other professionals including local people of different classes, administrative members and many other knowledgeable members of the society through several visits;

Phase 2:

- a. **Development:** pre-testing and finalization of data collection instruments for sound and actual data collection procedures;
- b) **Conducted fieldwork for data collection:** taking photographs; preparation of analysis and tabulation plans; editing, coding and data processing through a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data; and

Phase 3: On the basis of the criticism and comments by different scholars I made a revisit.

1.8 Methodology

Research begins with the selection of a problem or topic of interest that guides the entire research endeavor. Here research aims at solving the problems and thus investigates relationships of the numerous variables that exist in the human life and society. In this regard, and to find out the exact solution to the problem, every research work in sociology, anthropology or in any other discipline of the social sciences contains a sound methodological understanding upon which the researcher depends a lot from the very beginning of the research process. Methodology may thus be used to refer to theoretical discussions concerning the entire research proposal including the forms of thought of the research, aims and objectives of the research, application of various research methods, etc. Social sciences research focuses on describing, understanding and analyzing social processes and dynamics of social phenomena. It is normally very difficult to predict and explain social phenomena specifically and precisely, and therefore, social researches depend on different methodological approaches.

Methodology is often used in a narrow sense to refer to the methods, techniques, tools, etc. employed for the collection and processing of data, but in a broader sense methods or techniques are one of the components of methodology; thus the success of any research work, whether in anthropology or in any other discipline, heavily depends upon the proper utilization and understanding of research methodology used in practice (Jha, 1994).

In recent times social scientists are largely motivated to apply different types of strategies as well as techniques in search for the actual findings of the research in action. This has led to the development of some changes in the ultimate utilization of the research methods. Whether the research is conducted in the rural or urban areas, it is particularly dependent on the understanding of the researcher of what types of methods are to be employed. Therefore, in these days, a lot more emphasize has been given to the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. It has been argued that the researcher can use quantitative measures and experimental designs to study cognitive dissonance and reactions to disapproval predictions; again the researcher can also use the method of qualitative research while gathering data by looking, listening, and secretly recording their observations as the occasion permits. Thus the understanding of research methodology is one of the most important aspects in conducting an in-depth study of any research problem.

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With a research problem, a theory of social or cultural interaction or behaviour, a variety of conceptual guidelines, and a concrete research methodology are the pre-requisites for any sociological or anthropological research. Thus before asking the first question in the field the researcher begins with a problem, a theory or model, a research design, and in general, a specific data collection technique or methodology for research work (Fetterman, 1989). However, this is a sociological study about the agrarian class structure and mode of production in a Bangladesh village named Char Dumla where this is a pseudonym or imaginary name used for the study.

1.9 Methods Used and Techniques of Data Collection

One of the major problems and challenges faced by the sociologists, anthropologists or any other social science researchers, working either in urban or rural societies, is not always methodological, but theoretical and conceptual as well; hence researchers must search for “most significant context” within which to relate their particularistic cultural studies on the whole of the world’s political economic system. However, the present study is based and conducted on the phenomenon of rural life and, hence, uses various types of methods and techniques for the collection as well as analysis of data for proper manifestation. The research methods that are used in sociology, anthropology or in social sciences for a long period of time have had greater view and application to the study of rural societies. It has been perceived that these rural societies are quite simple and homogenous in nature. The hallmark of anthropological research method is participant observation and holism in the life of community which demands the researcher to live among the people he studies and participate as fully as possible in their daily lives (Basham, 1978). This was earlier proposed and applied by Malinowski and later was followed by Radcliffe Brown and others. The researchers working in the field of the rural areas for a prolonged period of time have largely utilized this method of participant observation. This has helped them to figure out the exact view and understanding of the people and their livelihood with an in-depth interpretation

In recent years a quiet revolution is seen in the field of anthropological, social sciences as well as in the development research where a new appreciation for qualitative research has emerged among the scholars of different disciplines. These qualitative research methods have become increasingly important modes of inquiry for social sciences and applied field such as education, regional planning, and management. A qualitative research method of inquiry is that where initial questions for research often come from the real-world observations, dilemmas, and questions and have emerged from the interplay of the researcher’s direct experience, tacit theories, and growing scholarly interests

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(Marshall & Rossman, 1995). However, researchers who would conduct qualitative research face at least three challenges such as: (1) to develop a conceptual framework for the study that is thorough, concise, and elegant; (2) to plan a design that is systematic and manageable yet flexible; and (3) to integrate these into a coherent document that convinces the proposal reader- a funding agency or a dissertation committee- that the study should be done, can be done and will be done (Ibid).

But recently in the field of development research a significant change is seen where both qualitative and quantitative research methods are deliberately used. “Qualitative research is a guide which uses a special language that appears to exhibit some similarity to the ways in which scientists talk about how they investigate the natural order-variables, controls, measurement, experiment, etc. and in quantitative research these are taken to provide an epistemological yardstick against which empirical research in the social sciences must be appraised before it can be treated as valid knowledge” (Bryman, 2000: 11). Therefore, in present days, both the qualitative and quantitative research methods are integrated in the research work for more flexibility in the collection of data and in the implication of data collection technique and research methods, which are why both these methods are collaboratively used in field, practice and in the present study in particular. Again, the researcher working in the field may wish to improve their descriptions through the use of historical, demographic, and survey techniques; but they must retain intensive in-depth interaction with small groups to direct their inquiries and flesh out their conclusions. Stanley R. Barrett stated that in terms of methodology, the reorientation of the discipline will mean using computers, statistics, sampling procedure and questionnaires (Barrett, 1976). However, according to Pelto (1970) in his book *Anthropological Research: The Structure of Inquiry* the techniques of data collection in sociological or anthropological research are:

- i) *Participant Observation*
- ii) *Key-informant Interviewing*
- iii) *Collection of Life History*
- iv) *Structural Interviews*
- v) *Questionnaires*
- vi) *Ratings and Rankings*
- vii) *The Semantic Differential Technique*
- viii) *Project Measures*
- ix) *Other Psychological Instrument*
- x) *Unobtrusive Measures*
- xi) *Technical Equipment in Fieldwork*
- xii) *Multi Instrument Research.*

Flexibility in the collection and analysis of data from the field in the research orientation is now one of the most important aspects of core consideration. In

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terms of collecting data from the field in development projects and also in other social science researches the researchers are now combining both the quantitative and qualitative methods. Today, the desirability of integrating quantitative and qualitative research methods is widely acknowledged and a multi-method approach is of great importance among the scholars (Bamberger, 2000).

However, in this regard some of the major attributes or characteristics of quantitative research method are: random sampling; generalization; statistical testing; structured questionnaires of data collection; extensive use of pre-coded closed-ended questions; standard protocol; numerical values or closed-ended (ordinal or nominal) variables; minimum use of open-ended questions; observational checklists; consistency checking of key variables; triangulation through qualitative methods in limited way; descriptive statistics; multivariate analysis; significance tests; starting from the macro rather than the micro level; focused on outcomes rather than processes; positivist; etc. In case of qualitative research method for collecting data the major characteristics are: “exploratory or directed choice of selection procedure, purposive or theoretical sampling, representatives as a sub-sample of a quantitative sample survey, random sampling methods, unstructured protocol with narrative text, flexibility of modifying protocol during the study, textual data (verbatim on notes), informal or semi-structured interviews, focus groups and community meetings, direct observation, participation methods, photographs, socio-metric charts, behaviour or unstructured interviewees, participation of monitors for triangulation in focus groups, sample survey, case studies (that is each subject treated separately), numerical analysis to permit systematic comparison of individuals, communities or groups, follow-up to statistical analysis of quantitative survey, conceptual framework to formulate and test hypothesis, starting at the individual or micro level and seeking to understand the constraints of everyday life, seeking to understand processes as well as outcomes, subjectivist approach, holistic - putting subjects into socioeconomic context, etc” (Ibid: 10-13).

To make the study more in-depth as well as analytical an attempt has been made here to combine both the quantitative and qualitative research methods. Because of the situation in the field and to overcome the barriers both quantitative and qualitative methods as well as data collection techniques have been fruitfully utilized to get the actual facts and data from the field. However, in the following sections descriptions of different methods, techniques and tools of anthropology are given that have been used in different stages of the study during fieldwork.

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The qualitative methods of formal and informal observations have been used in the research. In the field and in terms of formal observation identifying and selecting the study area have observed the criteria, behavioural aspects and general attitudes as well as activities of the agrarian people. The respondents were observed informally without any use of formal procedures of the study where it proved fruitful to bring out the underlying and seemingly unseen views of the study and also of the villagers under study. Moreover, in this case the samples are randomly selected, observed with no predetermined view and process and they were being watched with their normal activities without much interfering. Through these methods the nature of agrarian structure in the village, the view of the villagers, and many other issues have been observed with an in-depth understanding.

The method of fieldwork is the hallmark of research for both sociologists and anthropologists and means of working or mixing with people for certain period of time in their natural settings. It is the method, which conducts research in the native environment to see people and their culture behaviour given all the real world incentives and constraints (Fetterman, 1989). Thus the fieldwork method has been used intensively and with great importance to conduct the present research successfully. And this became helpful to understand the daily lives of the villagers in their agrarian relations and settings for greater outcome.

“Methods of structured and unstructured interviewing play great roles in collecting data from the field and these are applied during the fieldwork in this research. Structured interviewing involves exposing all the information in a sample to the same stimuli that may be a set question; and unstructured interviewing means involving people informally during their course of an ordinary day of participant observation” (Bernard, 1988: 203). However, in this case a questionnaire has been used. In social science research the method of questionnaire is important which develops by listing a number of questions to the information to know and identify various dimensions (McNeill, 1990). Such a method has been used in this research to obtain information about various dimensions of the study and which helped to get data on issues like the behaviour of the villagers, their way of thought, pattern of agrarian class relations, dominant mode of production in the village, agrarian class structure, their agriculture based everyday life as well as the impact of modernization and capitalization in the village and on their lives in general.

The methods of emic perspective, that is the insiders or natives’ perspective of reality and the etic perspective that is the researcher’s external or outsider’s social science perspective of reality, in terms of understanding the nature and integrating aspects of the lives of the village people in the study area, are being used in this research work. These helped in the instrumental perception of

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reality to the understanding and accurately describing the situations and real life understanding as well as behaviour of the people involved.

Case study method has also been used in this study. A case study involves the indepth study of a single example of whatever it is that the researcher wishes to investigate. With this method the actor or individual's point of view are compiled and incorporated in this research. Within a limited time scale this allowed the researcher to concentrate on the specific instances or situations to identify various interactive and integrating aspects of the villagers at work. This method helped in testing and analyzing all the theoretical and conceptual issues to make the research work more applied, pioneer and rationale in nature.

An organized and well-developed checklist has been used in this study that included the important indicators related to the study. This helped the research work to be conducted in a more symmetrical and systematic way. In this case an ethnographic or fieldwork diary has also been used to note all credentials, mistakes as well as information and notes done or collected during fieldwork. In this visualized and technological world of communication the use of camera in collecting photographs on several activities of the villagers and other related issues is a live presentation and understanding of information and data in this study. Apart from using different qualitative methods and techniques, some quantitative or statistical methods and techniques have also been incorporated in the study. In this regard, and to prepare the collected data, some statistical tools such as SPSS, graphs, charts and tabling have been used both in and after the field.

1.10 Sources of Data Collection

Data collection is one of the important major tasks in conducting the research and during the fieldwork it carries much of its interest with the intention of the researcher about how this data collection process can be materialized in an organized way. Different kinds of sources can be used in this regard. However, in conducting this research and for gathering data both primary and secondary sources of data have been used. Primary sources of data collection for this research are those that have been directly obtained from the field and through the close contact with the responding people during the fieldwork. These are then raw data based on the primary sources that are firsthand contact with the people under study. Besides primary sources; data have also been collected from the secondary sources that is, from various books, journals, articles, statistical information, daily newspapers, magazines, etc. to support the research work from the very beginning. Moreover, The National Archive, World Bank Library, Central Library of Dhaka University, local *Thana* Office, different Government organizations, etc. are some other bodies of secondary

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sources from which valuable information, data and papers have been collected and support has been received. These secondary sources helped in the formulation of some of the concepts and basic notes or background information about agrarian class structure, mode of production, geographical and demographical information of the study area or the village under study, and various other supporting issues respectively. Taken together both primary and secondary sources of data collection worked as fuel to keep the machine of the study running, grounding and validating.

1.11 Techniques of Data Analysis

To maintain the rationality of the research findings and its systematic analysis one of the most important tasks of the researcher is to properly organize the raw data collected from the field for analyzing them in a more interpretive way. Sometimes data analysis is equated with statistical analysis, but this is quite unfortunate because the process of data analysis in a qualitatively designed research is more complicated and hence demands a strong care than performing typical statistical operations on the data. In search for a meaningful analysis these data are coded properly, transferred and processed through a machine, usually a computer and then these are re-organized with the help of statistical tools including classification, SPSS, tabulation, graphs, charts, and analysis. These are all the steps and techniques that have been taken into account by the researcher in the present study.

Moreover, in terms of having an indepth analysis about the agrarian class structure and mode of production in a Bangladesh village the raw data and information are first gathered from the respondents in the field. In this case the researcher depended upon a single variable and the level of measurement of most of the variables is nominal and interval scale. To understand the different dimensions of the subject matter the statistical analysis of the study is confined with frequency distribution and percentage. Based on both primary and secondary sources of data collection the researcher has interpreted the results with a fruitful qualitative and quantitative analysis of data.

1.12 Pains and Pleasures of Fieldwork

In conducting the present study the researcher has faced different pains and pleasures during fieldwork which were both subjective and objective in nature. Some of these have been envisaged before starting the fieldwork while others cropped up either as surprise or shock during the study. But it is obvious that all sort of sociological and anthropological fieldworks do bear some problems, constraints as well as successes. According to Chowdhury “fieldwork makes the research work spontaneous, enjoyable, unforgettable as well as memorable.

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The pleasures of fieldwork are immense but the pains are no less” (Chowdhury, 1985: 108). In the present study after getting the primary preparations of collecting materials and several other issues in regard to the problem of the study at hand the researcher went on to work in the field to conduct the research successfully. In a similar sequence the researcher had some pains as well as pleasures during the study and these are described in the following sections.

i) Pains

Accommodation is the first and foremost problem faced by me during the fieldwork. It was not possible to have proper accommodation to stay long time in the field due to the lack of any suitable housing facilities. Moreover, the ecological feature of the study area located in the coastal and char zones reveals the fact that the salinity of water is very high and this caused several problems including lack of pure drinking water and bath among others. There is not any well developed road communication in the village and this made it difficult to walk for different households. It is almost natural that a feeling of homesickness became prone after having dissolved all the enthusiasm and excitement to conduct the study. This is because of leaving the families and some memories behind, but for the time being. After getting into the day to day lives of the villagers this started to remove and the focus moved to conducting the field.

The pains, in some instances, came from the utter dissatisfaction and resentment from the local people with different degrees of responses. Traditionally the village women (both married and unmarried) use *purdah* and *ghomta* and hesitate to come in front of any strangers. Even though the researcher was a female, the women appeared with long *ghomta* and *purdah* which made it difficult to communicate with them easily. Again due to their respectness to the women, the male members of the study village hesitated, at first, to talk or to have any direct or indirect communication with the researcher. But all these constraints resolved after a period of time. The villagers were surprised to see a female researcher conducting fieldwork and living away from family and home. As a part of their religious belief to make any sin, they disagreed to take their photographs.

It was not surprising that when the researcher used to talk about their assets and income positions at the very beginning they showed their disliking disclosing any information. The responses were different for different classes of people of the village. Moreover, the rich people were very sensitive to speak about their relationship (class relationship) with the poor people. Similarly the poor responded having a fear in mind about the richer section of the village.

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These people were also not very open in discussing about political affairs, inter and intra-social affairs and the pattern of making decisions both within and outside the household and village. This revealed the fact at the beginning the villagers were very selective about the questions asked. All these made several constraints in conducting the fieldwork.

ii) Pleasures

Pains are a common part of conducting any research, but there exists a feeling of pleasure beneath this. From the very beginning the research seemed to be as an adventure for discovering and understanding new things. All the incidents are remaining in memory which includes enjoying talking to the people, sometimes having a lonely walk through the mud roads, sitting with the village women and gossiping, going to the market place and so on. All these put me back to my youth age. Here it was enjoyable to see the interplay of light and shade in the golden fields of *hemanta* evenings. The village Char Dumla has become a part of long lasting memory. The village people are like close kin and this resulted because of having close contact with them for long time fieldwork. What seemed to be shocking at the beginning, after spending some times closely with the village people this was resolved. People from all classes started to response very well and this helped in conducting the research with more ease. Support from the administrators, both from the local and *thana* level, is also mentionable where they were very helpful.

Above all the motion of understanding the rural reality, particularly the status of the *char* people, is wordless. The rural setting is a different picture and all the features belonging to it have a different meaning showing the nature of rural ways of life. This is the emotional attachment to the village people that made the study more integrative, intensive and a part of great pleasure and satisfaction.

1.13 Literature Review

This is an intensive study about agrarian class structure and mode of production in a Bangladesh village. In a predominantly rural society like Bangladesh people are basically dependent on agriculture. The focus of the present study is class relationships in the agrarian society of Bangladesh and the modes of production that exists in the agriculture of Bangladesh. We propose to make a review of the existing literature relevant to our present study before our present investigation. However, the following literatures have been reviewed for the purpose of present study.

Agrarian Change and Economic Development: The Historical Problems is a book edited by the authors Jones and Woolf (1969) focused on the role of agriculture in the

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“Western Model” of economic development in several regions of the world. This book contains the essays of several authors including the editors that are concerned with historical examples of change within particular agricultural systems and their implications for national economic development. Thus the book examines the crucial relationship between the agrarian change and economic development from a historical perspective.

It has been stated by the authors that the common features of the irrigated agriculture was the immense power of a state apparatus based on a bureaucracy concerned with defense against external threat and the internal maintenance of its own position. By taking a grand view of history they further added that these bureaucracies aimed at, and succeeded in maintaining, vast peasant societies through long ages and at all population densities in a state of virtual homeostasis. This work on the agrarian aspect reflects the growing conviction that the long-run patterns of Western agrarian development are likely to suggest more effective solutions to the difficulties of the underdeveloped world than have been obtained from the unimaginative importation of Western technology.

The authors mentioned that in those countries with passive industrialization a new farmer class evolved, and with regional exchanges of certain agricultural products such as cereals, livestock and wool merchant institutions developed in medieval times for growing moderate towns. Thus, in their observation farming for the market reached unprecedented heights of intensity around the textile town's of late medieval Flanders. In this process the authors have treated the period before 1914 and declared that so much of the world's has engaged in farming throughout so much of human history, and so much is still so engaged, that the vicissitudes and attainments of agriculture present almost immeasurable problems of description. Moreover, they argued that the process of economic development forms parts and parcel of pervasive societal changes of which the prime causes are not self-evident.

In discussing about the agrarian change and economic development by taking into account the historical problems the authors further mentioned about the historical relationship between agricultural and economic development in Italy where it is suggested that a general, continuous, maintained process of economic development has never occurred without an expanding agricultural sector that might have formed the condition for an industrial advance in the country. Again they have discussed about the landownership pattern and economic growth in England in the 18th century by focusing on the problems that involve connections between the behaviour of landowners and the course and level of sections of economic activity. They stated about the labour supply and demand in European agriculture in between 1800 and 1880 where

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historically the small grains harvest has been the main farm operation to create an exceptional demand for labour, agricultural improvement in Japan from 1870-1900 in which the growth of industry was matched by an increase in the productive capacity of agriculture, the agriculture and economic development in Africa from 1880-1914 where the role of agriculture in economic development has a strange foreign ring, and the Mexican agrarian reform since 1910-1960 where the overall performance of the Mexican economy since the 1940s remained impressive. However, this is a work based on the significant historical agrarian relations through changes in the Western model that can provide some valuable insights in understanding the agrarian relations and mode of production with the impact of modern equipments (the fruit of industrialized world) in the village taken for present study.

Hindess and Hirst (1975), in the book *Pre-capitalist Mode of Production*, has tried to discuss about different types of mode of production that are operative in the agriculture of different countries of the world. Here this has been viewed as a work of Marxist theory. The major objectives of the study is to investigate the various pre-capitalist mode of production that are being briefly stated as well as indicated in the works of Marx and Engels. From this the authors went on to examine the conditions of the transition from one mode of production to another respectively. Both Hindess and Hirst have taken into consideration the fundamental concepts for their investigation in the nature and strategy of the pre-capitalist mode of production such as the concepts of mode of production, of necessary-labour and surplus-labour, of politics and the state, and so on that are being derived from other works of Marx. The aim their analysis is to raise the conceptualization of several issues regarding mode of production and of transition to a more rigorous level of understanding.

However, in discussing different types of mode of production and status such as primitive communism, politics and state, ancient mode of production, slavery, Asiatic mode of production, feudal mode of production, the transition from feudalism to capitalism they made an attempt either to construct a general concept of that mode of production or else to show that such a general concept cannot be produced. In this regard they visualized some issues regarding different types of mode of production and some of these are: that there is no Asiatic mode of production, that the feudal mode of production requires neither serfdom nor seigniorial power, and that the transition between one mode of production and another must be conceived in a non-evolutionary form which would appear controversial to both Marxists and non-Marxists. By taking all these issues in mind both the authors opined that the object of Marxist theoretical analysis, the current situation, is constituted within political practice and this does not refer to surrender to the dictates of pragmatism. Marxist politics is only possible on the condition that it is based on theory, that

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its problems, programs and practices are defined by and subject to the criticism of theory. Thus, in this regard, the authors considered the abstractions and generalities in their book to be pertinent to the present.

In the book *Agrarian Capitalism in Theory and Practice* the author Mann (1989) has discussed about a longstanding controversy in the sociological theory on the nature of resistance to wage labour in agriculture. In conducting her work among the South American agriculture Mann has adopted an interdisciplinary approach and drew insights from history and economics as well as sociology. Mann is of opinion that capitalist development in agriculture has been slower and more uneven than in other spheres of production and that major parts of the rural economy remain almost pre-industrial in their reliance on family labour, lack of separation between industry and household and failure to develop a highly specialized division of labour. In this regard and also in this highly theoretical work on agrarian capitalism she has focused on the theory of agrarian structure and change in the principles of classical Marxism and contemporary neo-Marxist thought, and has also crafted an original and sophisticated theoretical framework for the analysis of agricultural production and rural society.

Taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of major classical theories of agrarian capitalism Mann has identified the differences between the production processes in agriculture and those of industry by presenting a theory of natural obstacles to the use of wage labour and also by combining diverse methodologies. Thus analyzing the U.S. Agricultural Census data she has shown the correlations between the types of agricultural commodities, their natural and technical features, and the use of wage labour. However, in discussing about the rural production process in relation to the differences in the social organization of production she has used a commodity-specific analysis to examine whether a given type of farming has any relationship to the use of wage and family labour.

Using a historical-comparative approach in her work she has made an investigation about the persistence of non-wage labour in Southern American cotton production after the Civil War. In this process she has examined that why sharecropping, rather than wage labour, replaced slavery in the older cotton-producing regions of the Southeastern United States. From this she went on to discuss about the domestic and international factors that finally led to the demise of sharecropping and the rise of wage labour in the decades following the Great Depression. Thus in this historical study of the rise and demise of sharecropping, she has highlighted the interplay between nature, gender, race, and class by closely examining both natural and social obstacles to wage labour within the context of a global economy. However, in this work on

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the theory and practice regarding agrarian capitalism Mann has tried to answer the agrarian question on how the development of capitalism has been integrally related to the development of capitalists' ability to control and subordinate - to civilize nature where this is a new framework to examine the social history of the American South in particular.

The work of Bêteille (1974) on *Studies in Agrarian Social Structure* is an attempt to study the agrarian structure in the Indian subcontinent in the late 1960s. It is Bêteille who is the first person to provide with serious thought regarding the study of the agrarian structure Indian society from an anthropological perspective. He has conducted his study in a village in South India where he figured out that the transformation of land into a commodity has rendered the way for creating a change in the relationship between caste and agrarian hierarchy.

Bêteille has observed the population of the village under study from two viewpoints and these are: firstly from caste relations such as Brahmin, Non-Brahmin, and *Adi-Dravida*; and secondly the class relations among the landowners, tenants, and agricultural labourers. With these he went on to analyze the process of change with respect to agrarian relations in a system of hierarchy. Bêteille also tried to establish some theoretical formulations regarding agrarian structure in Indian society. Despite avoided in defining the agrarian structure in the Indian agriculture, he indeed pointed to the issues like ownership, control, and the use of land as focal points to conduct study on Indian agrarian structure. From these he made an attempt to define the agrarian hierarchy as the production process based on family labour, wage-labour, and tenancy. Besides all these factors he failed to determine the predominant mode of production in his study area, in particular, and in the Indian agriculture, in general.

Bose (1984), in her book *Agrarian Bengal: Economy, Social Structure and Politics 1919-1947*, has tried to draw important conclusions about the peasant politics in general and about the effects of international economic fluctuations on primary producing countries like India. In this regard she has developed a general typology of systems of agrarian production and distribution in Bengal to show how these responded to different types of pressure from the world economy, and treats in detail the effects of the effects of the 1930s World Depression on Bengal.

Bose has organized the book into two parts where the focus of the first part is on the agrarian economy and society with an understanding of the structure and trends, and the focus of the second part is on the issue of peasants and the politics related with them. Through this book she has challenged some of the

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ruling orthodoxies in the modern social and political history of rural Bengal. She has taken into account the impact of the global crisis of the 1930s on the agrarian economy and society of the region and the implications it had for the nature of peasant politics in the climatic decades of British rule in India.

The author has made an indepth analysis about the relationship between demographic change and production for the market, and the product, credit and land markets as well as the links between them where particular attention has been paid to the working and rupture of rural credit relations which not only transmitted international economic fluctuations but also formed the key thread in the texture of agrarian relations within the region. She further opined that the chain of credit relationships provided the transmission belt along which fluctuations in the world market, compounded by the colonial government's financial policies, were mediated to the regional economy.

By comparison, to Bose, it has been in situations of a clear-cut class dichotomy between rich farmers or village landlords and sharecroppers, as in the rich farmer-sharecropper system of the frontier regions in Bengal, that the weakening of landlord repression has provided the best field for class-based agitation and political radicalism. However, in this process, she has also pointed out the issues of proletarians including the market in land and the question of change in the social organization of production, agrarian class conflict, nationalism and communalism in east Bengal, agrarian relations and mass nationalism in west Bengal, and the sharecroppers' agitations in the frontier regions, etc. Taking into account all these issues she declared that religion, described as a crucial component of communal consciousness, to some extent imparted a sense of collectivity and an ideological legitimization in a specific historical conjuncture when the balance of class power in the countryside had already changed. Thus this work on the aspects of economy, social structure and political implications is an attempt to visualize the contemporary situations of the agrarian Bengal.

In the book *Agrarian Social Structure: Continuity and Change in Bihar, 1786-1820* Mitra (1985) has aimed at an analysis of the impact of the Permanent Settlement of 1793 on the rural socio-economic structure of the non-tribal areas of Bihar with particular reference to a few districts- *Patna, Gaya, Tirhut* and *Purnea* in India. In other words, this is an attempt by the author to understand the roots of *Bihars'* backwardness in terms of its agrarian history.

In discussing about the agrarian social structure with an historical understanding Mitra is of opinion that while other studies have mainly looked at the impact of specific and recent land reforms measures on changes in structure of landed society in parts of *Bihar* or examined the emergence of

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agrarian movements, the present work deals with the processes of continuity and change in the context of Permanent Settlement. Thus large holdings and capitalist investment in agriculture, according to Mitra, had existed side by side with debt bondage from the later half of the 19th century, and in rural *Bihar* the law had no meaning and only the strong arm of the landlord backed by the police set the limit for exploitation.

Mitra has also further mentioned that British rule, introduced into the province in 1765, became responsible for the introduction of definite measures into the socio-economic and political fabric of *Bihar*, which determined the growth of the province in a particular direction. However, in this work the author has tried to re-examine the notion that the Permanent Settlement brought about a sharp distinction in the Pre-British agrarian social structure. Thus in making sense of the continuity and changes in the agriculture of Bihar in the late 18th and early 19th centuries under the rule of East India Company, Mitra has considered several aspects of the operations of the land market, movement of rents, development of commercial agriculture, and stratification within peasant society, and their long range impact that influences *Bihars'* political economy to the present day. Therefore, the growth of *Zamindari* system, introduction of a new land settlement, new aspects for the agricultural production in the land, several class determination among the *Bihar* peasant society, and also the system of rent in the agriculture of *Bihar* are some of the crucial point to be figured out by the author that are seen as operative in the society which provide us with a contemporary picture of the agrarian social structure among the peasants of Bihar in a large scale.

In the book *The Agrarian Policy of the British in Bengal: The Formative Period, 1698-1772* Mukhopadhyay (1987) has tried to discuss about the land revenue system of the British in Bengal from the time when in 1698, they occupied a group of villages and acquired the status of the *Zamindar* of Calcutta. In this regard he is of opinion that after the battle of *Palassey* the Company's sphere of revenue collection increased and besides Calcutta, they became the collector of revenues of the rented district of 24-*Parganahs* and the ceded districts of *Burdwan*, *Midnapore* and *Chittagong*.

In discussing about the agrarian policy of the British in Bengal Mukhopadhyay mentioned that the land revenue collection was an important source of income of the state from the earliest times and the fiscal policy of the Indian rulers in the pre-British days was mainly based on land revenue, and in this context the agrarian policy of the Hindu and Muslim rulers of India had been adopted and moduled by the British according to the changed circumstances of their colonialism. Thus, essentially, the period was one of transition and the British assumed direct power of the *Subah* of Bengal. In this process, in 1765, the

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grant of *Dewani* brought them the whole *Subah* where they enforced their own modes of taxation and of revenue collection.

Moreover, the author has emphasized on the issue of the Company's *Zamindari* in Bengal, the Company as the collector of revenue, the grant of *Dewani* to the Company, land revenue administration under the British colony, the activities of the British administrators as the supervisors of revenue at the district levels, failure in the land revenue administration and the tide of famine in Bengal, the intervention of Warren Hastings and the Company's direct management of the land revenues in the Bengal. Thus, as he revealed, the British colonizers gave up the policy of the *Mughals*, introduced cash currency and recognized the individual land ownership, while retaining the personnel of the *Mughals*.

Relevant to this order of revenue collection by the British in the contemporary times the author also figured out that the profit-motive of the British miscarried the spirit of *Dewani*, brought chaos and anarchy throughout, resulting in the Great Famine of 1770-71. At the end it has been observed by the author that the experiment by the British in this regard and also in the formative period was a failure that finally forced the Company's authorities in 1772 to take up direct responsibility of assuming the agrarian policy of the province. Therefore, this work on the issue of agrarian policy in the Bengal at the British period is a clear document to have an idea of the contemporary conditions.

In the book *Agrarian Structure and Productivity in Bangladesh and West Bengal: A Study in Comparative Perspective* Saha (1997) has tried to develop an integrated approach of comparative analysis of agrarian change in Bangladesh and West Bengal. The main hypothesis of the author is to examine the prevailing agrarian structure in the study areas where this may act as an impediment to the dissemination of new technologies resulting in endemic low growth potential, if not stagnation of agriculture. In this process the author argued for understanding the influence of agrarian structure on technology adoption and productivity that lead to certain type of surplus utilization with their continual regeneration on progressively higher levels.

Again in this study Saha tried to analyze the effects of the interaction between agrarian structure and the adoption of technology for determining production, productivity and growth performance in Bangladesh and West Bengal by demonstrating striking differences in the level of capitalist relations prevailing in the study areas. After analyzing various data, reports and documents the author went on to state that the initial situation with regard to agrarian structure was more in-egalitarian in West Bengal than in Bangladesh. In this process he has given a comparative picture of legislative reforms undertaken to

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change the agrarian structure in both the countries since the late 1940s to prove the point that West Bengal has made more serious efforts in this regard than Bangladesh. Saha also argued that given the nature of political regime West Bengal could have gone through radical reforms such as low ceiling on landownership for drastic redistribution of land or for collectivization of agriculture, which could have contributed more to growth and equity.

The author has also provided a comparative picture of the operations of land, labour, credit markets and the pattern of technology in the study areas, and some of the major issues in this regard are: the structure of landownership in West Bengal has been less unequal than in Bangladesh as a result of agrarian reforms, the tenants in West Bengal enjoy the privilege of higher security of tenure and access to credit markets as well as government support services than in Bangladesh, in terms of the adoption of technology less differences are seen in both the study areas where shift from sharecropping to fixed rent tenancy is evident, and in spite of favorable changes in agrarian structure the practice of interlocked transactions were more relevant in West Bengal than in Bangladesh. Thus all these issues suggest that agrarian structure was less serious a constraint to the development of productive forces than biophysical and economic factors such as dependence of crop cultivation on the vagaries of monsoon, depth of flooding and poor drainage, policies for supporting public versus private sector investment for flood control, drainage, irrigation and so on.

Saha has examined the impact of technology on the productivity of land across different farm sizes and tenurial groups, and on the intensity of land use and changes in crop patterns where he found almost similar type of picture in both the areas and demonstrated that the inverse relationship between farm size productivity for traditional farming system in the areas weakened to some extent with the adoption of new technology, but the inverse relationship between people still holds.

The author also discussed about the issue of generation and utilization of agricultural surplus and stated that in Bangladesh agriculture surplus is diverted to investment in non-farm activities, housing improvement and higher education of children to augment their capability to move out of agriculture. On the other hand in West Bengal it is seen that with the gradual diffusion of the new technology the rich and the semi-absentee landowners got interested in agricultural investment particularly in tube wells and for diversification of farming from rice and wheat to non-cereal crops such as vegetables and oil seeds. However, in both the regions it is found that small farmers use a larger portion of surplus farm income for capital accumulation in agriculture than in non-farm activities. At the end the author concluded by saying that West

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Bengal is ahead of Bangladesh in transforming agrarian structure in response to the needs for smooth functioning of the markets and the exploitation of the growth potential, and the main impact has been on the capacity of the rural areas to retain agricultural surplus for its own development. With these findings this study attempted to focus on the divergent issues in both the areas though having some lack for going into an indepth analysis of available data to make the issues more generating regarding the agrarian system on the whole.

Agrarian Studies: Essays on Agrarian Relations in Less-Developed Countries is a book edited by the authors Ramachanran and Swaminathan (2002) where they have discussed about the agrarian relations in different parts of the world such as Latin America, South Asia, South Africa, and so on with some theoretical perspectives on the issues like agrarian relations, human development, and land reform system in the regions comparatively.

In discussing about the agrarian systems of different countries of the world the authors have mentioned that the transformation of rural societies in the third world in the era of globalization is one of the most significant processes of social change in the contemporary world. Thus, in there observation, the majority of the people of less-developed countries are still rural, their lives and work bound up with the relations of production in rural economies. In this process, the accelerated introduction of policies of stabilization and structural adjustment in the 1980s and 1990s had wide-ranging and profound implications for the third world countryside.

Here the authors further viewed that the policies of the contemporary time regarded as active for several issues such as for agrarian relations and the development of capitalism in the countryside, for programs of local government and, ultimately, for the conditions of life and work of hundreds of millions of people in the less-developed countries of the world. In this regard the authors have tried to integrate some wide range of theoretical issues and empirical experiences where these help in addressing the questions of the effectiveness and reliability of different types of land reform by focusing on the macroeconomic context of liberalized trade and mobile financial flows respectively.

This book tries to illustrate the facts and changes in the agrarian relations in the context of globalization in the countries like Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Cuba, China, and Bangladesh. Again the book emphasizes on identifying the nature of and constraints on land reforms in the contemporary period. Here it has been tried by the authors to discuss on the Indian experience ranging from macroeconomic trends and state wise patterns to a study of a particular village over two decades by taking into account the concerns and worries with regard

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to the impact on the rural working people of new policies of globalization and liberalization. However, in this work the emphasis has been given to the study of agrarian relations, presentation of land relations, changes in agrarian relations and livelihoods in the rural areas, relations of agriculture, employment and poverty, and also the economic and social vulnerability in the rural areas on an understanding of how these work on the lives of the people of these regions in general.

In the book *Bangladesher Krishite Dbonnotontreer Bikash* Akhlakur Rahman (1974) has discussed about the issue of capitalistic mode of production in the agriculture of Bangladesh with the Marxian economic perspective. He is of opinion that the ownership of land by the cultivators in the rural Bangladesh is the distinctive and main feature of land system in the country and on the basis of ownership pattern he viewed the peasant society as being divided into three broad categories such as small, middle and reach peasants.

In discussing about the development of capitalism in the country he pointed out that majority of the rural population belong to the small peasant category owning 23% of the total cultivable land, whereas the reach peasants owing 30% and the middle peasants owning 47% of the total cultivable land disproportionately. In this regard Rahman mentioned that the rich peasants are the rural bourgeoisies whereas the middle peasants are the petty bourgeoisies. From this he went on to say that in terms of rural Bangladesh the middle peasants are the dominant sections, while the landless and small peasants are the rural proletariat or semi- proletariat where it is the rich peasants who exploit the landless, small and even a part of middle peasants considerably. To him, forms of differentiation, division of labour, and contradictions are some of the key indicators for the development of capitalism in rural agriculture.

In terms of sharecropping Rahman stated that it is an existing form of social arrangement in Bangladesh agriculture where landless peasants are taking 3% of the total land for sharecropping and made a rough estimation that though the exact size of sharecropping land by owner-sharecroppers is not known, but this can be expected to be not more than 19.5% of total cultivable land. From this Rahman went on to argue that sharecropping is not the dominant form of agriculture in the country.

He has also discussed about the wage labour in agriculture and to him this system has developed due to the cumulative differentiation among the peasantry. In discussing about the development of capitalism in agriculture he further mentioned about the use of modern technology or machinery in Bangladesh agriculture that is increasing quite rapidly. In this regard he has mentioned that irrigation, HYV seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides,

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introduction of industrialized agricultural credit are some of the indicators for the growth of capitalism in the country's agriculture. This has led to the development of mechanization of agriculture significantly in contrast to the traditional methods, and also to the increased crop intensity. Though small peasants and fragmentation of land are strong barriers to extensive mechanization of agriculture, but the present conditions, according to Rahman, are the characteristics of capitalism, and these further enhances the chance for division of labour.

Another issue for the extension of division of labour is the development of cottage industries, and to Rahman, these have accelerated the commodity production further, which is becoming the general feature of agricultural production in the country today. In dealing with the commercialization as well as marketization of agricultural production Rahman calculated that 70% of total commercial crops are produced and sold in the market as commodity and these empirical facts of Rahman help to substantiate his claim that capitalism is the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture. Although this work of Rahman helps in the articulation of capitalistic mode of production in agriculture but he has not provided any definition of mode of production. Moreover, he has not developed any systematic theoretical background about the nature of development of capitalism in agriculture and the resultant social dynamics including the impact on agrarian class relations in rural Bangladesh as well.

In the book titled *Jhagrapur: Poor Peasants and Women in a Village in Bangladesh* Arens and Beurden (1977) have discussed about the conditions of peasants and women in the village *Jhagrapur* of *Gangni Thana* in the district of *Kushtia* in Bangladesh. In this process they have observed and classified the agrarian population of the village into four categories- poor peasants, middle peasants, rich peasants, and landlords. They figured out that in the village agriculture most poor peasants are forced to sell their labour and most labourers used to find employment within or close to their own village.

In determining the dominant mode of production in agriculture both the writers have mentioned about three important aspects and these are- the nature of relationship between two classes (those who are actually cultivating land and those who are appropriating the surplus), rate of mechanization and division of labour, and impact of national and international economy on the local production system visible in the rapid extension of commercialization of agriculture and in the extent of cultivation of cash crops. They observed that production in the village has been organized by tenancy and wage-labour and claimed that the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh is far from being

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the “peasant mode” because there are very few households in the village who neither sold their labour nor hired labour, neither they took loans nor gave any. The authors further demonstrated that although there are symptoms of patron-client relationship persisting sharecropping and some other power existing opportunities for the landlords, these are only the remnants of feudalism in *Jhagrapur*. However, almost 40% of all families, most belonging to the middle peasant category, sharecropped some land, but poor peasants often found it difficult to become sharecroppers. Thus the level of apprehension of being evicted among sharecroppers was very high in the village that reveals the nature of class exploitation. They opined that the region was more traditional with more feudal traits, but at the same time the capitalist characteristics were also surfacing. Moreover, Arens and Beurden thought that it is not possible to conclude what exactly was the main contradiction in that area, nor is it possible for them to determine the dominant mode of production by one element only. In this regard they believed that the germ of capitalistic development was present in *Gangni Thana*. Nonetheless, the authors do not want to call it capitalistic agriculture, and they described the present status as neither feudal nor capitalist.

They also rejected the notion of colonial mode as used by Alavi (1975) as it would not explain the nature of class contradiction in rural Bangladesh, particularly after the advent of Pakistani regime. They have also objected in calling it “semi-feudal” because this would not reveal the contradiction between surplus peasants and land labour as it is fast emerging. Moreover, they have rejected to describe it as “pre-capitalist” as this would not specify about the class contradiction in the village or telegram for the matter. In this process they have pleaded to describe the mode of production prevailing in rural Bangladesh in such a manner that all of the above characteristics can be coped with.

In her book *Mode of Production in Bangladesh* Westergaard (1978) has tried to study about the existing agrarian class relations and then went on to determine the nature and characteristics of the mode of production in Bangladesh in general, and in the village of *Baringram* in the district of *Bogra*, in particular. In this process and also relating her studies with the Indian debate she has tried to point out the features of capitalism in the agriculture of Bangladesh as whether this can be referred to as the capitalistic mode of production or not at all. To identify the actual situation and to measure the existing pattern of mode of production in the village she figured out that the population of the village can be categorized into four different classes and these are: (a) landless peasants, (b) marginal peasants, (c) subsistence peasants which includes small and medium peasants, and (d) surplus peasants.

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Again Westergaard is of opinion that among these peasants the landless households depend entirely on selling labour and do not own any land whereas the marginal peasants own insufficient land to maintain their family and household; besides this they are also forced to seek for employment opportunity outside the village or to take land in lease for cultivation or they have the opportunity to take the both. Along with these some peasants have the surplus production in agriculture and thus enjoy of having capital and modern equipment in hand for agriculture. Here the author found that the accumulated surplus of these peasants is utilized in diversified ways in most of the instances such as in the form of money lending, trade, purchase of land, education of the children, etc. However, by considering all these issues she has argued that the *Baringram* data do not point towards a trend towards capitalistic relations of production in agriculture.

Following Patnaik (1976) Westergaard also claimed that the use of wage labour in agriculture would not necessarily refer to the development of capitalism in agriculture in the village. She has pointed to the tendency to describe the dominant mode of production as “semi-feudal” which is based on the belief that tenancy and sharecropping are incompatible with capitalism; accordingly wage-labour is also the principle indicator for capitalist production. Taking all these facts she is of opinion that the use of wage-labour in agriculture dose not necessarily indicate towards the presence of capitalistic mode of production because in *Baringram* the sharecroppers are gradually being pushed below the agrarian social ladder and are treated as the farm labourers. This is, to her, not owing to the development of capitalism as such, but owing primarily to the growing population pressure in the land. Moreover she uttered that the accumulation and reinvestment should also be considered as the major defining criterion for capitalism and with this criterion the village under study could not claimed to have developed the articulation of capitalism at large.

Following these issues although Westergaard has admitted the process of pauperization in the village, but she has pointed out that it was not owing to considerable accumulation of land by a small-inflated group. Rather she mentioned that through the employment of their educated sons, as well as money lending and investment in non-agricultural activities, a rich and well-established peasant layer is able to stabilize its position while at the bottom an increasing number of peasants are forced off their land. Thus the process of class differentiation continues through a combination of ecological pressure and diversification of economic activity among the rich peasants. Therefore, theses are the major arguments developed by Westergaard while determining the dominating mode of production in the agriculture of Bangladesh.

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In his book titled *A Bangladesh Village: A Study of Social Stratification* Anwarullah Chowdhury (1978) has made an indepth study about the pattern of social stratification in a village in Bangladesh, namely in the village of *Meherpur* of Dhaka district. With this attempt he went on to figure out a dramatic picture of class relationships in the rural areas as well. In this regard he observed and pointed out that on the basis of ownership and non-ownership of land and also to capitalize on the issue of class relations the agrarian population of *Meherpur* can be categorized into three classes respectively and these are: i) landowners, ii) sharecroppers, and iii) landless labourers.

Again in pointing to the actual pattern of social stratification in the village Chowdhury further found that the landowning class was divided into two more categories – one is the rentiers and the other is the owner-cultivators. Here he also mentioned that the rentier section of the landowners did not work in the field and they were attached to the habit of renting out their land either in whole or in partial condition. This process, as the author found in the village, has led to such a practice where those people who rented land partly were engaged in wage-labour for cultivating their land under their own supervision. Moreover, in terms of the owner-cultivator section they tended to organize production mainly through their family labour in action.

In the social stratification pattern economy is one of the major causes and Chowdhury mentioned that the main income of the sharecroppers used to come from the land they leased in, and they also owned and cultivated small land-holdings. In the village, as figured out, the landless labourers did not own any land for their production purposes, but still they contributed their labour force in the process of production. This is because they were engaged in the land of the landowners or sharecroppers on the basis of daily wage. However, from these practices Chowdhury argued that these classes in *Meherpur* were classes-in-themselves and not classes-for-themselves, and he pointed to the reason for this that it is very doubtful whether class-consciousness among the members of all these three different classes. Thus all these are the factors that Chowdhury has mentioned in his study for the existing class relations, mode of production, and manifestation of social stratification in the village respectively.

In the book *Gram Anchale Dhonnontotrer Bikas (Development of Capitalism in Rural Areas)* Jahangir (1978) has admitted that capitalism is the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture and to him the major characteristics of the agricultural system in Bangladesh today can be described in the following terms: (1) though in different degrees, all classes – rich, middle, and poor peasants- have been engaged in the commodity production; (2) the difference between the poor peasants and the landless is of degree (or scale), but they too are an integral part of the capitalist production relations; (3) rich peasants are

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intensive in the land and are also leasing in the land to enlarge their scale of agricultural production; and (4) at the same time rich peasants, middle peasants, and sometimes even poor peasants are also leasing out land.

These characteristics, as mentioned by the author, are sometimes thought of as an articulation of several mode of production in terms of the rural society of Bangladesh. But Jahangir further mentioned that the diversities in the features of the relations of production are due to the presence of colonialism in this part of the world (in fact neo-colonialism) and particularly in the economy of Bangladesh. This has also been generated by private ownership of land and cumulative commodity of production. In this regard the author also added that these two systems have given the opportunity for using the wage of labour by rich peasants through wage and mortgage markets whenever necessary. Despite these they also keep the option for sharecropping arrangements whenever they suit them. In this process the author found that the landless and poor peasants are frequently found to engage themselves either as wage labour, or as sharecropper.

However, the author is of opinion that the production system for agriculture is mainly for marketing opportunity and in this way the in rural areas the investment is taking place. He further stated that policies of the state have led to the rise of rural entrepreneurs. Though Jahangir has discussed about different aspects of the mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture but he has not clearly defined the characteristics of capitalist mode of production, nor has he mentioned about the reinvestment of surplus production by the rich peasants. What we get from the work of Jahangir is the diversification of economic activities by the peasants and of their investment of surpluses in trade, money-lending, land-purchase, constructing houses, children's education, etc. By taking into consideration all these issues it can be said that through this work Jahangir has tried to construct a general profile of the development of capitalism in the rural areas of the country and accordingly it might be the reason that he has not reacted directly to the general theoretical debate on the subject matter of the development of capitalism in the agriculture of Bangladesh as a whole.

Differentiation, Polarization, and Confrontation in Rural Bangladesh is the other work of Jahangir (1979) where he has tried to observe as well as demonstrate a clear process class differentiation, polarization and also the pattern of confrontation within the small peasant economy of the rural areas of Bangladesh. To him these processes have led to the development or formation of a rich peasant stratum in the peasant agriculture on the one hand and a depressed stratum of impoverished peasants including middle and poor peasants on the other. In this process the author has identified that this has not only converted both the

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middle and poor peasants into labourers but also into consumers of food items that they purchase from the local market respectively.

Jahangir has also viewed that the principle source of livelihood of these peasants is the wage labour. Along with other peasants they take the opportunity to buy commodities from the local market that they previously did not use to do. This led him to take into account the fact that an increase in the use of wage labour and mechanization of production in agriculture has dominantly taken place in the rural areas. Thus market forces, diversifications in the government policies taken for both agriculture and economy, and the nature of the state structure – all these have acted as repressive factors for the above issues. Again these have profoundly influenced the systems of land and labour, primarily through the commodification of these factors of production.

However, in the same study the author argued that it is by accumulating land that the rich peasants are stabilizing their position in the rural areas where the poor peasants were forced to sell their land during natural calamities, man-made and other crises. These are the factors that further worked in the rural areas to facilitate the chance for both polarization and confrontation in the village agriculture. From all these observation Jahangir has come to the point that it is the rich peasants who gained the chance and became able to place their children in the non-agricultural jobs. This has further led them the opportunity to prevent their lands from being divided and subdivided in case of inheritance which is generally seen in case of the poor peasants, and these factors gave them the strength for capitalizing on their opportunity in action towards class differentiation, polarization and confrontation in the villages further.

The work of Chowdhury (1982) on *Agrarian Social Relations and Rural Development in Bangladesh* is one of the most important works regarding agrarian issues in Bangladesh. This has further added to the debate on different issues of agriculture in the country. In this way and by taking into account some micro and macro level data Chowdhury is of opinion that the dominant mode of production in the agriculture of Bangladesh cannot possibly be described either as the 'peasant mode' or 'capitalist mode' or even 'feudal mode'; rather it should be described as 'semi-feudal and semi-colonial mode of production' in action. In his term "the subsistence peasants who operate their farms or workshops mainly with family labour, who are self-sufficient, who never employ labourers or sell their labour to others, who are neither in debt nor lend money, and who are not involved in any kind of sharecropping arrangement, are not dominant in Bangladesh agriculture" (Chowdhury, 1982: 17).

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Chowdhury further mentioned that the present mode of production in the agriculture of Bangladesh couldn't be fully treated as capitalistic because an increase in the wage-labour category or a decrease in the owner-cum-tenant category does not necessarily indicate the emergence of capitalism in this context. In this regard the author pointed out to the facts that an increase in the wage-labour might be due to the growing demographic pressure on land and that modernization in agriculture has taken place in some areas only. He also viewed that yet there is no convincing evidence from available empirical studies to show that the surplus generated from agriculture by the rich peasants is invested for expansion of farms on operational holdings and boosting up the agricultural production in order to earn a still a higher rate of profit. With these factors Chowdhury has questioned the claim of those who herald the growth of capitalism in rural Bangladesh somewhat enthusiastically.

Again the author argued that the dominant mode of production in the agriculture couldn't be described in terms of the 'feudal mode' because there is no agrarian class of absentees living purely on rent. Here it is observed that the class of landowning does not appropriate the surplus labour in the form of rent, or through extractions and extra economic coercion. However, after the abolition of *Zamindari*, there is a change in the nature of exploitation and class structure. From this he went on to argue that a new class has emerged where *jotdar*, landed gentry, and rentier section of the landowning class and moneylenders are exploiting poor cultivators through the nexus of tenancy, wage-labour, and credit. Finally Chowdhury argued that the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture could best be described as semi-feudal and semi-colonial where the following reasons are thought to be significant for the above aspects: i) remnants of feudal exploitation are very much present in the shape of sharecropping which is the most proffered form of tenancy arrangement in rural Bangladesh; ii) in the 1977 Land Occupancy Survey, it was reported that owner-cum-tenants and pure tenants were 39% of total agri-household; besides tenants were making all investments for production while owners were paying only a negligible amount as annual revenue to the government and even owner-tenant relations often resembled to patron-client relations and sometimes to patron-tied (bonded) labour type arrangement also; iii) marginal farmers have been in perpetual indebtedness owing to frequent crop failure, floods, and droughts, and they tend to repay their loans in kind or in services rather than in cash; iv) big landowners are operating as landlords, moneylenders, government dealers, and marketing intermediaries at the same time; and v) government institutional credits are monopolized by big landowners where marginal or small peasants and sharecroppers have little or no access.

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Thus considering all these conditions Chowdhury has preferred to demonstrate the present system of production relations in the rural Bangladesh as 'semi-feudal', but at the same time 'semi-colonial' too, since he thinks that agriculture in Bangladesh has been closely associated with the international market system through export of jute, tea, etc. However, in this process the author wants to illustrate as well as interpret the pattern of exploitation of the landless labourers by the rich peasants or landowners as the secondary contradiction in the rural Bangladesh. At the end he presupposed that the main contradiction in the agriculture of this part of the world is feudal or semi-feudal, and the secondary contradiction in this regard is the capitalist one on the whole.

In the book *Changing Agrarian Structure in Bangladesh: Shimulia, A Study of A Periurban Village* Arefeen (1986) has tried to illustrate his debate regarding changing aspects of the agrarian structure in the village in Bangladesh. Depending on the data gathered from a peri-urban village near Dhaka district named *Shimulia*, he figured out that capitalist relations are developing very fast in the agriculture of Bangladesh. To him the traditional Muslim kinship organization in the village is disintegrating and also giving way to the formation and development of class relationships. With this he went on to argue that there is a polarization existing between rich members of a given *gushti* (lineage) where the rich families no longer feel obligated to help poor families of the same *gushti*. In this regard he has mentioned about some cases where rich farmers let their lands out for sharecropping to the non-kin tenants with non-kin considerations such as efficiency in farm management, entrepreneurial capability, resourcefulness, honesty, diligence, etc. including the factor for underlying the decision-making process. Arefeen argued that the principle reason for this practice is that rich farmers are looking forward to increase the level of profit from agriculture, and it is profit rather than rent receiving interests of the feudal variety, which is motivating the big landowners of *Shimulia* now a days.

Again Arefeen pointed out to the process of class differentiation in the *gushti* organization of the village. In this case he mentioned that rich families of different *gushti*, both high and low status, tend to create friendly relations among themselves, and in some cases, forged business partnerships with each other. Thus not only interests but also profitability has become increasingly the dominant basis of their relationship at large. The author also discussed about the commercial issue where the rich farmers in the village consider agriculture to be the commercial venture, and they invest in agriculture quite heavily in the form of buying modern inputs such as irrigation equipment, HYV seeds, chemical fertilizers, and insecticide, etc. in order to raise their productivity in the land. As a result of this they produce surplus profits, which they use efficiently to acquire more cultivable land and also to invest in different types

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of businesses such as import of yarn, wholesale and retail trading, construction activities, and contractual supplying of goods to various organizations outside in the village.

He has also discussed about a distinct type of sharecropping system that has developed in the village, which cannot be called tenancy in the ordinary sense; rather the rich farmers have become sharecroppers for absentee landowners who produce for the market. Arefeen mentioned that the superior sharecropping lands are taken by these farmers and the reminders of these lands are distributed to middle, subsistence, marginal, and landless farmers to create patronage that are later channeled into the factional politics in the village. Therefore, in this process the rich farmers have taken the position of overall supervisors on behalf of the absentee landowners.

Arefeen has again mentioned about a market relation that has emerged in relation to labour. With this he figured out that the use and practice of wage-labour in the land of the village is on the rise. This is obvious that in the village the poor farmers often sell their labour in nearby mills and factories as well as working as construction workers, porters, etc. Hence an increasing demand is seen for these temporary types of labour in the locality where their wages are 50% higher on an average than their agricultural wages. As a result, to Arefeen, the inflow of the outside agricultural labourers to the village has increased dramatically where these are the seasonal migrants and destitute labourers who are in abundant supply. Due to their lack of bargaining power and cheap rate the rich farmers preferably hire and use these labourers, and thus they can dissociate themselves from kinship and *samaj* obligation. However, with these observations the author has tried to illustrate the changing aspects of rural agrarian structure where these appear rather impressionistic, as they do not illuminate the process very well whereby agrarian class relationships have been undergoing transformation in the wake of capitalistic development in *Shimulia* at large.

Alam's (1987) work on *Mode of Production in Bangladesh Agriculture* published in *Sociology of Bangladesh: Problems and Prospects* by Chowdhury, et al. (1987) is an attempt to study about the pattern of mode of production in the agriculture of Bangladesh where his fieldwork is based in two villages of *Comilla* district namely *Shohagpur* and *Teligram*. In this work he is of opinion that the dominant mode of production in the agriculture of Bangladesh today is capitalism. He has discussed about the sharecropping pattern in the land where he figured out that this has been declining not only at *Shohagpur* or *Teligram* but also in other areas. To him, wherever it exists today, its persistence appears to be functionally suited to or molded to suit the new economic and technological requirements of capitalist ways of agricultural production system. He

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mentioned that in some ecological conditions, available technology, and crops, sharecropping are much more profitable than cultivation through hired wage-labour and thus the persistence of small-scale sharecropping is not the sign of pre-capitalist relations, rather it is persisting on a profitable basis.

Alam also talked about the issue of commodity in the village where it has been observed that labour has turned into commodity. In terms of *Comilla*, to him, where there is a shortage of local wage-labour, there is an extensive presence of the migrant wage-labour that plays a significant role in the village agriculture. Even the original family servants have now turned into a mode of paid employees of rich peasant households. In this case besides mode of payment of wage-labour in cash with rare exceptions of food and clothing, which, too, are calculated in money terms. In relation to this Alam is of opinion that at these days various sources of credit have more or less replaced the traditional moneylenders and here money lending is done not exclusively by the rich peasants, but also occasionally by the middle and even poor peasants, small shopkeepers, or local clubs. It is important to note that this money lending is only one of the varieties of ways in which the landowners utilize their surplus profits as well. This also gradually replaced the traditional patron-client relationships by more contractual form of relationships.

However, according to Alam, the traditional form of cooperative prevalent among the subsistence peasant households in both villages is also being replaced by modern wage-labour. He further observed that in *Teligram*, owing to ecological conditions and available technology, investment in agriculture is not very profitable beyond a certain point. Therefore, big landowners are always having some non-agricultural investments, which apply to the commercial village, too. In this regard he pointed to the factor that under the broad national and international capitalist framework, production is primarily taken for marketing purposes, both directly and indirectly. Here food production has also been commercialized as a sizable proportion of food crop is sold in the market. With all these issues Alam has tried to focus in his study that the traditional pattern of agriculture and production system is facing toward a change and that capitalism is playing a dominant role in this regard on the aspect of mode of production in rural Bangladesh on the whole. Thus, on the one hand, Alam has preferred to call the present form of capitalist agriculture as peripheral capitalism as the capitalist world market and foreign finance are exploiting Bangladesh peasantry, and on the other hand he has not elaborately discussed about how the emerging capitalism in rural Bangladesh looks for its expression in the agrarian class relations.

In the book *Rural Bangladesh: Competition for Scarce Resources* Jansen (1987) has made an extensive fieldwork among the peasants in the rural areas of

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Bangladesh. In this regard the author has tried to figure out the problems that are faced by the rural population due to the scarcity of land and also the lack of work opportunity. To find out the existing situation the author has organized his work by taking into account various aspects of the rural areas where the changing pattern in the ownership of land, competition of those people in the job market who have no land of their own, and also the status of the sharecropping system for obtaining the land have been analyzed for greater understanding.

In a similar sequence Jansen has also tried to describe and analyze the various economic strategies that the rich and poor peasants pursue, and the complex nature of the relationship that exists between them. Why patron-client relationships as a form of alliance between rich and poor peasants are a more typical form of adaptation than alliances based on class interests have also been generated in this study. Jansen mentioned that this work aimed to describe, on the basis of empirical evidence from the rural villages, the processes that led to poverty for most people and to the accumulation of poverty for a small group with the competition for scarce resources (as viewed that land in the most scarce resource). Jansen is of opinion that the 'winner' in these competitive relationships normally improves their standard of living and obtains a strengthened position in the society while for the 'losers' the result is increased impoverishment.

The author has conducted this study in *Bhaimara*, a village about 40 miles west of Dhaka, with a view to focus on the economic, political and social relationships between people in the rural areas. In terms of theoretical framework Barth's theory regarding social reality has been adopted for analytical framework. This has also taken into account the Marxist theory to discuss the economy, production and social relations in the rural areas. Jansen pointed out, by taking into account the physical and ecological description of the study area, different aspects of the households where these played as the 'decision-making unit' along with the pattern of transferring mechanism of land through mortgaging and selling.

Sharecropping has an important role to play in the village agriculture in which most of the households are engaged and the author also observes it that almost all the households of the village are involved in the labour market either as employers or employees including the method of wage labour. In this regard Jansen has tried to portray a rather neglected issue in rural studies in Bangladesh that is the understanding of different types of disputes over the ownership of land in the village. In support to these the author has pointed out the internal aspects of the village where the village is politically and economically integrated into a wider society with particular emphasize on

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various types of Government policies in rural Bangladesh. Therefore, all these are some of the most integrated issues that have regenerated in the study to figure out the actual condition of the rural areas of Bangladesh by focusing on the village *Bhaimara*.

However, these literatures are briefly reviewed here for an overall understanding about different aspects of the rural agrarian society in Bangladesh such as different dimensions of class structures, pattern of agrarian relations and mode of production, land based agrarian classes and relations of production circulating around the rural communities.

Chapter-2 Background of the Study Area

- 2.1 Bangladesh Scenario
- 2.2 Early History of *Noakhali* District
- 2.3 The Scenario of *Chars* in the Coastal Area
- 2.4 *Char*-Land Laws
- 2.5 Land Ceilings over the Period
- 2.6. Characteristics of *Char* Areas
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Chapter-2: Background of the Study Area



Map1: Bangladesh

2.1 Bangladesh Scenario

Location

Situated at the heart of the largest gulf and in the largest deltaic plain in the world, Bangladesh (*See Map 1*) enjoys a unique geographic position in the world. The territory constituting Bangladesh was under the Muslim rule for over five and a half centuries from 1201 to 1757 A.D. Subsequently, it was under the subjugation of the British after the defeat of the last sovereign ruler, Nawab Sirajuddowla, at the Battle of *Palassey* on the fateful day of June 23, 1757. The British ruled over the entire Indian sub-continent including their territory for nearly 190 years from 1757 to 1947 (BBS, 2002). During this period Bangladesh was a part of the British India provinces of Bengal and *Assam*. With the termination of the British rule in August 1947 the sub-continent was partitioned into India and Pakistan. Bangladesh was then a part of Pakistan and known as East Pakistan. It remained so for about 24 years from August 14, 1947 to March 25, 1971. It appeared on the world map as an independent and sovereign state on December 16, 1971 following the victory at the war of Liberation from March 25 to December 16, 1971 (Ibid).

Bangladesh lays in the North Eastern part of South Asia between 20° 34' and 26° 38' North Latitude and 88° 01' and 92 ° 41' east longitudes. The total area of the country is 56,977 square miles or 1, 47,570 square kilometers. However out of this 119624 sq. km. in effective land area, 8236 sq. km. river land area and 19710 sq. km. in forest area (Ibid). The limiter of the territorial waters of Bangladesh is 12 nautical miles and the area of the high seas extending to 200 nautical miles measured from the base lines constitutes the economic zone of the country. The total river line area in the country is 3521 square miles and forest area is 7420 square miles. On three sides i.e. West, North and East, the country is surrounded by India and has a small strip of boundary with Burma at the extreme South-East. In the South of the country there lies the Bay of Bengal and to the North-East the country is surrounded by the broad mass of the Assam range and the Shillong plates. The Himalayas are not far from its Northern boundary. Tertiary folds, which branch off from the Himalayas, run to the South through the Southern Sylhet along the Eastern border into Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts and continue into Burma as Arkan Yomas (Akhter, 1981). Dhaka is the capital and the largest metropolis of the country, and *Chittagong*, the port city, is the second largest metropolis. Metropolitan Dhaka had a population of about 6.9 million, *Chittagong* about 2.3 million, *Khulna* 1.0 million and *Rajshahi* 0.5 million in 1991. *Barisal*, *Sylhet*, *Mymensingh* and *Comilla* are some of the major towns of the country (Ibid).

Geographical Settings

Bangladesh is constituted mostly by alluvial plain passed over by a number of rivers and streams and spotted with *beels* or *jheels* and marshes. On the basis of physiography Bangladesh broadly falls into two main regions, first, the lower *Ganges-Brahmaputra* alluvial plain, and second, the *Chittagong* hill regions (Rabinson, 1978). The *Ganges* alluvial plain is the largest low land in the world, combined with *Brahmaputra*, the delta, it constitute the largest complex delta having its head in the Bay of Bengal. The physiographical survey done in 1962 recognized 500 soil series in Bangladesh. According to the survey these 500 soils have been divided into 20 groups of main physiographic units (GOEP, 1962). Further, they can be divided into three areas namely Hill area, Terrace and Flood Plain area respectively. Except the hilly regions in the North-East and South-East, some areas of high lands are seen in the North and North-Western part. The country consists of low, flat and fertile land. Hill areas comprise of the *Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs)*, *Chittagong*, *Comilla*, *Sylhet* and Northern *Mymensingh* districts of Bangladesh. This unit occupying about 12% of the areas of the country constitutes mainly unconsolidated or consolidated sands and shale. The hilly areas are of two types- the high hilly ranges and the low hill areas. The high hill areas are mostly in the *CHTs* rising up to 1000 to 3000 feet. The highest peak in the country is 3454 feet and situated at the South-Eastern extremity of the area. The low hill areas raise only less than 500 feet above mean sea level. The low hill areas are well forested. The terrace areas include two physiographic units, one, *Modhupur* tracts and the other *Barind* tracts. These tracts occupy about 8% of total area of the country. The flood plain areas occupy about 80% areas of the country. It is flat alluvial plain, criss-crossed by a number of rivers that curse out an interesting drainage pattern with the help of the tributaries and innumerable distributaries. The main rivers in the country are the *Padma*, the *Meghna*, the *Jamuna*, the *Brahmaputra*, the *Surma*, the *Tista* and the *Karnaphuli* having about 230 tributaries and distributaries with a total length of about 15,000 miles flowing through the country to the Bay of Bengal (Akhtar, 1981; BBS, 1982). Heavy silts deposited by rivers during the rainy season are thus continuously enriching the alluvial soil.

The rivers play a very significant role in the socio-economic life of the people of Bangladesh. They provide cheap and convenient means of transport and communication and serve as drainage channels and ensure an abundant supply of fish. Every year they deposit an enormous quantity of fertilizing silts and sand over a large part of the country. Hartmann and Boyce (1988: 8) stated, "Bangladesh is rich enough in fertile land, water and natural gas for fertilizer not only to be self-sufficient in food, but a food exporter, even with its rapidly increasing population size". Though the river built alluvial flat plain provides

more and more fertile land but every year the flood and cyclones take a heavy toll of human and animal life or livestock, and cause extreme damage to the crops, property and resources. Further the alluvial flood plain area can be divided into four types, one, the piedmont plain at the foot of the Eastern hills; two, the *Ganges* tidal flood plain criss-crossed by innumerable rivers and erects, the well-known sharply tropical tidal forest, the *Sundarbans* lies in the area along south of the river *Madhumati* and Western coast; three, the meander flood plains of the *Ganges*, *Tista*, *Brahmaputra*, *Jamuna* and *Surma-Kushiara* which occupy most of the flood plain areas; and four, the old and young *Meghna* estuaries that are almost flat but have a fell of no erects (Akhtar, 1981).

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Bangladesh is country of islands and rivers. Naqi has divided the rivers of Bangladesh into five systems i.e. “one, the *Ganges* and the *Padma* and its deltaic streams; two, the *Meghna* and the *Surma* system; three, the *Brahmaputra* affluent and channels; four, the North Bengal rivers; and five, the rivers of the *Chittagong Hill Tracts* and adjoining plains” (Naqi, 1984: 43). Combined together in the Bay of Bengal they constitute the country of the largest delta in the world. Perpetual change of course is the main feature of the rivers of Bangladesh (Ahmed, 1968). Change in the course of the *Ganges*, the *Brahmaputra*, the *Mahananda* and other rivers of Bangladesh during the different periods are testified by the maps prepared by Brooke, Thoriton and Rennel (Roy, 1963). Their change of course grabs away land along one side and builds new land known as *chars* along the other side of rivers. These *chars* are very fertile. “The environment in the *chars* lands, although highly certain with looming threats of flooding or erosion, may provide some of the most productive agricultural soil in the country (Baqee, 1998: 2). The plain of North *Mymensingh* and *Sylhet* lies at the foot of the scrap of *Assam* range from which there is a heavy run-off in monsoon extensive marshier and *jheels* known as *haors*. They have all the physical aspects of the new delta except for the existence of distributaries.

Climate

Bangladesh enjoys generally a sub-tropical monsoon climate while there are six seasons in a year, three of them namely winter, summer and Monsoon are the most prominent in the country. Winter, which is quite pleasant, begins in November and ends in February. In winter there are not usually many fluctuations in temperature that ranges from minimum of 7.22 to 12.77 Degree Celsius (45°F-55°F) to a maximum of 23.88 to 31.11 Degree Celsius (75°F-85°F). The maximum temperature recorded in summer months is 36.66 Degree Celsius (98°F) although in some places this occasionally raises up to 40.55 Degree Celsius (105°F) or more (BBS, 2004: xx). Monsoon starts in the month of July and stays up to October. This period accounts far 80% of the

total rainfall. The average annual rainfall varies from 1429 to 4338 millimeters. The maximum rainfall is recorded in the coastal areas of *Chittagong* and Northern part of *Sylhet* while the minimum is observed in the Western and Northern parts of the country. Humidity is high in the country throughout the year. During June and July varies from about 84 to 90% and during winter month it varies between 75% and 82% (Ahmed, 1968). Abundant rainfall and humidity give Bangladesh an ideal climate for agriculture for the whole of the year as well pisciculture.

Ecological Settings

The country is very rich in flora and fauna as it has about 13.3% of the total land as forest area. The forest area consists of three main types, namely- hilly forest, tidal forest and *sal* forest (Akhter, 1981). The hilly forests comprise of tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen species like *Garjan* (*Depleroctarpus* spp.), *Civit* (*Swintonia* spp.), *Jarul* (*Lagerocarpus* spp.), and plenty of bamboo. It is located in the *CHTs*, *Chittagong* and *Sylhet* districts. Tidal forests comprise of mangrove species like *Sundri* (*Herittera* spp.), *Kewra* (*Sonnerati a apetata*), *Gewa* (*Excaecaria* spp.), *Goran* (*Ceriops* spp.), and other species growing in the deltaic region locally known as *Sundarbans*. It is spread over the coastal belt of *Khulna*, *Patuakhali*, *Barisal*, *Noakhali* and *Chittagong* districts. *Sal* forests comprise of degraded *sal* (*Shorea robusta*) with other evergreen and deciduous associates are found in *Dhaka*, *Comilla*, *Tangail*, *Mymensingh* districts and small patches in *Dinajpur* and *Rangpur* districts. Bangladesh is also well known for palm trees and bamboo, teak, *mahogany*, silk cotton tree, banana, *mangnolie* and rhododendron. Bamboos grow in almost all areas, but quality timber grows mostly in the villages. Varieties of wild animals are found in the dense tropical rain forest areas in Bangladesh. *Sundarbans* is the home of the world famous 'Royal Bengal Tiger' and *Cheetas*. Of other animals' elephants, bears, deer, monkey, leopard and crocodiles are worth mentioning. A few hundred species and sub-species of birds are found in the country. Some of them are of seasonal and migratory types (BBS, 2004).

Demographic Features

Bangladesh is the most populous in the world. The population of the country stood at 111.4 million in 1991 (Ibid). The inter-census growth rate of population estimated by using adjusted population of 1991 census was 2.1 per annum. According to the 2001 census the enumerated population of the country stood at 140 million (BBS, 2003). The density of population was approximately 647 per square kilometer in 1981. It has increased to 755 per square kilometer in 1991. The sex ratio of the population includes 106 males per 100 females. According to the census 2001, with a corresponding

population density of more than 900 per sq km. During the past half of the last century the population increased by only 45%. This slow increase was due to a combination of high birth rate and high death rate. The second half of the century, population growth was rapid tripling during the period. The relatively young age structure of the population indicates combine rapid growth population in the future. According to the 2001 census, 39% of the population is under 15 years of age, 57% are between 15 and 64 years, and 4 percentages 65 or over (BBS, 2003). The census defines sex ratio as the number of males per hundred females and it is 105.4. The life expectancy at birth 64.5% in the year of 2002. According to vital registration the total fertility rate per woman (that is the average number of children born to a woman surviving through her productive years) is about 2.56% in the respective year. The percentage of Muslim population was 88.3 while that of Hindu, Buddhist and Christians were 10.5, 0.6 and 0.3 respectively. The country is predominantly rural with 102.3 million populations living in rural areas and 30.6 million in urban areas. The percentage of urban population was 20.1 while that of rural was 79.9 % (BBS, 2002).

The literacy rate of the country obtained from 1991 census was 32.4% for population of 7 years and above. The literacy rate of population five years and over, in 2004 for both sexes stood at 44.9% as against 42.5% in 2001. The male literacy increased by 2% points while female literacy increased by 2.1%. According to the 2001 population census, literacy rate of population 7 years and over for both sexes, male and females were 45.35, 49.6% and 40.8% respectively, while the corresponding figures were 51.1% and 49.9% in 2004. There are 19.9 million households in the country distributed over 59,996 *mauzas* (revenue villages) (BBS, 2004).

Age and sex are important demographic variables and are the primary basis of demographic classification in vital statistics, censuses and surveys. The distribution of the de facto household population of Bangladesh in 2004 is shown in the following table 2.1 by five-year age groups according to sex and urban-rural residence. The household population includes 51,255 persons indicating 78% rural and 22% urban. Female constitute 51% of the population. Overall, the proportions of persons in the younger age groups are substantially larger than the proportions in the older age groups for each sex and in both urban and rural areas in Bangladesh (BDHS, 2004).

Table 2.1: Population by Age, Sex and Residence in Bangladesh 2004*

Age	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<5	11.3	11.5	11.4	13.8	12.7	13.2	13.2	12.4	12.8
5-9	12.5	10.8	11.7	13.6	12.8	13.2	13.3	12.4	12.8
10-14	11.7	12.6	12.2	13	12.3	12.7	12.7	12.4	12.6
15-19	10.5	13.5	12	9.5	12.5	11	9	12.7	11.3
20-24	8.6	11.1	9.9	7.1	9.7	8.4	7.4	10	8.7
25-29	7.4	9.1	8.3	6.6	7.9	7.2	6.8	8.1	7.5
30-34	7.7	7.3	7.5	6.6	6.7	6.7	6.8	6.9	6.8
35-39	6.6	6.2	6.4	6	5.5	5.7	6.1	5.7	5.9
40-44	6.7	4.8	5.7	5.5	4.3	4.9	5.8	4.4	5.1
45-49	5.0	4.1	4.5	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.2	4.4
50-54	3.5	2.5	3.0	3.5	2.6	3.1	3.5	2.6	3.0
55-59	2.3	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.8	2.5	2.2	2.6	2.4
60-64	2.4	1.7	2.1	2.7	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.1	2.3
65-69	1.4	0.9	1.1	1.7	1.3	1.5	1.7	1.2	1.4
70-74	1.2	0.7	1	1.8	1.1	1.4	1.7	1	1.3
75-79	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.6
80+	0.7	0.8	0.7	1.3	0.9	1.1	1.2	0.8	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number	5,530	5,721	11,251	19,570	20,435	40,004	25,099	26,156	51,255

[*% Distribution of the de facto household population by five-year age groups, according to sex and residence, Bangladesh 2004.] Source: BDHS, 2004.

Economically active population or the labour force of Bangladesh comprises persons who are actually engaged or desirous of engaging themselves in the production of economic goods and services. In Bangladesh (2002-2003), in terms of above 15 years, 4.43 crore (male 3.45 crore and female 0.98 crore) people are engaged in a variety of professions, the highest 51.69% still being in agriculture. According to this survey 20.09% of labour force was engaged as daily labourers and 13.77% as fully time employed workers. The latest survey also indicates that 18.28% of labour force was engaged as unpaid family labourers which are increased by 6% (BBS, 2002).

According to 1995-96 Labour Force Survey (LFS) the total Civilian Labour Force of the country was estimated at 56.0 million of which 34.7 million are male and 21.3 million are female. While it was 51.2 million for both sex, 31.1 million for male and 20.1 million for female in the 1990-91 LFS as per extended definition. In extended definition the activities like care of poultry and livestock, processing, husking, preparations of food etc. are considered as economic activities that are usually performed by females in and out of the agriculturally based household in rural areas. In conventional usual definition the above activities are not considered as economic activities. According to the 1995-96 LFS, the total Civilian Labour Force was estimated at 41.7 million

while it was 35.9 million in 1990-91. The female labour force stands at 7.6 million in 1995-96 in usual definitions while it was 4.9 million in 1990-91. The female participation rate was estimated at 18.1% in 1995-96 as compared to 14.2% in 1990-91 (BBS, 1994). Of the total labour force the majority- about three-fifth (59.3%) - are engaged in agriculture, then others and business only. The per capita income is as low as \$444 and more than one-third of the population lives below the absolute poverty line (UNDP, 2004). Economically Bangladesh is still one of the poorest countries in the world.

Transport and Communication

The transport and communication network in Bangladesh has evolved around road, rail and air transport system including post telecommunication and information technology. It has a wide network of the transport and communication system with 3570 kilometers national highway, 4323 regional highway, 2,855 kilometers rail way and 13678 kilometers feeder road type- (BBS, 2005). A side by side with the development of road transport efforts is under way to develop the water transport system. In fact, rivers are the lifelines of the nation that provide the cheapest means of transport, water for agricultural operation and ensure supply of fishes for her people. Steps also have been taken to put more mechanized vehicles into the service and to modernize the existing country boats. The country is well connected with other countries by the international airlines. Whereas regular domestic air services are operated between the capital city of Dhaka and other major country and towns of the country. The two seaports of Bangladesh are *Chittagong* and *Mongla*. The country has a wide mass media communication network of radio and television broadcasting respectively.

Agriculture

Agriculture has been playing a vital role in socio-economic progress and sustainable development of the agrarian country of Bangladesh through upliftment of rural economy, ensuring food security by attaining autarky in food grains production, alleviation of poverty and so on. In FY 2004-05, the combined contribution of all sub-sectors of agriculture (crop, livestock, forestry and fisheries) to GDP is about 21.91% of which fisheries sub-sector accounts for 5.03% and the crop sub-sector alone is projected to contribute 12.10% to GDP. Of the total labour force in Bangladesh, 51.7% are engaged in agriculture (BBS, 2003; GOB, 2005). According to the final estimates, the volume of food grain production in 2003-04 was 274.43 *lakh* metric tons of which *Aus* accounted for 18.32 *lakh* metric tons, *Aman* 115.21 *lakh* metric tons, *Boro* 128.37 *lakh* metric tons and Wheat 12.53 *lakh* metric tons. Food grains production target for FY 2004-05 has been estimated at 300.49 *lakh* metric

tons of which *Aus* accounts for 20.45 *lakh* metric tons, *Aman* 127.88 *lakh* metric tons, Boro 137.53 *lakh* metric tons and Wheat 14.63 *lakh* metric tons (GOB, 2005). To fulfill the food and nutritional demand of the growing population of the country and to ensure and sustain dependable food security, special emphasis has been given on building up a modern agricultural system based on appropriate technology. Against this background, various reform measures have been taken which include ensuring the availability of agricultural inputs including fertilizer at the door-steps of the farmers, implementation of the agricultural extension policy, simplification of the disbursement procedures of agricultural credit, creating opportunities for investment in agriculture, modernization of research methods for quality improvement of agro-products, the utilization and extension of the integrated technologies derived from research. An Action Plan is in place for proper implementation of National Agriculture Policy. Included among the objectives of the Action Plan are to: take the extension service to the grass-root level; ensure decentralization of administration in this sector; mobilize external assistance to strengthen and popularize the trading of agricultural commodities and also to turn it profit making; adopt comprehensive reform programs to facilitate extension of activities of NGOs and development partners.

Measures have been taken to put in place a more robust and effective national agricultural research arrangements. At the same time, emphasis has been laid on increased coordination between research and extension. Besides, efforts are underway to bring about overall improvement in agriculture by taking a range of steps like protection of ever-increasing erosion of soil, assessing utility of irrigation water, monitoring abuse of land and preventing crop nutrition deficiencies. During FY 2004-05, a total of Tk. 1315.77 crore has been provisioned for agriculture subsidy on TSP, DAP and MOP fertilizer including Urea as well as for providing other forms of assistance to agriculture sector. In addition, 30% cash incentive is being provided to agricultural exports. The Government has waived interest on classified agricultural loan up to Tk. 5000. This is going to make far-reaching contribution towards augmenting agricultural production. During FY 2004-05, disbursement stood at Tk. 4956.78 crore against the target of Tk. 5537.91 crore. In 2003-04, the exported earning amounted to Tk. 2363.47 crore from the export of 54,141 metric tons of fish and fish products (Ibid).

According to available data, in 2004, there were 112 fish hatcheries in the public sector and 696 hatcheries in the private sector. Altogether 808 hatcheries and farms were there in the country. About 517 crore of fingerlings and 297.78 metric tons of fish spawn were produced from private farm and hatcheries in 2003. In a bid to develop livestock resources, the government has set up a large number of livestock and poultry farms through implementation

of ADB projects. Also in order to alleviate poverty, the Government implemented goat-rearing projects throughout the country on a priority basis. The livestock and poultry farms set up at the self-initiative while making a substantial contribution to this sector, also generating self-employment opportunities for the unemployed youth and attracting huge investment. A total of 8 projects have been taken up by the Department of Livestock (DOI) in 2004-05 for which Tk. 77.04 crore has been allocated and up to June 2005 Tk. 67.95 crore has been spent which is 88.20% of the total allocation (GOB, 2005). In the following table 2.2 the trends of cropping intensity in Bangladesh from 1981-1982 to 2001-2002 is given for a general understanding.

Table-2.2: Trends of Cropping Intensity in Bangladesh (Land Area in Million Hector)

Year	Total Land Area of the Country	Net Cultivable Land	% of Net Cultivable Land of Total Area	Shown Net Land Area	Total Cropping Area	Cropping Intensity
1981-82	14.29	9.38	65.63	8.58	13.20	153.84
1982-83	14.29	9.36	65.63	8.65	13.00	150.35
1983-84	14.45	9.46	65.41	8.68	13.36	153.96
1984-85	14.48	9.43	65.10	8.64	13.15	152.22
1985-86	14.70	9.44	65.19	8.75	13.54	154.48
1986-87	14.84	9.51	64.68	8.85	13.34	150.73
1987-88	14.84	9.82	66.22	8.29	13.82	166.75
1988-89	14.84	9.84	66.33	8.15	13.71	168.19
1989-90	14.84	9.78	65.95	8.35	14.06	168.44
1990-91	14.84	9.72	65.50	8.17	14.03	171.70
1991-92	14.84	9.09	61.25	7.98	13.81	173.02
1992-93	14.84	8.75	58.96	7.85	13.70	174.35
1993-94	14.84	8.75	52.02	7.72	13.48	174.52
1994-95	14.84	8.77	59.10	7.74	13.52	174.64
1995-96	14.84	8.72	58.76	7.80	13.51	173.18
1996-97	14.85	8.24	55.49	7.85	13.80	175.71
1997-98	14.85	8.36	56.30	7.97	14.09	176.79
1998-99	14.85	8.43	56.77	7.99	13.96	174.73
1999-00	14.85	8.45	56.90	8.13	14.27	175.52
2000-01	14.85	8.40	56.57	8.08	14.30	177.00
2001-02	14.84	8.48	57.14	8.08	14.30	176.98

Source: GOB, Bangladesh Economic Review, 2005: 74

Management of Agriculture

Since provision of food security, improvement of the living standard and generation of employment opportunities of the vast population of the country

are directly linked to the development of agriculture, there have been continued efforts by the Government for the overall development of this sector. Considering the importance of agriculture in the overall economic development, the Government has attached top-most priority to the agriculture sector. To fulfill the food and nutritional demand of the growing population of the country and to ensure and sustain dependable food security, special emphasis has been given on building up a modern agricultural system based on appropriate technology. Against this background, various reform measures have been taken which include ensuring the availability of agricultural inputs including fertilizer at the door-steps of the farmers, implementation of the agricultural extension policy, simplification of the disbursement procedures of agricultural credit, creating opportunities for investment in agriculture, modernization of research methods for quality improvement of agro-products, the utilization and extension of the integrated technologies derived from research. In the light of National Agricultural Policy, Government has been steering a range of development programs in agriculture sector. Also an Action Plan is in place for proper implementation of National Agricultural Policy. Along with poverty reduction, this Action Plan will assist in building a sustainable food security system by achieving optimum growth in agriculture. Included among the objectives of the Action Plan are to:

- i. take the extension service to the grass-root level;*
- ii. ensure decentralization of administration in this sector;*
- iii. mobilize external assistance to strengthen and popularize the trading of agricultural commodities and also to turn to profit making; and*
- iv. adopt comprehensive reform programs to facilitate extension of activities of NGOs and development partners (GOB, 2005).*

Measures have been taken to put in place a more robust and effective national agricultural research arrangements. At the same time emphasis has been laid on increased coordination between research and extension. Besides, efforts are underway to bring about overall improvement in agriculture by taking a range of steps like protection of ever-increasing erosion of soil, assessing utility of irrigation water, monitoring abuse of land and preventing crop nutrition deficiencies.

Because of the regular monitoring of fertilizer distribution situation and adopting timely measures, fertilizer supply and distribution across the country has improved. The measures for the improvement of fertilizer distribution include *interalia* setting up monitoring system in the Ministry of Agriculture,

extension of the dealership system up to *upazila* level, increasing the number of buffer stock centers, strengthening the monitoring system both at the district and *upazila* level, motivating the farmers to use super quality fertilizers like DAP or NPKS, using granular urea for transplanted paddy cultivation, prohibiting import of granular and colored SSP fertilizer, withdrawal of advance income tax and development surcharge from TSP, DAP, MOP and NPKS fertilizers to encourage the farmers to use nutrient rich phosphatic fertilizers, etc. These steps resulted in steady and smooth supply of fertilizers throughout the country. Steps have been taken for testing soils at field levels across the country through mobile soil laboratories. Crop diversification programs have been taken up to retail the soil fertility. In order to develop agricultural marketing system and ensure fair price of agro-commodities, development work in wholesale market is under way.

Quality seeds are a precondition for further development in agriculture. Considering this, steps have been taken to increase supply of quality seeds through BADC. All steps are under way to strengthen seed distribution activities. Sample seeds are being tested at farm level by the seed certification agency. Besides, various research institutes like Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI), Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA) and other associated institute have been developing new technologies, HYVs, in their respective fields (GOB, 2005). Application of newly developed technologies is ultimately contributing to enrich the country through increased agricultural production. Despite significant achievement in food grains production, Bangladesh has much potential to increase crop production through the application of biotechnology and this potentiality is now being explored.

The Agriculture Commission, constituted for providing overall policy guidelines for the development of agriculture sector, has already submitted its report to the Ministry of Agriculture. The recommendations of the Commission have been submitted to the Prime Minister. A report titled 'Actionable Policy Brief' (APB) has been prepared following a thorough review of the crop sub-sector with the support of FAO and UNDP. Proper implementation of these two reports will play an important role in the development of agriculture sector in future.

Agricultural Subsidies and Assistance

The very survival of agriculture against inadequacy of investment coupled with increasing input cost warrants huge subsidy. During FY 2004-05 a total of Tk. 1315.77 has been provisioned for agriculture subsidy on TSP, DAP and MOP fertilizer including Urea as well as for providing other forms of assistance to

agriculture sector. In addition, 30% cash incentive is being provided to agricultural exports. A program for providing 25% subsidy on the import cost of TSP, DAP, MOP is being implemented to encourage the use of balanced fertilizer for increased production. These supports are encouraging many people involved in agriculture sector.

Irrigation

Irrigation is considered as the most important and critical input for production of food grains and other crops. Since inception of minor irrigation projects (power pump, DTW, STW and floating pump, etc.) in early sixties, area under irrigation has been expanding. However, this expansion is yet to be in commensurate with the availability of increased number of irrigation equipment. Use of irrigation water at the field level requires being more economical for augmenting agricultural production. Better irrigation water management can largely minimize wastage of irrigation water and also increase production and save much of fuel cost. Keeping this in view, irrigation water management at farm level has been given top priority in the National Agriculture Policy. There are continued efforts to intensify and increase crop production and crop diversification by ensuring well integrated and planned use of both surface and under-grounded water while protecting environment. A number of projects are being implemented in different places of the country for the development of irrigation. Notable among them are: (1) Survey and Monitoring Project for Minor Irrigation Development; (2) Rubber Dam Establishment Project to increase irrigated area through preservation of surface water in the dry season; (3) Prevention of intrusion of saline water and the development of drainage system in *Kumira-Sonai Chari* Region of *Sitakunda upazila* and the construction of *Guptakhali* water reservoir and irrigation project; (4) Project for the development of irrigation area (*Barendra* project); (5) Project for installation of deep tube-wells in *Barendra* area; (6) *Ashugonj Palash* agro-irrigation project, etc. (GOB, 2005). Overall, the objectives of these projects include: development of minor irrigation, proper use of the surface water, extension of irrigation facilities in drought-prone areas and poverty reduction through command area development. In addition, efforts are underway to strengthen small irrigation programs of BADC to extend irrigation facilities to the farmers.

Fertilizer

The use of fertilizer has been consistently increasing for agricultural production. In FY 1993-34, the total quantity of fertilizer use was 22.17 *lakh* metric tons which increased to 37.55 *lakh* metric tons in FY 2004-05. The use of urea fertilizer alone was 15.79 *lakh* metric tons in FY 1993-94 which

increased to 25.23 *lakh* metric tons in FY 2004-05. The percentage increase in urea use in FY 2004-05 is 59.78% i.e. 9.44 *lakh* metric tons compared to that of FY 1993-94. This is attainable to increase of irrigated areas and diversified use of urea. On the other hand, the use of phosphatic fertilizer (TSP, DAP and SSP) increased by 92.8% in FY 2004-05 compared to that of FY 1993-94. Total fertilizer use has increased by 69.3% compared to that of 1993-94 (GOB, 2005).

The Market Monitoring and Information System (MMIS) of the Ministry of Agriculture have been regularly monitoring the fertilizer situation in the country. In order to ensure smooth supply to districts as per estimated demand of Urea, restriction has been imposed on inter-district movement of urea. There is no such restriction on the movement of super granules *urea*. The smooth supply of fertilizer and its distribution have been made possible due to close monitoring of supply, stock, availability, price and evaluation of performance of dealers by the District Fertilizer and Seed Monitoring Committee and introduction of *upazila* based dealership network and monitoring of fertilizer centrally by a National Coordination Committee. The price situation has been under control and within the reach of the farmers. Smuggling and border trade of fertilizer has also been under control. To avoid any crisis of urea fertilizer during the peak season, the system of maintaining buffer stock of *urea* by Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) has been introduced.

Since 1995-96 *urea* super or mega granules are being manufactured and marketed through private sector. This has resulted in reduction of the misuse of *urea*, saving of 30 to 35% of *urea* and increase in yield together with creation of employment opportunities in the rural areas. The number of machines for manufacturing *urea* super granules has gradually increased since 1996-97. Super or mega granules are also being used in other *rabi* crops. Besides, use of different types of mixed fertilizer is being encouraged for balanced use of fertilizer. TSP complex in *Chittagong* has started production and marketing of NPKS fertilizer on experimental basis. Some factories in the private sector have started producing and marketing NPKS. Import of NPKS is also being encouraged under private sector (Ibid).

Import of DAP, TSP, NPKS and Potash with more nutrient contents, instead of low nutrient content SSP fertilizer is being encouraged and farmer are also being motivated to use such fertilizer. In order to maintain the quality of fertilizer and also to control the production, import and marketing of adulterated or low quality fertilizer, steps are being taken to enforce Fertilizer (Control) Order, 1999. Post-landing inspection has been strengthened in the

case of imported fertilizer in the private sector. Besides, manuals for fertilizer inspection and fertilizer analysis have also been prepared.

Industry

Industrial sector to the Bangladesh aspect is extremely critical. Recently its contribution is increasing. The current level of development, the contribution of industrial sector to GDP in the coming decade will be 30 to 35% and the sector will absorb 30% of total labour force (BBS, 2003). In order to achieve this estimate growth in the industrial sector, less emphasizes on strengthening establish of agro based and agricultural product processing industries in the policy. Taking appropriate measures to meet the adverse situation by the export oriented garment industries, adapting SMEs and cottage industries as the prime movers of industrialization, establishing economic and export processing zone (EPZ) different parts of the country enhancing quality of products and providing support for marketing. This would result in planned expansions of industrialization which in turn would help achieving continued and sustained development in industrial sector in Bangladesh. All these together with accelerate overall economic growth by reducing poverty, generating employment and improving the quality of life in Bangladesh society.

Administration

The country has a unique form of government. Administratively the country is divided into six hierarchical administrative divisions. In the organizational hierarchically of division- the division is at the top, next is the *zila*, the third is *upazila* (*thana*), fourth is the *union parishad* and fifth is the *mauza*. In all at present there are 64 *zilas*, 507 *upazilas*, 4484 i and 59990 *mauza* (BBS, 2001). Following the decentralization programmes in 1984, all previous subdivisions were declared as *zilas* and all police stations (*thana*) were upgraded *thanas* or *upazilas*. Under this system all the SDO were given the power at administration at *upazila* level which is newly posted of TNO look into all matters in *upazila* level. The grassroots administrative tiers of *union parishad* played important role in the execution of rural development, judiciary and rural administration through integrated and coordination by the recently newly created administrative UNO. The *union parishad* and is the lowest structure of public administration of Bangladesh. It is required to supervise and coordinate different development works in the village: particularly food production, irrigation, adult education, sanitation, family planning, law and order, meditation of disputes, revenue and road, etc. A *mauza* is generally a revenue unit, the boundaries of which are defined by the revenue survey. It usually bears the name of the main village within this boundary, but does not necessarily correspond with the same. It may contain only one village or a number of separate villages or it may be uninhabited (Malley, 1931).

2.2 Early History of Noakhali District

The district of *Noakhali* originally known as *Bhulua* was created by acquiring lands from the neighboring district on the 29 March, 1821. Subsequently, in 1868 the name was turned in to *Noakhali* which was behind to the derived from the name of a *khal* (canal) known as *Noa* (New) *Khal* (canal, on the right bank of which the quarter of the former district was located (Khan (ed.), 1977). A number of territorial reorganization took place in the district during nineteenth century. Lastly, the *thana* of *Sandwip* belonging to the district was transferred to the district of *Chittagong* in 1955 after which no change took place in the boundary of the district. The District of *Noakhali* (See Map 2) is one of the deltaic districts of Bangladesh bringing the Bay of Bengal. Some of ancient remains indicate that the district was a part of *Samatata* which was under the authority of Samudragupta. The district remained under the authority of Samudragupta and his successors till the first quarter of the 6th century A.D. There is archeological evidence the three independent rulers of *Samatata* ruled over the district in successors from 525 to 575 A.D (Hunter, 1875). Subsequently, the district came under the authority of the kings different dynasties such as the Khadga, the Denas, the Harkela, the Chandras, the Varmans and the Senas who ruled over the district one after another from second half of the seventh century A.D. to the thirteenth century A.D. Muslim ruled was first established over the district in the beginning of 14th century A.D. The best among the Muslim rulers were Sultan Fakruddin Mubarak Shah Sultan Rukuddin Barkar and Alauddin to Hossain Shah who rose to great prominence for effective administration and expansion of Muslims rule in East Bengal.

The *Mughal* rule in Bengal said to be started in the second half of the 16th century A.D with the nominal submission of *Afgan*, Hindu *Zamindars* and the *Baru* (twelve *Bhyiyans* of Bengal). The constant inroads of Arakan King and specially the plundering raids Firingi and Nagh in the South eastern Bengal created serious hindrance in the established of *Mughal* rule in the region. *Amar-Manikya* a king of *Trippera* conquered the District of *Noakhali* in 1578 A.D by defeating the local chief (Sarkar, 1948). But he failed to retain his authority over the district as it was occupied by the king of *Arakan* including a large portion of South-eastern Bengal shortly after his conquest. During the reign of Emperor Jahangir his governor Islam Khan managed to establish *Mughal* rule over a large portion of the South-eastern Bengal including a part of *Noakhali*. Lastly *Mughal* authority was firmly established over the entire district of *Noakhali* by defeating *Ananta-Manikya* who kept a large province of Bengal including *Noakhali* was ended large territory of the district under his possession. The *Mughal* rule over the whole province of Bengal including *Noakhali* was ended in 1760 A.D. The British rule over the district nominally

started with the conferring of *Divani* or the authority over the revenue Administration of Bengal to the East India Company in 1765 (Hunter, 1975). The Company started organizing the pattern of revenue commerce and administrative affairs of the whole Bengal including *Noakhali* and became successful in its mission which ultimately brought perpetuity in the British rule in the region. The roots of discontentment and agitation started gaining ground against British rule in the first quarter of 20th century which gave a birth to *Khilafat* and Non-cooperation movement headed by the famous Ali Brothers and Mahatma Gandhi respectively (Wakil, et. al., 2003). These movements gave a violet blow to the foundation stone of British rule and promoted in bringing political renaissance under the banner of different of the Indian subcontinent in latter.

Location and Area

Noakhali, one of the districts of the *Chittagong* Division, lies between 22°-06' and 23°-17' north latitude and 90°-38' and 91°-35' east longitudes (BBS, 2001). It is the easternmost of the deltaic districts fringing the Bay of Bengal. *Noakhali Sadar* is the second largest *thana* of *Noakhali Zila* in respect of both area and population. It became a *thana* in 1861. The *thana* was previously known as *Sudharam*, after one *Sudharam Majumdar*, a wealthy merchant and benefactor. The *thana* has been renamed as *Noakhali Sadar thana* in December 1983. According to the census of 2001, it comprises an area of 3601 km. Due to the existence of large rivers in the south and because of constant alluvial and diluvium action of the rivers, the area figures of the district require constant adjustment. Administratively the *zila* is divided into four hierarchical units like *Zila*, *Thana* or *Municipality*, *Union parishad* and village. At present the district consists of 6 *thanas* and 5 Municipal Corporations, 128 UP and 979 villages (Ibid).

Geographical Settings

Noakhali with an area of 3600.99 sq km. is bounded by *Comilla* districts on the North, the *Meghna* and Estuary and the Bay of Bengal on the South, *Feni* and *Chittagong* Districts on the East, *Lakshmipur* and *Bhola* Districts on the West. The district of *Noakhali* is the easternmost of the deltaic districts of Bangladesh fringing of the Bay of Bengal (Wakil, et. al., 2003). This district consists of a tract of main land with several islands on the sea-face of the Bay of Bengal at the mouth of the *Meghna*. The main land is (geologically speaking) a recent alluvial formation, and the islands are merely the crests of an extensive and increasing alluvial deposit at the mouth of the estuary and are formed over the area in which the tidal and the river water wage incessant warfare. Tradition speaks of *Meber*, a village in the *Tippera* district, as being the southernmost

point of *Asali* land and all the lands below as being of deltaic origin. The district, as well as known, is liable to salt inundation and to incursions of storm waves. Along the old factory road above *Beganganj*, *Gopiganj* and *Dewanganj*, there are many very highly-embanked tanks, probably made scores of year's age to meet the calamity of wide-spread salt inundation and storm-waves. This cordon of highly-embanked tanks of great size would seem to show that when they were dug and embanked the sea or the river coast was many miles inland on the north. *Sudharam* or *Bhullah* is any of the old *Hindu shastram*, although the names of *Kamalankeya* (*Comilla*) and *Samkeya* (*Chittagong*) are to be found in them. The district of *Noakhali* is bounded on the north by the districts of *Comilla* and Hill *Tripura* State of India, on the east by the *Teni* District from which the big *Teni* river separates it, on the south by the Bay of Bengal and on the west by the main stream of the mighty *Meghna*. To the south of main land there exists large number of islands. The most notable is the *Hatiya* now nearly 25 miles from north to south and about 8 miles broad. A multitude of *chars* that are constantly changing their directions and boundaries lie between *Hatiya* and the main land (Khan (ed.), 1977).

The *chars* of the oldest formation present much of the same appearance as the main land. The newer *chars* are marked by the absence of trees, and consist generally of a uniform cultivated plain intersected with numerous *khal*s. With here and there '*bari*' patches where the soil is still unfit for cultivation, newer formations are the banks barely above water, but covered with grass on which herds of buffaloes may be seen grazing. Among all these *chars* and islands there are traces of changes seen. The main rivers flowing through the *zila* are the *Meghna*, the *Hatiya* and the *Burichor*. The rivers are navigable all the year round. The drainage system of the *zila* mainly depends on a few tidal channels or wharves of which the *Noakhali* and the *Birudra khal* are important. The rivers occupy an area of 806.49 sq. km. which is 22.40% of total area of the *zila*. *Noakhali* is one of the coastal districts at the fringe of the Bay of Bengal with vast *char* land of recent origin of the south. The plant life is confined generally to variations belonging to the lower *Gangetic* plain and of other districts in the southern region of the country. Except the Government sponsored afforestation program for the coastal belt, there is no organized forestry in the district. However, the dense and lush green foliage of wide variety of trees usually covers all the homesteads. In the farmlands, varieties of crops namely local and HYV rice, jute, vegetables, spices, pulses, oil seeds, etc. are produced. Rice production covers about 82.70% of the gross temporary cropped area. However, the most important of these alluvial formations are their approximate extents that are shown in the following chart 1.

Chart 1: The Alluvial Formation of the *Chars*

1.	<i>Char</i> Ghuia Dhopa, Part I	}	
2.	<i>Char</i> Ghuia Dhopa, Part II	}	
3.	<i>Char</i> Kachapea	}	In the Bamni river near the mouth of the Feni
4.	<i>Char</i> Fischi	}	
5.	<i>Char</i> Ram Narayan	}	
6.	<i>Char</i> Lance	}	
7.	<i>Char</i> King	}	
8.	<i>Char</i> Bharat Sen	}	
9.	<i>Char</i> Iswar Ray, Part I	}	
10.	<i>Char</i> Iswar Ray, Part II	}	
11.	<i>Char</i> Nilakhimay Kunjatali	}	
12.	<i>Char</i> Nalchira	}	
13.	<i>Char</i> Amanullah	}	
14.	<i>Char</i> Mir Muhammad Ali, Part I	}	
15.	<i>Char</i> Mir Muhammad Ali, Part II	}	Addition to the island of Hatiya
16.	<i>Char</i> Ghazi	}	
17.	<i>Char</i> Alexander	}	
18.	<i>Char</i> Hasan Husain	}	
19.	<i>Char</i> Goshai	}	
20.	<i>Char</i> Lakhi Afzal Fakir	}	
21.	<i>Char</i> Sekandar Mudafat Dulgazi	}	
22.	<i>Char</i> Maheer	}	
23.	<i>Char</i> Niamat	}	
24.	<i>Char</i> Jabbar	}	
25.	<i>Char</i> Jubilee	}	
26.	<i>Char</i> Jum Madhale	}	
27.	<i>Char</i> Bailey including Batu Langoha and Sona	}	Islands in the Hatiya river
28.	<i>Char</i> Macpherson	}	
29.	<i>Char</i> Princes Alexandra	}	
30.	<i>Char</i> Bedoma Private Estate	}	
31.	<i>Char</i> Poragacha Private Estate	}	
32.	<i>Char</i> Sita	}	
33.	<i>Char</i> Behari	}	
34.	<i>Char</i> Lawrence	}	Islands in the Meghna separate from Hatiya
35.	<i>Char</i> Bose	}	
36.	<i>Char</i> Bansi	}	
37.	<i>Char</i> Mirzamara	}	Formation at the mouth of Dakatia river
38.	<i>Char</i> Udmara	}	
39.	<i>Char</i> Ababil	}	

Source: Khan (ed.), 1977: 3.

Ecological Settings

Most of the trees grown in the homestead forests are fruit bearing. Mangoes, although poor in quality, grow in abundance. Almond or *badam* is usually common. Other common trees are *Gab* (*Diaspyros embryopteris*), *Jam* (*Eugenia jambolana*), Plum, Tamarind or *tetul*, Jackfruit, *Jalpai* (*Elacocarpus serratus*), Wood apple or *bel* (*Aegle marmelos*), *Chalta* (*Dillevia indica*), *Boroi* or *kul*, Guava, etc. Banana is seen almost everywhere but their quality is rather poor. Litchi, *Kamranga*, *Ata*, *Haritaki*, *Amlaki*, etc. grow abundantly. Juice of *Gab* fruit mixed with charcoal is used in coloring boats and stiffening fishing nets. Indigenous timber trees include *Koroi*, *Shal koroi* (*Albiya procera*), Garjan (*Dipterocarpus speciosa*), *Jarul* (*Lagerstroemia speciosa*), *Shimul* (*Salmalia*), etc. However, various exotic trees like *Teak*, *Mahogoni*, *Sissu*, etc. have been introduced as wayside trees as well as farm forestry. *Mandar* (*Erythrina indica*), a thorny tree mostly used as fuel and fencing, is seen in almost every household forest. *Shimul* and *Kadam* trees are very manufacturing matchstick. Both Eucalyptus and Pine are the newly introduced trees among the others. The luxuriant growth of palms is the most characteristic feature of the vegetation. *Supari* (*Areca catachu*) plantations are more and more abundant towards the north and west of the district and grow almost in every forest. Coconut or *narikel* grows enormously throughout the district. Today Palms or *tal* (*Barassus flabelliformis*) and Date palms or *khejur* are also very common in this region. Date palm is a valuable tree and both *supari* and *narikel* are good sources of income for the households in the *char* areas. Shady trees include Banyan or *bat* (*Ficus indica*), *Pipal* (*Ficus religiosa*) and *Nim* (*Azadirachta indica*) (Khan (ed.), 1977). There are several varieties of cane, a good deal of bamboo of different varieties and thatching grass or *chan* is existed in the area although their plantations are gradually decreasing steadily. Use of bamboo is wide spread in the region where it is used as post and fencing, building houses, making of baskets and trays of various kinds. *Bet* is used for making baskets, binding and fencing.

It is evident from the old accounts that a few hundred years ago, the district of *Noakhali*, like many other districts of Bangladesh, had more forests and wild areas than it has today. Consequently, the fauna was also richer than it is at present. Webster (1911) mentioned about different species of deer, the tiger and buffalo, which were well represented in the past, became scarce. Owing to the absence of organized forest and other natural conditions, and any kind of large or medium carnivores are no longer seen in the district of *Noakhali*. Almost all varieties of birds that are seen all over Bangladesh are also commonly seen in *Noakhali*. Raptorial birds include King Vulture or *shakun* (*Trogon calvus*), *Pariah Kile* or *cheel* (*Milvus migrans*), *Kani Boga* (*Ardeala gragii*), *Go Boga* (*Baleulcus ilcis*) and *Kala Boga* (*Dupeter plovicallis*), Crows and King

Fisher, etc. Many kinds of colorful and singing birds are also seen in the district. These include the national bird *Rabin Magpie*, *Kokil*, *Halde Pakbi*, *Vinger*, *Myna*, *Shalik*, Redvented *Bulbul*, *Tuntuni*, *Shama*, Sparrow, Flower Picker, *Babui*, and several species of Pigeons, Doves, etc. There are many species of sea and fresh water fish available in the district. The list of the varieties is too long to find place in this volume. Although *Noakhali* is a coastal district, but most of the supply comes from ponds and tanks, canals and low line areas inundated by rain water. Popular varieties include the Carp Tribe, *Tubit*, *Katal*, *Mrigel*, *Airb*, *Tengra* of several types, *Magur*, *Sing*, *Koi* and *Pabda* are available in abundance (Khan (ed.), 1977).

Climate

The climate of the *zila Noakhali* is relatively moderate due to its proximity to the Bay of Bengal. The *zila* has a uniform temperature, high humidity and heavy rainfall that occur from June to October. The average annual temperature varies from 14.6°C to 33.0°C. The level of humidity is generally around 77% in January and around 90% in July. Annual rainfall as recorded in 1996 was 1872 millimeter (BBS, 2001). The offshore islands and the immediate coastal areas of the *zila* are frequently affected by cyclonic storms and tidal surges. In a year, there is three well marked seasons and these are: (i) winter from November to February, (ii) summer from March to May, and (iii) rainy season from June to October. The soil of the *zila* has alluvial sediments of recent origin with admixture of sand and clay in varying proportion. It is lying in the region of low parts of the *Meghna* floodplains. It has mainly light silts on ridges. The soil on the south is slightly calcareous and some are saline in varying degree. Flooding is mainly shallow and fluctuating tidally.

Demographic Features

According to the population census 1991, the total number of the households of *Noakhali zila* was 384000, which was 1.98% of the total households of the country. Estimated number of household of the *zila* in 2001 was 460000 and the population was 2571000 which constituted 2.09% of the total population of the country. The density of population was 616 per sq. km. compared to 900 per sq. km. for the country. The percentage of Muslim population is 93.41, while that of Hindu 6.41 and 0.18 among others respectively (BBS, 2002). The percentage of male and female population were 49.55 (1267000) and 50.45 (1304000) respectively. The average size of the household consist at 5.6%. The rate of literacy for the population of 7 years and above was 51.5% as against 44.8% of the nation. In the following table 2.3 *upazila* wise distribution of the households, population and literacy rate in 1991 compared to the 1996 is shown. For comparison the table also includes the *zila* and the national totals.

Table 2.3: Households, Population and Literacy Rate of Noakhali District

Geographical Area	Population Census- 1991			Estimated (July, 1996)		
	HH (000)	Population (000)	Literacy Rate (7 yrs+)	HH (000)	Population (000)	Literacy Rate (7 yrs+)
Bangladesh	19398	106315	32.4	22278	122100	44.8
Zila Total	384	2217	37.11	441	2547	51.5
Begumgonj	118	677	50.9	135	777	60.7
Chatkhil	34	194	54.8	39	222	70.3
Companigonj	31	183	44.3	36	210	47.9
Hatiya	48	295	17.4	55	339	29.2
Senbagh	38	216	49.3	44	248	60.4
Shudharam	115	651	60.7	132	749	41.8

Source: BBS, Census of Agriculture-1996

2.3 The Scenario of *Chars* in the Coastal Area

Background

There is a proverb, "If you live in the riverbank, you have to worry round the year". Through continuous erosion and siltation process, one side of river is deposited with sand and become a char; on the other hand, a long lasting channel is also developed. Through the river erosion and siltation process a new sandy and *poli* or alluvial land wake up from the riverbed which once developed with human settlement and gradually become a cultivable land. Though large cultivable land is available in the *char*, even then various natural calamities such as river erosion, flood, drought, storm, tornado, and elements of class and group conflicts become as the barrier for the livelihood options and employment, and these bring long-term impact and consequences in the life of the *char* dwellers. *Char* dwellers get inadequate support than the people of towns and *upazilas* during the flood and other natural calamities. Being the most under-privileged, *char* dwellers receives very inadequate government and non-government support for their socio-economic development. If the *char* dwellers could get the partial facilities which the people of towns and cities get; then they would have a significant participation in the national income. The six seasons of Bangladesh brings different features of livelihood for the *char* dwellers. They encounter natural calamities one after another. If the natural calamities could be avoided, then there would be large prospect for harvesting agricultural and fisheries resources. Each *chars* crisscrossed by rivers are cultivated with different crops and various livestock are husbanded according to the characteristics of the *chars*. The average population of the *char* is half of the average population dwells in the mainland of Bangladesh. Through proper

utilization of the natural resources, a happy and prosperous human settlement can be developed in the *char* lands.

Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries of the world. About 5%-7% of the total populations of Bangladesh are now living in the *char* land areas of the coastal regions of different rivers throughout the country. Again, about 50% of these *char* land people are living under the poverty line. Internal conflicts (family, lineage, social, political), inexperience in mode of production, interior communication system, weak marketing process, weak local government structure, negative political intervention and influence and avoidance of local intellectuals or society have deprived 50% of the *char* land people from all types of governmental facilities (CUM, 2005). Besides these, family disturbance, local and social conflict and disintegration of the *char* land people have made them deprived of different facilities. Simultaneously, flood damages severely the crops (paddy), cattle and houses (surrounded by banana tree) of the *char* land people. So, these people are always facing the material, biological, social, economic, political and natural threats.

Meaning of *Chars*

The bowing sands created by the gradual river erosion become concentrated in the channels of the rivers, seen as the islands, which are sometimes arisen inside the river and sometimes surrounded by the river partially or totally, which can, somehow, build-up a communication with the plain land, are called as *chars*. Small bushes or different types of grasses grew gradually in the *chars* in course of time, which creates the environment for agricultural activities and the people build-up their houses in the *chars*. It can, sometimes, be changed into the permanent livable place or land or can be affected by the river erosion. The *chars* are the newly created low lying lands along the coast of the Bay of Bengal formed by a process of sedimentation of the silt that is carried into the Bay by the *Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna* system. In terms of sediment, this system is the river system with the highest discharge in the world. A small part of the sediment settles on low-lying lands in the delta resulting in the formation of the new land. The Bengali word *char* may be defined as large, sandy, unconsolidated and amorphous pieces of land emerged in a river through process of accretion (Baqee, 1998). In general terms, a *char* may be described as an island but when categorized on the basis of location and physical formation, different types of *chars* can be identified. The land which is raised from the river bed and surrounded by river (either partially or fully) and is like island, where 5% to 7% of the total population of Bangladesh has necessary elements of settlements and livelihoods that is overall known as *char*.

Different Types of *Chars*

i) Bichchinnya or Detached Char: This is usually situated in the middle of the river or of the main river and its branches, and detached from the main or plain land. Generally the land which is situated in the middle of the riverbed and is surrounded by the main river or branches of river of that area and is isolated from the main land is known as isolated *char*.

ii) Sangjukta or Connected (with plain land) Char: This was detached from the plain land in the past by the main river or by its branches and at present, the main river or its branches have been shifted to other places or have died and the *char* has been connected with the plain land. The land which was isolated earlier by the main river or tributaries later on, in the course of changing direction of the main river or tributaries, a land linkage has been developed and is also situated nearer is called the integrated land.

iii) Natun or New Char: It is the concentrated sands, seen as islands, which is situated either inside the main river or its branches or between the main river and its branches. Earlier the land which was cultivable and livable, later on through the erosion process of main or tributaries or through the evolution of the sub-tributaries again with the concentration of sand and *poli* soil, the sandy and muddy land which is developed gradually is called the new *char*. However, in the following chart 2 the differences between plain or main land, *sangjukta* and *natun chars* are shown for an overall understanding and comparison.

Chart 2: Differences between the Plain or Main Land and Chars

Plain or Main Land	Sangjukta Chars	Natun Chars
Both types of roads (<i>kacha</i> and brick-built) Permanent roads	<i>Kacha</i> roads Broken roads, need repairing in each year	Lack of roads
Availability of electricity	Availability of electricity in some particular areas	Lack of electricity
Schools and Colleges	Schools and Colleges in some particular areas	Lack of Schools and Colleges
All kinds of government and non-government facilities due to the good communication facilities	Some kinds of selected facilities from both the GOs and NGOs	Lack of facilities
Bank Loan and health or medicine facilities	Selected facilities of bank loan and health or Medicine	Lack of bank Loan and health or medicine facilities
Easy access to comodification of produced goods	Commodification of goods despite a few problems	Market place is far away from the localities
Good market price	Medium market price	Bad market price
Free from flood and sometimes flood comes as the blessing to wash away the germs of the plain land	Severe sufferings due to Flood	Severe sufferings due to flood
Low rate of conflicts or quarrels in the localities	Generally, low rate of conflicts or quarrels in the localities	Conflicts or quarrels are frequently or mostly seen in the localities
Law and order comparatively good		

Source: CUM, 2005

2.4 Char Land Laws

Bangladesh is a riverine country criss-crossed by innumerable rivers. These rivers are dotted by *chars*, which calls for special attention in considering the dynamics of ownership in the *char* lands. The remoteness of *char* areas hinders supervision by the law enforcing agencies of the government. Sometimes local landholders deliberately conceal facts regarding their hidden land from the local administration. Further, the government does not have an updated account of the newly emerged lands in the form of maps or other documents. But in the recent past, agencies like SPARRSO (Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization) have built up the capability of detecting newly embarking landmass throughout the country. But all in all, no serious effort has been made whereby a comprehensive picture could emerge. The laws under which the existing *chars* are administered, as described by Baqee (1998) are as follows:

- i) *The Bengal Alluvion and Diluvion Regulation of 1825;*
- ii) *The East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act of 1950 (Section 86 and 87);*
- iii) *Presidential Order No. 72 of 1972;*
- iv) *Presidential Order No. 135 of 1972; and*
- v) *Presidential Order No. 137 of 1972 (Ordinance LXI of 1974).*

Pre-Partition Laws

The first legislative act regarding Alluvion and Diluvion was the Bengal Alluvion and Diluvion Act (BADA) of 1825. According to BADA there are several alternative provisions regarding any emerging land. In brief, as described by Baqee (1998), the Acts are as following:

- i) *Land gained or annexed from the recess of a river or the sea to someone's land rightfully belongs to him;*
- ii) *Land cut off by a river and gradually attached to another's property without its identity being destroyed remains the original owner's;*
- iii) *A char that has emerged but is separated by a river channel is government property;*
- iv) *Fish resources in shallow water belong to the person whose land is next to the water body;*
- v) *Where a land mass re-appears on an old site and is identifiable, it becomes the property of the original owner, unless abandoned by him;*
- vi) *Fishing rights in non-navigable waters are reserved for the persona having adjacent land; and*
- vii) *Any dispute relating to land gained will be settled on the basis of local conventions and on the principle of justice and equity.*

Only one of the several clauses outlines the right of the government. The rest are designed to protect the interests of the original owner. These laws were put to use when there was not much of a cry for cultivable land. The situation, however, later turned to the more competitive because of increasing population, which led to agitation among the *chouras*.

Pakistan Period

The East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act (EBSATA) of 1950, not only offered a status to the main-land farmers, but also outlined the future use of the char-lands. EBSATA is some what similar to BADA of 1825, but it added some new sub-clauses. If land is lost due to erosion, it can be given back to the original owner but under the following conditions:

- i) *The resurfacing of the land must occur within 20 years;*
- ii) *The owner may get the land back by paying rent as settled by the revenue officer; and*
- iii) *The original owner must not possess land upward of 375 bighas.*

The limitation of holding as mentioned in section could be relaxed in case of:

- i) *Large-scale farming on cooperative basis;*
- ii) *Tea cultivation; and*
- iii) *Land owned by a company for purposes of cultivation of sugarcane for sugar production*

All these provisions favored the big landlords. On the other hand, they were frustrating to the peasant farmers. For example, none of the clauses mentioned whether the farmers were to continue paying the *kbajna* (revenue) to the Government after their land had been eroded. But when someone wanted to get back his or her property, he or she was obliged to pay the *kbajna* assessed by the local revenue officials. In such cases the revenue officer had a grip on the farmer, and the peasants had to bribe the revenue officer. In most cases the poor farmers cannot afford to pay the land tax arrears and eventually lose their right over their newly surfaced lands. This is an indirect procedure of eliminating competition for newly emerging *chars*, for it is only the big landlords who can afford to continue paying taxed for lands lost or newly emerged properties. Another observation with regards to the Act is that people who had more than 375 *bighas* (50.25 hectares) of land were excluded. In reality very few people in the then East Pakistan had such large land holdings in their possession. The ceiling therefore favored the already wealthy landlords. Both the landless and the big landlords were now equally qualified to obtain *char* lands under legal coverage.

Bangladesh Period

After the independence of Bangladesh matters were handled differently. The approach was people-oriented, especially with regards to landless peasants. The Presidential Order No. 135, aimed to rehabilitate the landless was promulgated in 1972. It clearly indicated that all newly emerged lands, previously lost by Diluvion, should be restored to the government and not to the original owner. Thus all newly formed lands were considered to be *khas* land or government land. This order was meant to recover char-lands from the powerful local elites (Naqi, 1984) and to redistribute these among landless farmers. P.O. 135 also laid down the principles as to whom the *khas* land could be offered:

- i) *Preference was to be given to families affected by Diluvion but families with land exceeding 25 bighas were to be excluded; and*
- ii) *The total quantity of land held by such a persona or his family before loss by diluvion, whichever is less.*

The Act, although it indicated that preference would be given to victims of erosion, was not strictly followed. The government framed laws to prevent the local elites from laying their hands on newly emerged char-lands, but eventually very few poor farmers could derive any benefit from such lands. The reasons were various, e.g. there were difficulties in implementing laws favouring peasants in remote parts of the country, delay in survey by the Land Revenue department, slow accretion of viable agricultural land and also political inequalities arising out of violence. As a result seldom did the poor peasants gain their rightful share of land in the newly emerged chars; rather, the use of force, dispossession, murder, rape and crop robbery has become the local practice. This is the established way of life in *char* areas.

In the context of the malpractices, the Ministry of Land Administration and Land Revenue reviewed the earlier arrangement for settlement of diluviated lands (vide their Memo No. 96 (36) V-177 or 77-LS) as mentioned in P.O. 135 or 72 and issued further instructions. It stated that in many cases diluviaed land owners faced difficulties and harassment in obtaining settlement in the reformed lands and, therefore, whenever any diluviated land reappeared, prompt action should be taken to ascertain its past ownership and, thereafter, the process of settlement of the original owners or their successors should be taken up according to the provisions of the law, as soon as possible, so that the re-formed land did not remain unsettled and invite forcible possession by ineligible persons defeating the purpose of the law. Such settlement of the original owners or their successors should be made on realization of a nominal salami equivalent to 4 years back rent or land development tax. If, however, the size of such re-formed land to be settled together with land already held by

the owner was 0.6 hectare (1.5 acres) or less, no salami was required. However, in the following chart 3 some of the major contents of *char* land laws are given for an understanding in brief.

Chart 3: Major Contents of the *Char* land Laws

Name of the Acts	Year Launched	Major Contents
Bengal Alluvion and Diluvion Act (BADA)	1825	This is the earliest recorded document for administering the riverine islands. It (BADA) was valid until the abolition of the <i>Zamindari</i> system. The act provided that any claim and disputes would be resolved by established and recognizable convention or practice. It also outlined river and river resources usage.
East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act (EBSATA)	1950	According to the act the terms 'Proprietor' and 'Estate' were abolished. The act was mainly framed to restore the rights of the owner whose land was eroded. It also provided that such restoration must take place within 20 years.
Presidential Order No. 135	1972	This order provides that all new lands in the form of accretion or in the form of reformation after Diluvion would vest in the government. It also states that the government would lease out such lands preferably to persons who have been affected by Diluvion. Sub-sections describe that, these lands will only be offered to people who have less than 25 <i>bighas</i> of land
Presidential Order No. 61	1975	Ordinance 135 or 1972 was discarded by P.O. 61 or 1975. In other words it reinstated the rules of the EBSATA of 1950 and this was approved by parliament in 1979 during the period of Ziaur Rahman
Estate Acquisition and Tenancy Act	1994	The Act rose the time of resurfacing from 20 to 30 years, which helped the owners to put in their claims. The Act also provided that the district authority would first take over the resurfaced land and within 45 days the surveying and necessary demarcations must be completed with one year the land would distributed among the owners.

[Note: The *bigha* is a local land measurement unit, although it's actual dimension varies from place to place. Usually, one *bigha* (0.134 ha.) is equal to 20 *kathas* and one *Katha* is equal to 66.9 square meters.] Source: Baqee, 1998: 64

In the meantime, some other developments have taken place in the administration of the *char* lands. In 1976, it was found that large *chars* were forming around the coastal regions of Bangladesh. The question of how to

accelerate this process of formation of new land and preservation of the land already gained became very important. The President's advisory council recommended that all new accretions in the Bay of Bengal be put under afforestation programme to ensure stabilization of the emerging lands and allow further accretion. The newly emerging *char* lands in the Bay of Bengal were barred from invasion by *char* people. As a policy, the government decided to lease such lands for human habitation after their release by the Forest Department. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests prepared a 10-year vegetation programme.

A study of the *char* land laws indicates that laws as well as their execution were relatively simple in earlier days. The complexities of the *char* land laws grew after the partition of India and they increased even further after the emergence of Bangladesh. This may be attributed to the rising need for arable lands and half-hearted attempts of successive governments of ameliorate the conditions of the land-poor section of the population.

2.5 Land Ceilings over the Period

The land ceiling over the period beginning 1950 until now is quite interesting. Before the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act (EBSATA), there was no upper limit to the land that a family could own. The EBSATA for the first time set an upper limit, but the limit was relaxed in the case of large-scale farmers. It should be noted that only the big landlords could afford large-scale farming. Some facts have been compiled in Table 4.1. It appears that land in excess of 13.5 *hectares* (33.3 *acres*) per family was to be acquired by the government. But this was not implemented for a long time (Siddiqui, 1980). The acquisition of excess land proceeded very slowly, giving the landlord ample scope for sale and partition of their excess lands. The definition of a family was also very loosely formulated. Thus there were loopholes for mischief and malpractice.

The British Era

The East India Company (EIC) headed by Lord Cornwallis introduced the Permanent Settlement System in 1793, which clearly stated that the (landlords) were the land proprietors of land, and as such, they were free to manage, transfer and mortgage their lands as they pleased. They were also equipped with extensive powers over the farmers. The farmer lost their inherent right to the ownership of their lands and became tenants of the *Zamindars*. The EIC, therefore, was no longer required to realize revenue from the peasants; instead, they realized it from the. This system was introduced in Bengal, *Bihar* and *Orissa* with the hope that it would ensure maximum returns to the EIC and the. Since the *Zamindar* were assured of inheritance of their *Zamindaris*, the

Chapter-2: Background of the Study Area

Company expected that the *Zamindari* would be encouraged to invest their capital in land and thereby land under cultivation would increase dramatically, and increase in land under cultivation would mean more revenue from taxation.

The land tenancy system known as Permanent Settlement was based on the strict principle of rent collection. To ensure the collection of *khajna* (revenue) the Company set a date (on or before the sunset of 30th Caitra of the Bengali calendar i.e. mid April) for payment of revenue by the *Zamindars*. The land tax set by EIC was very high, causing the *Zamindars* to be more aggressive in their collection of rent from their tenants. Many failed to pay the *khajna*. To the company officials, the remedy was simple and matters of fact – *Zamindaris* ownership were allocated within the mass people by open auction. A *Zamindari* having been perceived as an easy way of making a fortune, the *Zamindaris* put on auction we speedily bought up by merchants from Calcutta, although they were inexperienced in managing such estates. The rigid punctuality imposed for the payment ignored the previous *Zamindars*' position in society and clearly caused them a great deal of humiliation, particularly vis-à-vis tenants (Smith, 1921). These auctions resulted in wide-scale agitation among the former and farmers as well. The new *Zamindars* were mostly absentee landlords who ruled their estates through deputies, whose cruel ways, compared to the former *Zamindars*, evoked a hostile reaction among the farmers. By 1857, this agitation contributed along with other factors to the struggle for independence. The ultimate outburst was the *Sipahi Bidroho* (soldiers' mutiny). This upsurge of the masses in India perturbed the British Government and consequently India was under the direct control of the British Crown. Following the mass agitation, the Rent Act was introduced in 1869. The aim of the act was to reduce tension and forge a new relationship between the peasants and *Zamindars* (Islam, 1994). But in reality it caused further mass agitation and consequently a Rent Commission was formed 1879. On the basis of the recommendations of the Rent Commission, The Bengal Tenancy Act was introduced in 1885.

The situation did not improve over the years. Since the introduction of Permanent Settlement, the British backed the elites all the way. It took almost 150 years for the British to realize that the farmers should be brought under direct control, instead of the *Zamindars* or any other middlemen. In 1938 a commission headed by Sir Francis Floud recommended that, considering the socio-political background the *Zamindari* system should be abolished and the farmers should be brought under direct control of the government. This report, however, was not well accepted by the *Zamindari* and other middlemen. They strongly opposed the implementation of the recommendations. As a result, in 1944, the report was sent back for review to a committee of the Bengal provincial government. The committee supported the

recommendations of Sir Francis Floud. With some modification the recommendations under the name of East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act (EBSATA) were put before the provincial assembly. The bill further delayed because of the partition of the Indian subcontinent into two sovereign states – India and Pakistan.

The Pakistan Period

It took nearly three years to place the EBSATA before the parliament. Finally in 1950 the bill was approved by the then East Pakistan Government and thus the *Zamindari* system was abolished. The essence of the act is as follows.

The actual tillers of land shall be direct tenants of the government; and the *raiyat* (tiller) shall be called the *malik* (owner) and shall have the power to inherit and the right to transfer their land.

The EBSATA of 1950 has the merit of abolishing the hierarchy of land holdings by introducing only one class of landholders known as *malik* directly under the government. The Act was in the nature of socio-economic legislation.

The implementation of EBSATA was delayed owing to legislations and inefficiency of government agencies. This delay was felt by many as having served to protect the interests of the landlords. It gave the elites and the landlords enough time to conceal facts about their assets. In the meantime the 1954 provincial election brought a dramatic political change as the Muslim League (ML) government was completely routed by the United Front (UF) in the then East Pakistan. Such a political change again helped the elites to fabricate their land documents. However, in 1956 the United Front (UF) Government decided in favour of wholesale acquisition of land, but the landlords challenged the EBSATA and its speedy implementation in the High Court (Sen, 1971). This was done to cause further delay in the implementation of the Act. By January 1957, the Government won the case and proceeded with the acquisition of land from the landlords (GOEP, 1959). But by the time General Ayub Khan had come into power (1958) and he was persuaded by the elites surrounding him to stop the acquisition move. Ayub Khan protected the interests of the elites by raising the ceiling of land that could be owned by an individual. After this no measure was taken until the emergencies of Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh Scenario

In the post-independent period, the Awami League Government took steps to lighten the peasantry's burden. First, all land revenue arrears including interest were waived. Nearly 6 million certificate proceedings were pending against tenants for recovery of such arrears dues (GOB, 1972a). Second, families with agricultural land holdings less than 3.36 hectares (8.3 acres) were exempted from payment of any land revenue (Presidential Order 96/1972). Bangladesh has experienced a series of land reforms with the main emphasis on redistribution of *khas* land among the landless peasants. It was in post-independence Bangladesh that the elites for the first time faced any threat from the government policy making level. The discussion below highlights the land ceilings under different Acts. In the following chart 4 a brief analysis is given about land ceiling over time in Bangladesh.

Chart 4: Land Ceilings over Time

Name of the Act	Year launched	Land Ceilings	Remarks
The East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act (EBSATA)	1950	13.5 hectares (33.3 acres)	The ceiling would be relaxed in case of plantations, gardens, orchards, religious institutions, large scale farms using power driven machinery and equipment, and large scale dairy farm.)
Amendment of the EBSATA (GOEP)*	1961	50.6 hectares (125 acres)	In 1958 General Ayub Khan seized power in Pakistan and the made all-out efforts to protect the interest of the elites and accordingly he raised the land ceiling. Attempts were also made to return the previously seized land to the original owner.
Presidential Order No. 98 (GOB)**	1972	13.5 hectares (33.3 acres)	The Awami League government brought down the land ceiling to the level of 1950. It also attempted to define family.)
The Land Reforms Ordinance	1984	8.10 hectares (20 acres)	In April 1984, President H. M. Ershad declared the new land ceiling to be 60 <i>bighas</i> . The excess was to be surrendered to the government.

[Note: * Government of East Pakistan; ** Government of Bangladesh.] Source: Baqee, 1998: 58

As noted earlier, the legal situation obtaining in 1950 changed in favor of big landlords after General Ayub Khan seized power. In 1961, General Ayub raised the land ceiling to 50.6 hectares (125 acres) and where possible the seized land was given back to the original owners (Siddiqui, 1980). In 1964, in order to protect the interest of the landlords, General Ayub waived the ceiling for cooperative societies and religious institutions. The landlords were given

the choice of surrendering land under their possession. The acquired land was, therefore, poor in quality and dispersed in small pieces (Abdullah, 1976).

In the post independence period, the Awami League government fixed the land ceiling at 13.5 hectares (33.3 acres) of agricultural land per family by a Presidential Order (P.O. 98, 1972). The definition of family was, 'a person, his wife, son, unmarried daughter, son's wife, son's son, and son's unmarried daughter.' The Bangladesh government did not waive the ceiling on large scale farmers, but waived it for religious institutions. After evaluating the situation, Presidential Order No. 135 of 1972 was issued. It lays down that a married adult son living separately from and independently of his parents continuously for five years before December 16, 1971, and his wife, son, and unmarried daughter could now constitute an independent separate family. This clause was further relaxed; under certain circumstances, the revenue officer could accept the son's claim as the head of a separate family while his father was alive. The dilution in the definition of 'family' not only provided some land owners with loopholes as an escape route from the provision for a ceiling but also gave the lower revenue officials an opportunity to apply their discretion arbitrarily. Thus the benefit of land ceiling in Bangladesh did not reach the poor in the remote areas of Bangladesh. The situation changed after the new Land Reform Ordinance of 1984. It further lowered the highest land ceiling by almost one-third. The ordinance also warned that after April 14, 1984, any sale of land in excess of 8.1 Hectares or 60 *bighas* would be void. This was, in brief, the land ceiling data over the period (Baqee, 1998).

2.6 Characteristics of *Char* Areas

Crops

Among the crops cultivated in the *char* areas paddy is the major one. In the rice season, they cultivate both *Aman* and *JRRI* paddy combined. According to a survey conducted in 1930, there were around 15,000 species of rice in the undivided Bengal. In the mean time, those species of rice which has been lost or on way to be lost forever are *Chanda Binni*, *Khorma*, *Kotoktara*, *Shagar Dhan*, *Pora Binni*, *Bashful*, *Gachiboro*, *Radhunipagal*, *Chinisagar*, *Rajrog*, *Biroi*, *Potka*, *Patbar Nati*, *Fulkati*, *Thakurog*, *Shaita*, *Pankhiraj*, *Tulshimala*, *Khejurihupi*, etc. Only the *char* inhabitants still cultivates some of the local variety rice species during the *Aman* and *JRRI* (*Boro*) season. *Char* inhabitants have preserved some of the local and indigenous variety of rice species through their cultivation. *Char* inhabitants almost have abandoned the cultivation of local *Boro* species. Even then, where flood is very frequent and low land become fertile due to siltation process for remaining under water for long time; there they cultivate *Boro* crops once in a year. In the past, in those areas they cultivated *Camara* species of rice

during *Aman* season which rice grows with the water level increasing. In other high land areas, though *Aus* and *Aman* are cultivated, but there are high risks of damages due to flood. As the high lands can be damaged during the flood, on the other hand they get one crop from the low land on an average. According to the production intensiveness, productivity of char areas is almost equal with intensiveness of productivity of the main land, particularly *char* of upper *Meghna*, the *Meghna* floodplains, lower *Padma* and some areas of *Jamuna*.

Intensiveness of Productivity in Chars

Chart 5: Intensiveness of Productivity in Chars

From the chart it is seen that the intensiveness of productivity varies according to the criteria of rivers and *char* areas. As the upper portion of the river *Ganga* and *Padma* is sandy, this is why, *Aus* paddy grows well there. And the flood free *poli* land is good for producing *Aman*

River	Intensiveness of Productivity
<i>Ganga</i>	185
<i>Padma</i>	178
<i>Meghna</i>	150
Bangladesh	172

Source: CUM, 2005: 12

and *Boro*. Again, in the *chars* of *Jamuna* and upper *Meghna*, *char* people have left local *Boro* instead of high productivity hybrid paddy. People cultivate *Aus* before the flood in the *chars* of the *Jamuna*. As the *chars* of the *Padma* is attacked several times of a year by flood, that is why *char* inhabitants in those areas are less interested of producing *Aman*. During the *rabi* season in winter, *Khira*, *Motorshuti*, nut, sweep potato, round potato grows hugely in the floodplains of the river *Padma*, *Meghna*, and *Ganga*.

Fisheries: Fishing is an important occupation of the *char* dweller – particularly in the floodplains of the river *Padma* and *Meghna*. It is not only in the *chars* of *Meghna*, but in other *chars* as well, fishermen invest their fishing net to the *char* people on a 50% ownership basis of the fish, whereas a fishing net costs around 50,000 taka. Many *char* people take the occupation related with fishing during the fishing season. Small businessmen of the *chars* buy those fishes and sell those to the whole sellers in the main land. Later on, these fish is distributed all around the country. The following table 2.4 would show the percentage of fishing occupation in *char* land.

Table 2.4: Percentage of Fishing Occupation in *Char* land

River	Isolated <i>Chars</i>	Attached <i>Chars</i>
Upper <i>Jamuna</i>	2	3
Middle <i>Jamuna</i>	8	10
<i>Ganga</i> (Middle)	7	2
<i>Padma</i> (Middle)	23	19
Upper <i>Meghna</i>	15	17
<i>Meghna</i> Floodplains	28	18

Source: Ibid, 2005: 12

Poor people of *chars* neither have that economic ability to buy fishing nets nor do they receive any institutional assistance. There are no credit programs for assisting the poor fishermen of *char* areas. Many *char* inhabitants have been forced to take on fishing occupation for losing their lands. This is also a source of income of these people.

Cattle

Some *char* people are involved with the business of cattle, particularly with purchasing and selling of cattle. This is one of the main sources of their income. Among cattle oxen and buffaloes are used for cultivation of land, and this is the source of milk and meat for the *char* dwellers. The milkmen supply milk to the main land areas. Cow dung is very effective organic manure and is also used as fuels of cooking. Goat is another important domestic animal. Goat is very much familiar with the *char* livelihood. Buffalo is another known animal in *char* areas. Buffalo is mostly found in the *char* areas of the river *Ganga* and in the *chars* of *Jamalpur* district. Adequate grazing land in the *char* areas have facilitated for cattle husbandry. Some people in *char* areas make good profit by selling goats and cows. In some *chars*, cows and goats are domesticated on the basis of tenancy. In this process, price of the cattle or goats are settled down at first, then it is given to the *char* people for nourishing. Afterwards, when the cow is grown up, the price of the cow is taken by the owner and after producing the first calf, the calf and milk is given to the *char* person who takes care the cow. Second calf and milk would get the owner. Through the kin connections, many people of main land invest money for animal husbandry in *char*. The main problem of animal husbandry in the *char* areas is the threat of thieves and robbers. That is why *char* people make the shelter for the cattle near to their home. They do not get any kind of assistance from any institution for cattle husbandry. Recently in some areas, some NGOs went for providing assistance in animal husbandry of the *char* people through their credit programme. Veterinary treatment facilities are essential in the *char* areas. Every year, many cows and goats die in diseases in *char* areas.

Riverbank Erosion

Day by day Bangladesh is encountering the risks of global climate change. Temperature is increasing, at the same time sea level height is also increasing. Low land areas are gradually going under water. The seasonal diversity is under severe threat. These events are not now any kind of theoretical assumption. In the findings of scientists and researchers, this has empirical evidence. From 1961 to 1990, in these 30 years the temperature of Bangladesh has increased on an average 0.0037 degree Celsius per year. Again, from 1960 to 2002, in this period, the temperature has increased just its double. It is a great threat for a disaster prone country like Bangladesh. All together 223 small and big rivers are crisscrossed in Bangladesh (CUM, 2005). Every year due to tidal bores and excessive rainfall, hilly water falls come through the *Padma*, the *Megna*, and the *Bhramaputra* rivers. For this reason, *poli* and mud driven by flood water is deposited in the river bed and causing to the reduction of water capacity in the rivers. As the river beds are occupied with mud driven by up-water, in the rainy season rivers are filled with few water. In the consequences of the change of river course direction, it breaks the river dams, and is caused to river bank erosion.

People of erosion prone *char* areas become destitute through losing their assets frequently. During the disaster, these people take the first shelter to the houses of their kin members. They move to other areas as a group. Later on, they manage their livelihood as day labourer or petty businessman. Those who are economically solvent, they buy new lands in the mainland and settle down there. On the other hand, those who have no kin members in the areas adjacent to their houses, they move to another neighbouring *char*. Where they are sheltered by any landlord and they work for those landlord. Some dwellers of erosion prone *chars* permanently settle to the neighboring *chars* through developing marriage relationship. People in the erosion prone *char* areas that have no kin members for providing shelter usually migrate to various areas of the country (SAMATA, 2003).

Flood

Geographically Bangladesh is situated in a disaster prone region. Flood, drought, excessive rain fall, earthquake, cyclone, tornado, small velocity storms, the *Kal Baishakhi* storms attack in every year. Among these, flood is a devastating disaster which attack people of Bangladesh every year. The total landed area of Bangladesh is the part of the Bengal delta. The *Ganga*, the *Bhramaputra* and the *Megna* rivers have entered to this part of the delta through crossing India, Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and China. The half of the landed areas of the country is only 5 meters high from the sea level. Only for the reason of this

low height of land areas from the sea level, on an average one and half tornados hits the coastal areas of Bangladesh and for the same reason, the tidal bores enter into 200 km. of inland areas. By 2050, the sea level height will increase approximately 13 cm. high and nearly 1% of the total land areas of Bangladesh will go under sea water. 15% of the total population of Bangladesh leads their livelihood from this land which is under environmental threat. In the most unfavorable situation, 18% of the total land area of Bangladesh will go under sea water. By 2100, the land area that is depicted of going under sea water is provided by livelihood of 35% of the total population of the country. As a result, the land area which supports with the one-third of the total production would be lost under sea water (CUM, 2005).

In Bangladesh, the 80% of the average rainfall is occurred in June-September. These rainfall results into flood every year. The flood of 1954, 1955, 1974, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1998, and 2004 were devastative in nature and loss. Among all, the flood of 1988 and 2004 were the most devastative flood of 20th Century. During the flood, every *char* is identified as a risky area. People in the *char* areas who dwell in the low land areas, immediately take shelter to the flood protective dam or to the main highways. For this reason, people of day labourer class can not settle in the *char* areas for a prolonged period. 75% people lives in the *char* areas on an average 1 to 9 years. Again, 10% people live in the *chars* for more than 18 years. Either permanent or temporary settlement in the *char* areas are depended mainly by the flood. Because, people have to shift their houses to the high land areas every year due to flood. Crops are damaged, and cattle herding become very difficult. That is why during flood cattle are sold in a very low price. These people again domesticate cattle after flood. Houses, crops, cattle, fish pond, fish projects, trees and other valuable assets are damaged during the flood (Elahi & Roggi, 1990).

Flood does not always cause damage. Flood with low occurrence are sometimes treated as blessings. Bangladesh is well known all over the world as fertile crop land due to flood. The alluvial soil carried by flood water increases the fertility of the agriculture. Flood increases the underground water preservation, and it develops an appropriate reproduction area for fish. During flood, fishes complete their reproductive function and again get back to the river, or it have to stay in the canals, *baors* or *beels* due to decreasing of flood water. This fish supplies the need of animal protein of the char inhabitants in later period. The major crisis during the flood is the scarcity of drinking water and fuel. This time, most of the tube well remains under water. The *char* families which are capable manage their food supply and fuel before flood each year. They preserve dried food like *chira*, *gur*, *muri*, etc. Various crops and vegetables seeds are preserved by the char inhabitants for rapid post-flood crops and vegetable production. If the flood occurs for a prolonged period,

char inhabitants make their seed bed in floating boat made by banana tree, which is locally called *vella*. During the calamity, the people of the community cooperates each other with food, shelter, movement and other economic supports.

The *char* inhabitants make a *macha* (high shelter) for their goats, hens and ducks. Before flood, they also heighten their own houses. During the calamity, they do not receive the minimum health service. There are risks of various diseases during and post flood situation. Not only people, cattle also face food scarcity. As the grazing land remains under flood water, so the *char* people can provide their cattle only with dry *kebar* (dry part of staple crops). As a result, cattle also encounter various diseases. During the flood, for solving various problems of people and animals, there should be precaution activities. However, in most of the *chars*, there is neither pre-disaster nor post-disaster service for the *char* people. There is various relief and supportive activities available in the *thana* level, but these are not extended up to *char* areas during disaster period. During disaster in *char* areas, issues like health, sanitation, pure drinking water, human and animal food should be prioritized and incorporated into the planning of implementation.

Storms (*Kal Baishakhi*)

Falgun and *Chaitra* (February and March), Bengali months combine spring season in Bangladesh. The next two months are summer. Basically in summer, *Kal Baishakhi* storms come with its dangerous face. It is known as pre-seasonal storms. *Kal Baishakhi* comes with *shila brishti*. For this reason, crops in the fields are massively damaged. The fields which are damaged by *shila brishti*, become totally ruined. In addition, houses, cattle are damaged – even thunder storms occurred by *Kal Baishakhi* takes lives of many *char* people. *Kal Baishakhi* storms bring sufferings in the lives of *char* people. They are very much habituated facing various natural calamities like *Kal Baishakhi*. Because, they have no other alternative as *Kal Baishakhi* is a part of summer season. Every year, *char* inhabitants repair their houses and strengthen it for saving themselves from *Kal Baishakhi*.

Drought

The land of *char* areas is usually sandy. Due to excessive rainfall, the water level of *char* land falls down. Though the average rainfall in Bangladesh is adequate, but the amount of rainfall during the dry season is very low. Basically due to falling down of ground water level and excessive temperature of sun during the day time, in every year *char* areas and Western part of Bangladesh fall under drought. For this reason, farmers of *char* areas only cultivate the *Boro* paddy in

the low land areas of *char* during the dry season. Basically drought is one of the much known aspects of the nature of Bangladesh. During this period, due to the scarcity of land water irrigation is hampered, so the production of crops naturally decreases. This is the main limitation of the *char* dwellers.

Excessive Rain Falls

Though Bengali months, *Ashar* and *Sharaban* combine rainy season, but it extends up to *Bhadra-Ashwin* months (June-September). During this period, the average rain fall of the country is 2320 mm. Due to excessive rain fall, canals and *Beels*, rivers-tributaries, ponds become full of water. Mainly three seasons out of six seasons in Bangladesh are largely responsible for seasonal variation. Among which summer and rainy season have long term effects in our yearly weather. As a result, it increases the temperature of weather and it also rains heavily during June-September. Consequently, heavy rainfall has become a part of natural process in Bangladesh. Excessive rainfall occurs over flow of water from the hilly regions in and outside the country; as a result the river water flow crosses the danger level in many parts of Bangladesh during the rainy season. Over flow of rain water through the river and tributaries are the main reason behind the flood in Bangladesh. Particularly, the people of the river bank and adjacent *char* areas of large rivers suffer terribly in every year due to flood.

Agricultural Land

From the surface up to 6-9 inches deep soil is called agricultural land. The roots of crops which are cultivated in our country, usually goes up to above mentioned depth in the soil and the most nutritional elements of the crops are found in the agricultural land. Ideal soil consists of main four elements of soil: organic elements, inorganic elements, water and wind. Here it is mentionable that in the ideal soil condition, water and wind does not exist in an equally distributed manner.

Natural Resources of the *Chars*

Almost all agricultural products are produced in the *chars* in the agricultural based Bangladesh. In 1993, the total *char* area of Bangladesh was 1722 sq. km. Vast landed area of *char* is used in different agricultural production in different seasons round the year. The low lands of the *chars* are comparatively more fertile, where the intensity of agricultural production is on an average 150 to 185, which is on an average 165 in whole Bangladesh (BBS, 1997). Production capacity of the isolated and integrated *char* is lesser than the main land. The reason behind decreasing the production capacity of the *char* areas are

reduction of fertility of soil, regular natural calamities and inadequate extension service. Moreover, due to the availability of the adequate river water and underground water, *char* dwellers has cultivated crops lesser which are irrigation based. There are also sudden and unexpected floods for damaging crops, for this reason *char* dwellers tries to produce high value crops before floods. However, *char* dweller can catch fish resources from the river water round the year. Recently, the Forest Department is trying to implement the Social Forestry Movement in some *chars* with the combined initiative. There is cattle grazing land in the vast areas of the *chars* and in some respects, the sand of the *char* is also sold, which provides the *char* dweller with financial assistance. *Char* dwellers cultivates rapidly increasing banana trees for protecting their houses from the storms and high velocity wind. Other than banana the trees which are cultivated by the *char* dwellers include mango, jackfruit, guava, bamboo, etc. mainly.

Soil Life of *Chars* and its Influence

The organic elements of soil are the life of soil. Because the characteristics of soil is dependent on the elements contained by soil. In addition, the elements which are required for the nutritional needs of crops are embedded in the organic materials of soil. Ideal proportion of organic materials in soil is 3% to 5%. But in Bangladesh, with the increase of food demand, the intensiveness of agriculture has also increased, for which the organic materials of agricultural land has also decreased less than 1.5%. In some areas, it is below than 1%. With the increase of intensive agriculture, there is no alternative to increase the supply of organic materials in the soil.

Plant Nutritional Elements: There are two kinds of food elements of plants on the basis of crop demand.

Principal elements: 09 Carbon, Hydrogen, Oxygen, Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium, Calcium, Magnesium, and Sulfur.

Secondary elements: 07 Iron, Manganese, Copper, Molybdenum, Chlorine, and Cobalt.

Sources of Nutritional Elements of Plants:

- i) Carbon from air (does not need to supply);
- ii) Hydrogen and Oxygen from water (does not need to supply);
and
- iii) Rest of the elements from soil and fertilizer (need to supply).

Functions of Organic Materials in the Soils of *Chars*: Organic materials in soil are the only natural source of nutrition of the plants. Significant functions organic materials are as follows:

- i) Increases water sustaining capacity of soil;*
- ii) It works as the source nutrition of 17 elements of plants;*
- iii) It reduces the risks of plant diseases and attack of insects;*
- iv) It increases the exchangeability of the food elements of plants;*
- v) It increases quality and productivity of the crops;*
- vi) Organic fertilizer has no harmful side-effects;*
- vii) It reduces the use of chemical fertilizer; and*
- viii) It develops the soil composition overall (Source: CUM, 2005).*

Marketing System

Char people are more depended on their own *baazaar* than other people. In most regards, *baazaars* in *chars* are situated in very distantly locations. *Char* people comes to the *baazaar* of *Union* or *thana* or district for twice or thrice a week for selling and buying their necessary goods. As the communication facilities with the main land *baazaar* is not very convenient, that is why *char* people settle *baazaar* in their own *char* to meet their necessity. These *baazaars* are locally known as *haat*. Here they exchange their necessary goods for twice or thrice a week. Though, small *baazaar* or *haat* in *char* can not meet all the necessity of the *char* people. For this reason, *char* people sell their products to the local middlemen for avoiding of going to the distant *baazaar* or reducing their expenses. In the rainy season, when *baazaar* in the *char* remains under water, at that time they come to the *baazaar* of *Union* and *thana* for selling and buying their products.

Improvement of road and communication system are needed for the comodification of agricultural products, produced in the *char* areas. It is very costly for them to carry out the agricultural products to the market places due to the lack of proper transport and communication facilities. It is also very painful to them for the lowest rate of their products. It is necessary to create local markets, which can buy the agricultural products, produced in the

adjacent *char* areas; and through this process, the pains or miseries of the *char* land people can be reduced greatly. Simultaneously, it is also necessary to improve the transport facilities. Above all, economic support is necessary for the *char* land people so that they could start the small business through the selling and buying the different kinds of raw materials or goods during the specific seasons.

***Char* People's Interaction and Disputes**

Char inhabitants move and communicate with people of different occupations and class for meeting their daily life needs. The main relationship of the *char* inhabitants is developed with the *bazaar* and village *haat*. Their relationship with the *bazaar* and village *haat* is developed for the need of purchase and selling of commodities. It is also related with the supply of the food of *char* dwellers which is linked with their survival. Then they develop communication with the persons and institutions which are related with their daily economic activities. For example, day labourer, construction labourer, and other occupational groups of people with whom they communicate. Boat plays a significant role in the transportation with other *chars* and with the main land.

Disputes are very common in the everyday life of the *char* people. In the cases of disputes, the *char* people first seek assistance to their neighboring kin members. They frequently take legal actions and assistance regarding cases of land disputes and interpersonal conflict for other materialistic issues. They become looser financially and in other ways for running a case through the judicial processes for years after years. The *char* inhabitants even communicate with the local chairman, members of *Union Parishad* or even with local member of the parliament for the litigation of their disputes. For the credit related disputes, they communicate with the people of leading positions, chairman of the area, members etc. For seeking credit or other facilities from the bank, they communicate with the local money lenders or *Mohajons*, and they communicate with the people of leading positions or various NGOs. *Char* people communicates with the local *Kabiraj* or healer and paramedical doctors for healing their diseases. The interaction system of the *char* inhabitants is diversified and multidimensional

Unity

The *char* land people are very much united. They are very helpful for each other. They are always ready to be united for their demand. The people are aware of solving any kind of problems among them. They avoid quarrelling due to their lineage bindings and community sentiment. For this reason, the

char land people work together in different economic, social, political and religious affairs to which console their solidarity and bond of unity.

Local Government

Local government is the lowest administrative unit of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The Statue of the country has also included the *Gram Sarkar* Act-2003, which has ensured the participation of all the rural people. Several short-term programme have been identified for the entire development of the villages, which can bring the tremendous changes. In the past, there were three wards in each union, which has been divided into 9 sections presently and a member or representative is elected from each of the sections. There is also a reserved membership for the female in each section. The *Gram Sarkar* is formulated both with the combination of the elected male member, who acts as the head and the female member, who acts as the advisor of the *Gram Sarkar*. In this regard, there is no such restriction for the membership of others in *Gram Sarkar*. It is, however, believed that if *Gram Sarkar* works properly according to their budget, the villages of Bangladesh would be developed undoubtedly.

Responsibilities of the Institutions

An institution without any power can perform no activity or responsibility. Different government and non-government organizations have the responsibilities to work for the *char* land people. But, they are not performing their responsibilities properly. If they take steps with edge and efficiency to work about the education, health, sanitation, electricity, communication system and different sectors of agriculture; there would remain the minimum or 'functional' development in the *char* areas. In this regard, firstly, the respective workers or persons have to be aware of their responsibilities, then, the process of *char* development would be successful.

Health and Sanitation

Regarding the health and sanitation facilities of the *char* land people, the government is not as active as like as the actions taken in other places in this regard. The workers of community clinic and *upazila* health center are not regular in the *char* areas. The people have to travel for about at least 10-20 kilometers to reach the *thana* health complex. The patients have to suffer much due to the lack of proper communication facilities. Beside this, the people are not much aware of their health and sanitation. They are also deprived of the facilities about the health sanitation even during the period of disaster.

The people of *char* area have no idea about the sanitation system and they are totally ignorant. Even in these days, no household contains the sanitary latrine except the 8-10 families. They use the open land for their hygiene purpose, which is an extreme threat for their health. Mass awareness and habitation of health and sanitation are mentioned in the programme of *Gram Sarkar*. It is possible for the members of *Gram Sarkar* Committee to make aware of the village people about their health and sanitation.

Technology

The livelihood of the *char* land people totally depends on agricultural activities. They collect all the materials from agriculture, needed for their livelihood. But, they are not largely benefited due to their practice of traditional technology in agriculture. Though, the modern agricultural equipments, such as, tractor, power-tiller, paddy harvesting machine etc. are available in the *char* areas, the *char* land people are in the lack of proper knowledge and perception about the utilization of these modern technologies. So to say, today, it is necessary to change the practice of traditional technology in agriculture.

2.7 Women Activities in the *Char*

When male inhabitants of the *char* go for employment outside the *char*, and then the female members of the *char* carry on various activities for maintaining their lives. In this period, *char* women cut grass and sell it, work in *char* agriculture, crop processing, etc. Man and woman in *char* areas work together for repairing their houses after flood. Women rear cows, goats, hens and cocks; and they make a source of income from these assets. Some women maintain their livelihood through sewing *katha* and working as household helper in other households. Some women sell various hand made products which are locally useful. Most of these women are involved in activities like taking care of children, cooking, cleaning of house and kitchen, maintaining cattle and poultry. These roles and activities of *char* based women in the productive activities of the household are of major importance even if largely unrecognized. None of their activities bring much extra income but they saved the household much expenditure. Women's work is entirely taken for granted, however, the women in "*purdah*" are said not to work. In that sense the *char* women's labour capacity tends to be un-granted and to be exploited first.

Women's Role in Agricultural Decision making

Rural Women in Bangladesh continue to play traditional roles in agriculture in post-harvest activities, homestead cultivation, seed selection and storage and livestock and poultry rising, they are also increasingly playing an important role

in field, agriculture. Women becomes involved in field agriculture on landholding owned or leased by their husbands as male agricultural labour wages rise and become prohibitive to small and medium size farmers. Women's involvements in field agriculture, therefore, helps lower the cost of production. Women also work as agricultural labourers in field agriculture activities in areas in which they have been displaced as labourers in post-harvest activities by mills and in which field agriculture activities abound. Rural women are increasingly playing an important role in crop production as evidenced by:

- i) The intensification of cultivation of vegetables and fruits trees in the homestead and in adjacent plots for consumption and sale;*
- ii) The taking of an active role in agriculture decision making including decision regarding the adoption o improved seeds fertilizer;*
- iii) Undertaking field agricultural activities, farm management and crop production; and*
- iv) The cultivation of leased land or land obtained through some type of share-cropping arrangement by groups of landless or near-landless women. Occasionally, the leases land is khas land.*

Despite women's increasingly important role in crop production, agricultural statistics do not reflect their contributions and agricultural policies and programme are still formulated and implemented with the assumption that women's contributions to crop production are negligible. The agricultural extension system is based on the premise that women's contribution towards crop production as such is negligible. Similarly, seed and transplanting projects are targeted toward men rather than women and the Horticulture Development Board plans to train men farmers. But the focusing on women's activities in Bangladesh indicates that women have now developed a willingness to engage themselves in some sort of income generating work beyond their homesteads. By transition of women have always been more involved in homestead agricultural production than men intensification of horticulture and homestead agriculture, being home- based (or adjacent to the homestead) has been the most compatible agriculture set of activities with women's multiple roles. Although women's important role in post-harvest operation for the processing of field crop has been well documented (Abdullah & Zeidenstein, 1982; Westergaard, 1983), not much in recorded about their contributions in homeland vegetable and fruit production to both family and village food production. Such contributions, although underrated even by the

women themselves, to family income or consumption could be substantial, particularly in small and medium farm households.

The performance of small, marginal and landless households (in terms of 'return' per decimal of homestead land) is far superior to the large households, possibly due to more intensive care provided by the women, women in landless households are found to spend nearly 4 hours on average for all women. It has also been noted that the adoption of modern inputs for field crops is associated positively with the time women spend on homestead agricultural activities (Solaiman, 1987). But the women do not take part in agricultural decision making. They seem to have been convinced that the possibilities of exploiting opportunities at the homestead level have been exhausted (White, 1992). For the poor households, it is indeed a world where the women are driven by dream that would salvage them from the debtor of economic hardship. Participation in the periodic markets is thus one of the new avenues through which women folk in certain parts of the countryside are trying to combat poverty (Baqee, 1998).

The cordial activities of a woman including agricultural work within the confines of her home are assumed to be the routine pursuits of a housewife without any value being put on her labour. The role and status of women, especially of women in the rural areas, have been documented in detail (Alamgir, 1977; Abdullah & Zeidenstein, 1982; Chowdhury & Ahmed, 1982; Ahmed & Baqee, 1989; White, 1992). The study of White is more critical than the others and offers a sharper focus on rural women in a multi-religious and multi-dimensional society. But it must be noted that none of has ever attempted to include in their studies the hapless and poor drastic women of the *char* lands. *Char* like being so much different from the life of the larger part of women in mainland. The researcher strongly feels that *char* women demand special attention from the scholars. Not only are they engaged along with their families in a constant struggle for existence in a harsh and unfriendly, crucial and disfavored environment, they are at times left alone to bear the burnt of the rigorous of *char* life (Baqee, 1998).

It is very much difficult to analyze and organize, with any precision, the nature of the workload or activities of *char* village women on a daily round basis. As a matter of fact, the daily round of work and activities in *char* land's women largely depend upon the financial condition of the family concerned. Moreover, there are seasonal variations in respect of the work undertaken. During and after the harvesting season all families the women are engaged in a variety of activities. Depending on the socio- economic status, the women of the study area engages her in a number of activities. These are:

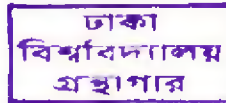
Chapter-2: Background of the Study Area

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <i>i) Domestic Work</i> | <i>n) Post harvest activities</i> |
| <i>ii) Childcare</i> | <i>ni) Cash earning activities</i> |
| <i>iii) Homestead Agricultural activities</i> | <i>vii) Rest and recreation</i> |
| <i>iv) Livestock Rearing</i> | <i>viii) Others Activities</i> |

In *char* village, the summer and rainy season is the time of hard working for women, when they saving in cash and in kind that can be made to be consumed later time of crisis or natural calamities and the off season food deficit. In winter, the days are shorter, the women more work has to be performed as it is also the season of harvesting and different types of socio-religious occasions (Baqee, 1998). Char Dumla is one of such *char* villages selected for the purpose of present study.

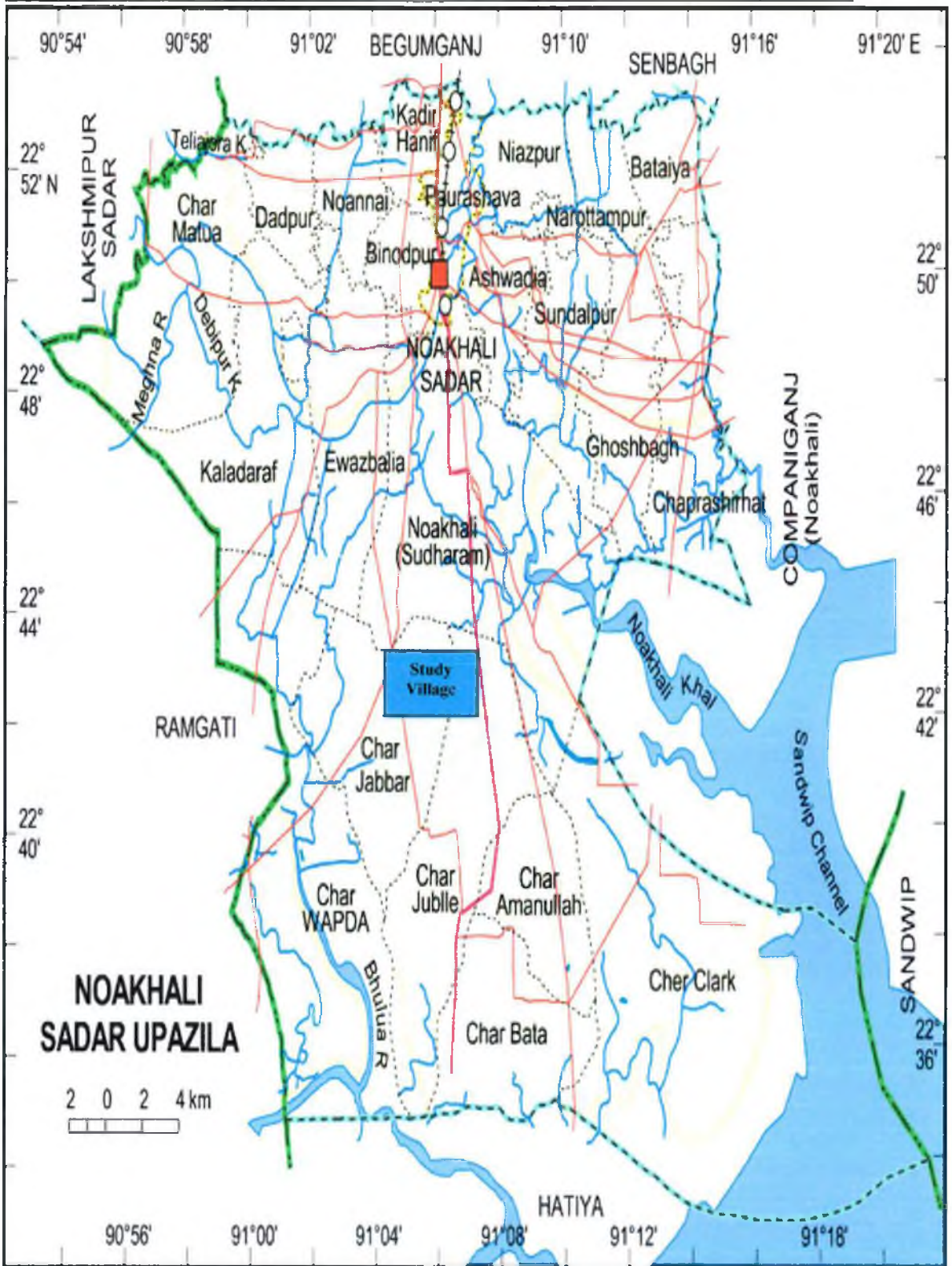
Chapter-3 Socio-Economic Profile of the Study Area

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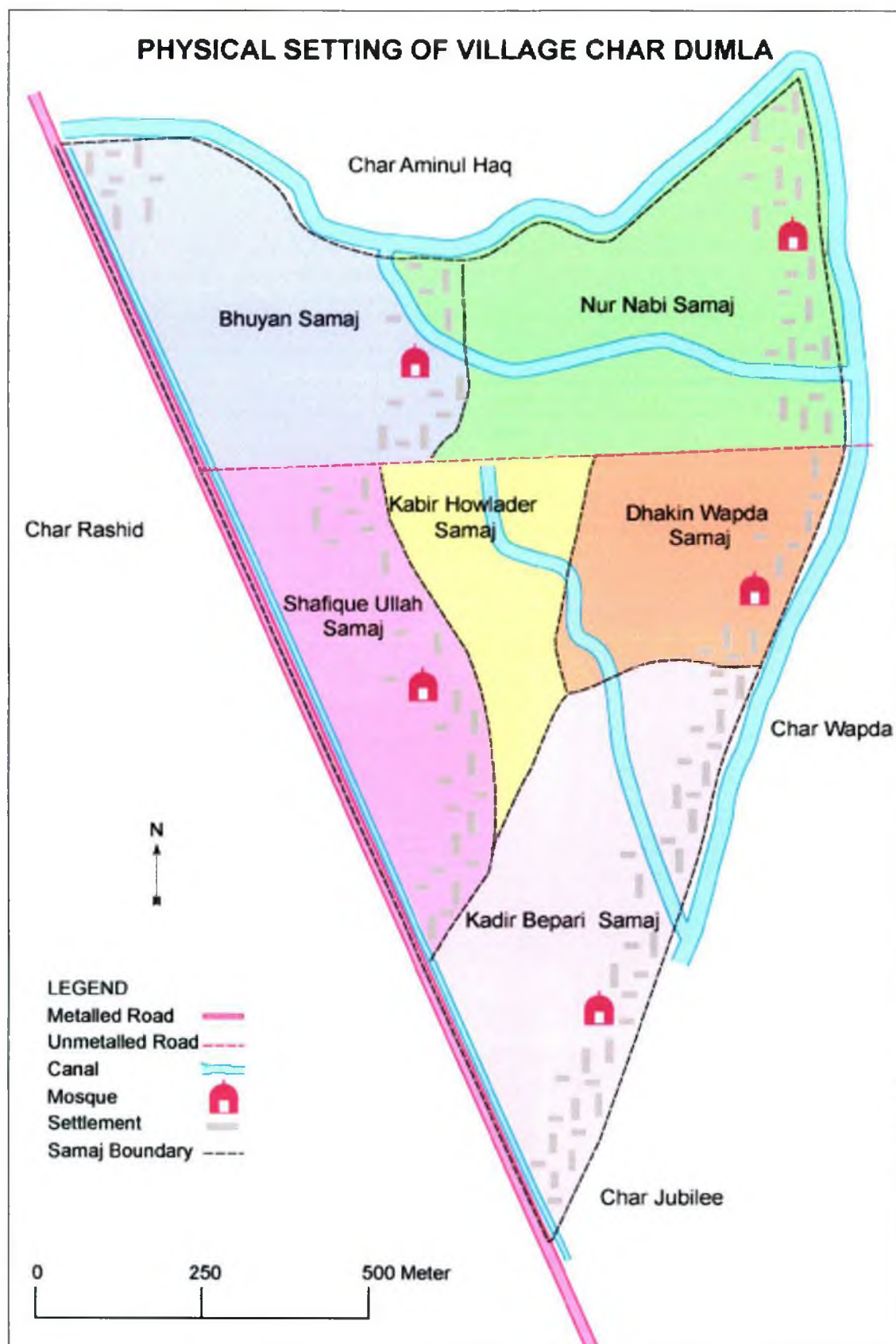


- 3.1 Settlement History of Char Dumla
- 3.2 The Physical Settings of Char Dumla
- 3.3 Demographic Composition of the Study Area
- 3.4 Educational Status of the Villagers
- 3.5 Occupational Status of the Villagers
- 3.6 Income Distribution of the Villagers
- 3.7 Agro-Ecological Conditions and Land Classes in Char Dumla
- 3.8 Constraints Depending on Crop Production
- 3.9 Seasonal Variation and the Cropping Pattern

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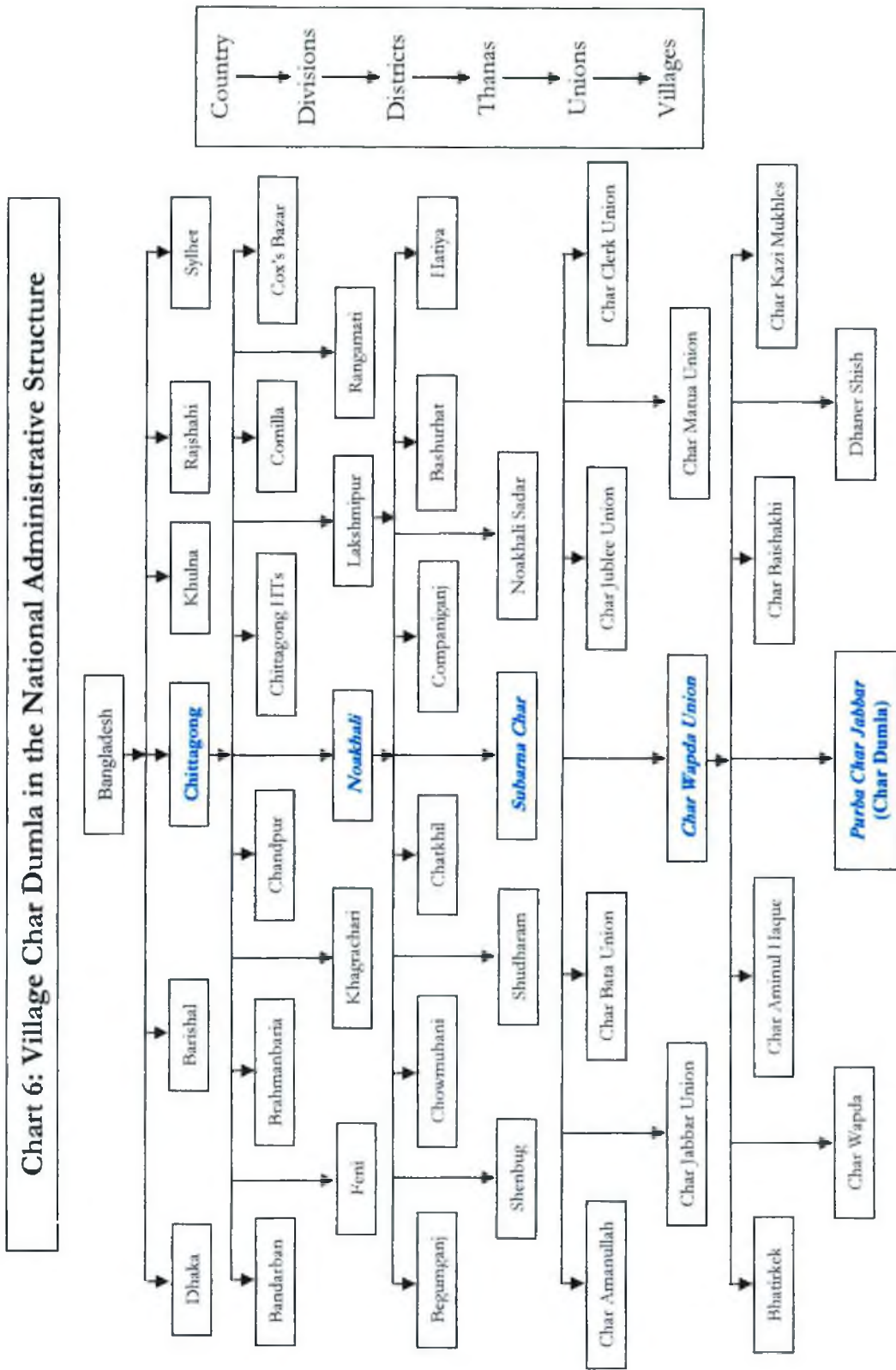


Map 3: Study Area, Char Dumla under Noakhali Sadar (Presently Subarna Char Upazila)



Map 4: Physical Setting of Village Char Dumla

Chapter-3: Socio-Economic Profile of the Study Area



Chapter-3: Socio-Economic Profile of the Study Area

3.1 Settlement History of Char Dumla

Chars are the coastal flats stretching out in front of large sections of the coast of Bangladesh. There is a great variety in the *chars*. The youngest *chars* are mud flats supporting little vegetation, dissected by tidal creeks, subject to frequent flooding tight tides and so on. However, the Char Dumla village is one of the oldest *chars* in the mouth of the *Meghna*. In the early 17th century, the river *Meghna* had damaged this *char*. During the early 18th century, the river *Meghna* carried to the sea the great bulk of the water of the *Brahmaputra* and the *Ganges* as well as the rivers of the *Noakhali* district first a little below *Chandpur* at the corner of *Char Ababil*. It has two channels, the right channel, and known hence forward at the river *Meghna*, lies in the district of *Bakergonj* (presently called Barisal). The other channel passes on between the main land of *Noakhali* of its left bank and *Chars Shibnath, Bose, Sita* and *Alexander* on the right. Before reaching the Southern most point of the main land, the river divided itself again at Char Dumla (Khan (ed.), 1977). The present Char Dumla is partly a reformation in situ of *Char Siddhi*, but it was formed at different times. In 1850, the Char Dumla was located and later in 1890 it was in an alluvial position. The inhabitants settled at the Char Dumla since the 19th century. But this *char* was through delusion gone on steadily in the South since Major Rennell's Survey, down to the town of the *Noakhali* district settlement and it was rather slow. The reverse process of diluvion has already set in the Southern boundary. In the mainland of *Noakhali* there has been as great a change near the riverbank as in the islands. Almost all these accreted areas vanished before 1835. The *Meghna*, thus, began to flow its pristine glory by the *West Char Bangshi* 'brimming and bright and large' and also cut *Char Bangshi*. But alluvion on one bank has only provoked diluvion on the other. Rather the converse of this is the fact and this side of *Noakhali* district has increased in area only at the coast of the district *Bakergonj* (Ibid). Since then there has been persistent diluvion but up to the time of the district settlement it was very much more in evidence in front of the town of *Noakhali* district than elsewhere. After the district settlement there was rapid diluvion all along the bank but at the same time Char Dumla was thrown up in mainstream and during the last few years there has been a large alluvial formation. The *Meghna* began to the silted up to the North-West of *char* salience. If the process of silting up continues on the eastern side of the land some portion of *Sudbaram Pourasava* (See Map 3) will also be connected with *Ramgati Pourasava*. Water Development Board (formerly BWAPDA) started an embankment on this channel in 1961 to connect Char Dumla with the mainland. This scheme has already been completed by 1963. Char Dumla was fully established as an oldest *char* in 1965 by WDB. Earlier it was called Tounji. The changing formation of the settlement process of Char Dumla was recorded with a '*diara*' survey (Hunter, 1875).

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When Char Dumla appeared from the riverbed people from *Ramgati*, led by some *jotdars*, occupied most of the land claiming it their ancestral land. The people of *Sudharam*, led by some other *jotdars* also had ancestral claim over the land. Both the parties were backed by their respective district and *upazila* authorities. In this regard fake papers were made by the consisting parties to defend their claims. Looting, setting fires on houses and clash between the *lathiyals* of both the parties were a regular feature in Char Dumla. It has been noted that a part from the *jotdars* and other interested groups also played a vital role in this case. Some cooperatives also came into existence. Land was leased in the name of the cooperatives and then distributed among the people paying subscriptions. At this stage the local *tabshildars* (revenue collectors) came into the scene and materialized the landless people for DCR. He engaged some of his own people in the area to materialize the landless to have DCR from his office. However, he gave DCR to the people who were possessing land. It has been reported that he had interest in keeping the land *khas* to make profit from DCR. He, being from *Sudharam*, also favored the people from *Sudharam* with his backing where the landless group ousted by many other interest groups, the so-called cooperatives and kept land *khas*. The Char Dumla, which is recently called the oldest *char*, has already consolidated lands, supporting annual cropping with more or less permanent homestead area despite the fact that the lands are unprotected and vulnerable to cyclones and so called tidal bores. Minor but more frequent cyclones are doing extensive damages to the crops of the *char* (Khan (ed.), 1977). The great diversity of Char Dumla has already secured and illustrated a position as a *char* with great variety among the coastal *chars*.

3.2 The Physical Settings of Char Dumla

The village Char Dumla (See Map 4) is situated in the plain of southern part of Bangladesh in *Char Wapda union* under the *Subarno Char* than of *Noakhali* district. It is a vastly integrated *char*. It is located 18 kms from *Noakhali Sadar thana*. Administratively it belonged to *Noakhali Sadar thana* during the last year. In 2005, *Noakhali Sadar thana* has been divided into two *thanas* and one of these is with the most popular word “*Subarno*” which was established as a new *thana*. The village Char Dumla en-counted in this new established *Subarno Char thana* (See Chart 6). It is an area where the large river bank of *Meghna* exists. The southern part of the deltaic village is fringing the Bay of Bengal. Char Dumla is also situated a few foot distances from the main road. Its fairly central location has a very *chowras* appearance. It is difficult to find any material features that have distinguished the *char* village from being more distant located in the interior. The village Char Dumla also situated at the Western part of *Char Wapda union*. It is located between 22°38” and 22°56” North latitude and between 90°54” and 91°15” East longitude.

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The village is bounded on the North by *Char Aminul Haque*, on the East by *Char Wapda*, on the South by *Char Jubilee* and on the West by *Char Rashid*. The village occupies an area of 1361 acres of land (BBS, 2001). It consists of a *mouza* which is the demarcated lowest administrative territorial unit having separated jurisdiction list number (J. L. No. 276 or 86) in the revenue records. Char Dumla is also called a *mouza* that has its well demarcated cadastral map. *Mouza* should be distinguished from a village since a *mouza* consists of one or more villages. The whole *Char Wapda union* area is well communicated by main tramic road, which is very rarely found in other parts of *char* villages in Bangladesh because it is an attached or integrated *char* and its land was isolated earlier by the main rivers or tributaries; later on in course of time due to the changing direction of the main rivers or tributaries a land linkage has been developed and is also situated nearer is called the attached land or integrated *char* which is also the same in case of the present study.

Land Settlement: Land is at the heart of many problems in Bangladesh. Most of the people of this country undergo sufferings that originated from land-related problems. 'Land is gold' for the common people of this country. Deltaic Bangladesh continues to be defined by the interplay of land and water. As is so aptly brought out alone within the context of overall land scarcity, the recurrent process of land erosion and land accretion generates a crucial secondary position whereby '*chars*' constitute a continuing 'land frontier' which is potentially available to the landless as indeed to anyone who may work to bring it under cultivation. In practice, establishing rights over '*char* land' is frequently an area of conflict but the relevant point here is a structural one, namely that, unlike mainland the bulk of which is under well-defined private ownership, *char* land is potentially open to new entrants who can establish use-rights over it by the fact of actual cultivation. Indeed, such a potential is in keeping with the historical tradition whereby actual cultivators progressively settled the new delta during *Mughal* rule. "The structural significance of *chars* can also be seen in the fact that they constitute the principal source of '*khas*' land i.e. land defined as falling under state ownership. This is significant because to the extent that the land-scarce context of Bangladesh permits it, *khas* land constitutes the primary vehicle for any meaningful pursuit of re-distributive reform objectives" (Rahman, 1990: 17).

Any land newly accreted from the riverbed is vested in the hands of the government and is called *khas* land. According to the law, the land is in principle available for distribution among landless households. The distribution is a drawn out process, culminating in the handing over of the official listed *kahtians*. Unofficial autonomous settlement on *khas* land is, however, a common practice in the coastal region including the study area. These autonomous settlers are mostly

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from other coastal *chars* and offshore islands that lost their land due to erosion or due to natural process of pauperization. Possession on *kebas* land in Char Dumla is secured through a number of factors. Factional lineage is instrumental in Char Dumla. It is characterized by political affiliation, kinship bondage, marriage affiliation and previous neighborhood relationships according to the settlement time. A power broker or power elite, in many cases with ancestral links and with newly accreted *char* land, tends to extend support and patronage to intending settlers coming from the same area. In case of Char Dumla settlers are mixed with the settlers from other areas and kin relations that often result in a melting pot of people originating from several places. For instance, the settler of Char Dumla has come from *Ramgati, Hatia, Bhola, Sandip, Sudbaram* as well as elsewhere in Bangladesh.

The people settled in this area over time in different ways. First and the most dominant way is the occupation of land either directly with the patronage of a *jotdar* (one who controls a large area of *char* land) or a group of *jotdars*. Second way is the purchase of 'possession' either from the *jotdars* or another occupant. Powerful people, like powerful elite, commonly known as *jotdar*, and settlers of the study area controlled by them occupy more land while late comers end up with tiny plots of homestead only. Informal transfer of money to power broker in Char Dumla to sustain possession and to get their influence to obtain the official title is common. It is very difficult to ascertain, as there are big number of *jotdars* who have full control over their possessions, as many settlers are mere *bargadars* (sharecroppers) of the real possessors who live in far away places including the district head quarters or any other urban areas in Bangladesh and receive half of the production without any investment in Char Dumla. This typical landscape is shot through with uncertainty not only on account of its physical characteristics, but also because of the social dynamics. A group of *matabbar* and his henchmen, the *lathiyals* (muscleman), overshadow the social sense. They have little respect for laws, property rights and other common human values. Driven by the instinct of self-preservation, they believe in the principal of survival of the fittest in total disregard of the name of civilized society (Baqee, 1998). The land grabbers are seen as the influential people in the study area. They also occupy important positions in the local government council (*Union Parishad*). Someone, however, can manipulate the process of land settlement in his or her self-interest. It has not been possible to bypass the local power structure on many occasions.

In Char Dumla, the landmass is sheltered by the embankments and free from erosion and normal flooding. So the Char Dumla is termed as well as called as *shaleek land*. This village is located far away from the banks of the river and also considered as the *shaleek land*. The *shaleek land* is, therefore, that landmass on

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which settlements gain their kopek and are reflected in stable and permanent village. In that sense the present study has been conducted at a stable, permanent and integrated Char Dumla. However, the stages of land settlement as per the rule of 1997 are stated in the chart 7 below.

Chart 7: Stages of Land Settlement as per Rule of 1997

SI. No.	Stages of land settlement
1)	The <i>Upazila</i> Agricultural Land Management Committee will prepare preliminary list of agricultural <i>khas</i> land and make wide publication
2)	Objection within 30 days before the <i>Upazila</i> Committee and decision by 15 days and publication of the final list
3)	Appeal within 15 days and decision by 15 days to the District Committee
4)	Appeal to the National Committee within 30 days and decision within 60 days and then the final list to be published
5)	Application to the invited from the landless within one month
6)	Within one month the <i>Upazila</i> Committee will finalise security of the landless and prepare the list of selected candidates and distribute land
7)	Within 21 days of the distribution of land to the landless by the <i>Upazila</i> Committee, AC(L) will initiate the settlement case and send the proposal to UNO
8)	UNO will send the same to the DC within 21 days
9)	DC will put up the same to the District Committee within 30 days and after approval send it to AC(L)
10)	AC (L) after taking one taka salami will execute the <i>kabuliyat</i> in favour of the landless and open the <i>khatian</i> within 15 days
11)	Within 15 days of <i>kabuliyat</i> execution, <i>Upazila</i> Committee will hand over possession of land to the settlement holder.

Source: Wilde, Koen de (ed.), 2000: 72

3.3 Demographic Composition of the Study Area

Out of about 15 crore people of Bangladesh around 50 lakhs to 1 crore live in *char* areas crisscrossed by rivers. This population is 5% to 7% of the total population of the country, which resides in 1722 sq. km. *char* areas. 80% of the total people living in *char* areas are below the poverty line (BBS, 2001). People of *char* areas have to migrate frequently due to geographical and environmental reasons. For this reason, their cultivable land and other assets are not permanent in all cases. This large population can avail the services and facilities provided by the various governmental and non-governmental organizations. For this kind of social, economic and other multidimensional destituteness, *char* inhabitants' condition is deteriorating from poor to poorer condition day by day.

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Households and Population by *Para*: The village Char Dumla under the present study comprises by a number of households that are clustered in different *paras*. It has been observed from the present study that the population of this village includes different categories. However, the distribution of households and population by *paras*, as observed from the village census and during the present study, is shown in the table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Distribution of Households and Population by *Paras*

Name of the <i>Paras</i>	No. of HH	%	Number of <i>Baris</i>	%	Estimated Population	%
<i>East Para</i>	87	19.21	49	17.50	539	18.30
<i>West Para</i>	82	18.20	47	16.79	494	16.78
<i>North Para</i>	94	20.75	60	21.43	570	19.36
<i>South Para</i>	98	21.63	66	23.57	656	22.28
<i>Middle Para</i>	92	20.31	58	20.71	685	23.67
Total	453	100.00	280	100.00	2944	100.00

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The village consists of 453 *paribar*, 280 *baris* and 5 *paras*. The village is not stratified by religious notion. All of the inhabitants of the study area are now Muslims. The total population of the study area as enumerable in the 1981 census was 1844, out of which 971 were males and 873 were females. The population according to the 2001 census was 2387, out of which 1184 were males and 1203 were females (BBS, 2001). The above table shows that there are at present 453 households living in the study village with 2944 residents settled systematically in 5 different *paras* (neighbourhoods) and 280 *baris* (Homestead). The size of population is 2944, out of which 1369 male and 1575 females. The male-female ratio of the residents is male 46.50% and female 53.50%. The average size of family is 6.50 members per household in the study area. The *paras* are separated from one another by narrow mud lanes and as such the dwellings are in a clustered form in every *para*. The *paras* in the village are mainly divided according to their physical features that characterize a village and are, therefore, lack any distinct boundary lines. Yet, the *paras* possess a peculiar socio-anthropological importance in almost all local affairs.

Age Distribution of the Household Head: Out of the total households 453, 97.79% are male headed households and 2.21% are female headed households. The age distribution in the household heads of the village is depicted in the table 3.2 by age and sex.

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Table 3.2: Average Age Distribution of the Household Head

Age	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
25-34	23	5.2	4	40	23	5.1
35-44	182	41.1	2	20	186	41.1
45-54	87	19.6	3	30	89	19.6
55-64	81	18.3	1	10	84	18.5
65-74	64	14.4	0	0	65	14.3
75- +	6	1.4	0	0	6	1.3
Total	443	100	10	100	453	100.0

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The average age of the heads of household in the study area is 47.47 years. In the analysis three categories according to age were used; first is those from 25 to 34 years of age (adjacent) which belongs to 5.2% male headed households, the second category consists of the 35 to 54 age groups (adults) which belongs to 60.7% male and 6% female headed households and the third comprised of those who were 55 and above (old) which belongs to 34% male and 4% female headed households respectively. Moreover, people belonging to the age group of 70 and above have no major occupation.

3.4 Educational Status of the Villagers

Education is considered as one of the key indicators in comprehending the character of influential factors of a rural and *char* based society in Bangladesh. The basic social change is dependent on education in both the developing and modern advanced societies. The basic functions of education in the society are value formation, value transference and value affirmation. Therefore, education in a developing society like Bangladesh is not only an agent of stability and cultural continuity but also an agent of change. Education also provides for the necessary skills and training for specialized adult roles which makes an individual functionally significant in the society. Though in the formal sense education gained prominence very late but it is a process as old as the dawn of human society. May be in its rudimentary form it did exist even in the prehistoric societies. Durkheim considered "education as an all pervasive and universal phenomena" (Durkheim, 1956: 17). In all of the societies whether primitive or modern education is intertwined into almost every aspects of human life, may be economic, intellectual, political, social, cultural, spiritual or even recreational. At individual level education helps in instilling values in the individual which provides for his or her better adjustment in the social system. Whereas, societal level it provides for better participative life. Furthermore, from individual point of

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view education is not important for the sake of knowledge only but also acts as a gateway to occupational training and other skills which equip the individual for upward social mobility. Besides providing vista to seek entrance to the elite class of intellectuals, specialists and technocrats, education of an individual is also the major indicator of one's achieved status. It is a powerful media for the individuals to change their socio-economic status and position in social ladder. Above all in underdeveloped and pluralistic societies education is the only means which can raise the awareness and consciousness of the people of their rights and privileges and seek articulation and aggregation of their interest effectively. From societal point of view education is regarded as a major instrument of social change and modernization. It is the key that unlocks the door to modernization (Lerner, 1962).

At socio-political level, in pluralistic societies like Bangladesh, in the rural and *char* based society education can vitally constitute to crystallization of attitudes and values conducive to the economic, political, ideological and cultural maturity and stability. Education is the instrument that can help them shed off their traditional complexes and become part of the main national stream of life. Education may be formal and informal. According to Toppo, "informal education is that education which the child gets by living with others in the community. It lives in its community or group, moves there from birth to death and consciously and unconsciously picks up the behavior and ways of the adult fellowmen" (Toppo, 1979: 2). The informal education is not a pre-planned system and this education is for the whole life. The informal system plays vital role and is indispensable for all societies. It is almost a prerequisite for the continuity and stability in all stages of all human societies. It plays even a greater role in the socio-economic structure of the contemporary countries which are giving much importance to informal education. The formal education has formal means and formal ends (Ibid). Formal education requires formal schooling or teaching which is deliberately planned. However, in contrast to primitive education, the modern education, by and large, is formal and integrated with economic and political institutions, a fact which tends to obscure the essential similarity in all societies of the purpose of a total education process, which may be defined as the assimilation of each individual to a cultural tradition (Seligman, 1935). Expansion of formal educational facilities by the government, non-government and NGOs in the different parts of the different districts and in different rural and *char* areas is quite significant to the status of literacy among Bangladesh. The situation explains the fact that in Char Dumla great importance is given to primacy and adult education through support of different government and NGOs, but no such effect is being made at the high school and other levels. The educational level of the literate people in Char Dumla is divided into the following categories where the table 3.3

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below would show the educational status of the household heads under the present study.

- i) *Primary level- class I to V;*
- ii) *Secondary level- class VI to X;*
- iii) *Higher secondary level- class XI to XII; and*
- iv) *Graduation level.*

Table 3.3: Educational Status of Household Heads

Level of Education	No. of H.H		Percentage		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Primary Level: I- V	186	0	41.05	0.00	41.06
Secondary Level: VI- X	23	0	5.08	0.00	5.08
Higher Secondary Level: X- XII	18	0	3.97	0.00	3.97
Graduate Level	11	0	2.49	0.00	2.49
Illiterate	205	10	45.25	2.20	47.46
Total	443	10	97.80	2.20	100.00

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The above data shows the literacy rates of male and female household heads of the study village respectively. As noted from this table that in the study area the male household head is 97.8% and female household head is 2.2%. Out of total household heads in the village, 238 (52.54%) household heads are literate. Out of 238 literates 41.06% have primary, 5.08% secondary, 3.97% percent have higher secondary and only 2.49% have a graduate level of education. It is interesting enough to note that the literacy rates of male household heads are 100% while the literacy rates of female household heads is 0.00%. It is the critical picture of the female education status in the study area. None of the female household heads are found literate. Education is considered as one of the key indicators in comprehending the character of influential forces of a given society. From the view point of the functional value of literacy, the mere ability to sign one's name as well as primary level of education have hardly any importance. According to the above discussion the literacy rate of the household heads in the study village is not satisfactory.

3.5 Occupational Status of the Villagers

The main occupation and the livelihood options of the *char* areas is agriculture and it is the main part of their life and principal means of development. This is why *char* economy is agriculture based economy where agriculture comprises four sub-

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sectors: 1) crops, 2) fisheries, 3) forest resources and 4) animal resources. This can be divided into two major divisions such as crop agriculture and non-crop agriculture. Agriculture contributes one-third of annual GDP of Bangladesh and GDP progress is very much influenced by agriculture. According to the Economic Survey of 2002 Report, in 2001-02 agriculture had contribution in GDP on an average of 19.21%, which was 25.33% in the economic year of 2000-01. In 1996 63% of the total labour force was engaged in agriculture. The figure was 80% in 1972-73 (BBS, 1996).

The land ownership pattern became overwhelmingly one-sided due to the discriminatory attitudes in the colonial period. As a result, small and marginalized peasants marched with the village people who were terminated from their right to land ownership. They became ordinary day labourers. At that time, day labourer was 20.79% of the total population. It is observed in the *char* areas that the large landowners do not live in most of the *chars*, either they employ the *barga* peasants for crop production or they produce with the *barga* peasants as sharecropping. Again, some *barga* peasants cultivate for a period of time in their land, and in other period they work as a day wage labourer. Some poor *char* inhabitants are employed for the agricultural work in the houses of the rich or big land lords for the whole year. Some people in *char* areas are employed in fishing. That is only in the rainy season and it is only found in the *char* areas in the *Meghna* and the *Padma*. In those areas, during the rainy season 40% people remain engaged in fishing. For meeting the nutritional demand and economic security most of the *char* inhabitants domesticate cows, goats, rams, ducks, hens and cocks. *Char* people, particularly in the *Boro* season, go to *Sylhet*, *Mymensing*, *Tangail* and other places of the country. Some other *char* people go to the neighboring towns or sub-towns for seeking job as a day labourer. Here *char* people sell their labour on a daily basis. Some people stay back their own place for seeking employment. Traditionally, some *char* people are involved in cutting of trees. For some days *char* men work as the driver of rickshaw, van, cart, and other vehicles. Those who are involved in this kind of profession for the whole year, they also in crop season, particularly when crops are cut and taken to home, engage themselves in the agricultural activities.

Some people of the study area obtain their earnings from a variety of sources in addition to cultivation. Life and condition of livelihood of the village is primarily dependent on agriculture. Through other forms of economic behavior of livelihood they can also devise part of their income from other sources. Some rich and middle peasants are found obtaining their income from a variety of sources. But small peasants and the landless are entirely dependent on the mercy of the peasants of rich classes. Normally they worked in the village and always seek employment and help from the rich peasants. Generally the landless poor have

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alternative means of survival, but some are engaged in other occupations like wage labour, petty trading and other diversified economic activities. The rich peasants are able to invest in other sources of non- agricultural activities. In this case an attempt has been made to analyze the main types of economic activities performed by the people of the study village.

Traditionally the occupational pursuits of the *char* people were mostly joint, cooperative and private in nature, requiring direct participation of all active members of the households and within the *samaj*, community and joint participation in farming, harvesting, gathering, other housing activities and construction of houses, etc. Even economic activities requiring individual skills like *kamla* or labouring, *sardari*, shop keeping and like way carried on within the help of other members of the households.

There are diversified occupations among the villagers where as counted more than 19 professional groups among them. Though there are some professions, which cover more than 95.36% of the villagers and these are cultivators, agriculture-oriented labour or *kamla* and agriculture related credit businessmen. Only 4.46% of the households are attached absolutely in non-agricultural professions. Here it is observable that the villagers are no more expecting to be living on single profession only, as in most cases it can not fulfill the demand of the family members. Traditionally most of the villagers were confined in agriculture, livestock and handicrafts-oriented occupations. But the days have changed. That the changes of nation socio-economic and cultural realities. Although people are gradually increasing and the cultivable land is limited the excess population has nothing but find out other sources for their livelihood.

Households of *char* villages are generally seen engaged in multiple economic activities like agricultural and non-agricultural activities, different jobs and business, etc. *Char* based people are generally poor since they lack proper education, training and other facilities. In that case they have limited option for salaried job. Economic opportunities are also very limited in *char* areas. Situation of Char Dumla is not different from other remote areas of Bangladesh. Scope for employment is less and alternative income sources are limited in the study village. The following table 3.4 would show the number of income sources of the households in the village

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Table 3.4: Number of Income Sources of Households in the Village

No. of Income Source	No. of HH	Percentage
Single	133	51.43
Double	171	37.75
Above Double	49	10.82
Total	453	100.0

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The table shows that among the villagers 51.43% households depend on single income source, 37.75% depend double income sources and the rate for above double is 10.82%.

Major and Subsidiary Occupations: The environment of the present *char* village influenced the economic life of the people and the formation their social structure. It has been observed that due to the favorable environment agriculture is the dominant element in the economy of the village. However, the distribution of employed population by their main occupation in the village is presented in the following table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Distribution of HH by Major Occupation

Occupation	No. of HH	Percentage
Agriculture	223	55.1
Day Labour or <i>Kamla</i>	85	21.0
Business	31	7.7
Service	14	3.4
Abroad	8	2.0
<i>Chowkider</i>	5	1.2
Driver	11	2.7
Rickshaw Puller	10	2.5
Tailoring	4	1.0
Mechanics	3	.7
Carpenter	3	.7
Housewife	2	.5
Union Parishad Member	1	.2
<i>Sardari</i>	1	.2
Shop Keeper	1	.2
Imam	1	.2
Beggar	2	.4
Total	405	100.00

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

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It is seen from the table that the major occupation of 223 (55.10%) heads of the households is agriculture, 85 (21%) wage labourers of *kamla*, 31 (7.7%) business, 14 (3.4%) semi-urban services, 11 (2.7%) bus or truck driver, 8 (2%) foreign services, 5 (1.2%) *chowkider*, 4(1%) tailoring, 3(0.7%) carpenter, 1(0.2%) union parishad member, 1(0.2%) *sardari*, 3(0.7%) mechanics, 1(0.2%) shop keeper, 10(2.5%) rickshaw puller, 1(0.2%) *imam* (religious priests) and 2 (0.5%) housewife and 2 (0.5%) beggars. According to the table it may be observed that agriculture was the main occupation of more than 55.10% of the total employed population followed by other agricultural and non-agricultural services and wage labourers is 44.90%.

Agricultural farm is the occupation of the bulk of the population of the village. There are 67.99% households living in the village who are directly engaged in agriculture or cultivation out of 453 households and others are associated with non-farm activities for their only means of earning. Thus most of the households depend on only agriculture for their subsistence and the rest 32.01% households make use of diversified economic activities mostly by non-farm activities as their primary source of income such as services, shop-keeping, government jobs, tailoring, rickshaw puller, etc. and mostly to go to foreign country as a labourer. They are also associated with agriculture and depend on cultivation as their secondary source of subsistence. There are 25 households who are salaried job holder in government offices like in the revenue board, District *Tabshil* Office, Union *Parishad* and Thana *Krishi* Office. 10 households of this study area have selected rickshaw pulling as their main subsistence activity. It should be mentioned here that 14 salaried jobholders are landowners and they treat cultivation as their secondary subsistence activity. 8 household heads live in foreign countries such as Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Malaysia and Kuwait. All of them are big landowners. 31 household heads have associated them with patty trading and shop keeping as their main source of income. There are 4 tailor, 11 drivers (bus, truck and taxi), 3 carpenters, 1 union *parishad* members, 5 *chowkiders*, 7 *shardar*, 3 mechanics, 7 *imams*, 10 rickshaw puller, 2 beggars and 2 housewives in the village. It is mentionable that households depending solely on cultivation are not always the landowners. It is also true that who have identified other jobs as their main sources of income actually more than two thirds main income comes from land. Each of its members looks after the cultivable land. The head of this household sometime goes to the respective field to supervise agricultural work. 29 households of the study area are associated with cultivation and consider agriculture as their subsidiary occupation. However, in the following table 3.6 the distribution of household heads by subsidiary occupation is shown.

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Table 3.6: Distribution of HH by Subsidiary Occupation

Occupation	No. of HH	Percentage
Agriculture	29	17.0
Brokerage	3	1.8
Fishing	8	4.7
<i>Bepari</i>	7	4.1
Driving	3	1.8
Farmer	4	2.3
Imam	1	.6
Day Labourer or <i>Kamla</i>	72	42.1
Sub Contractor	5	2.9
Business	31	18.1
Rickshaw Puller	3	1.8
Beggar	1	.6
Village Doctor (Physician)	1	.6
Servant	3	1.8
Total	171	100

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

Most of the households of these 29 households are salaried jobholders and foreign workers. There are also 72 (42.1%) wage labourers in the area who are landless and have associated themselves with farm and non-farm activities. They live solely on wage labour. This is their only source of income of those who depend on agriculture for a livelihood, a significant number of 21.0% actually live on selling their own physical labour as wage earners, locally known as *kamla*. In addition, there are almost (72) a similar number of households with small agricultural plots of their own whom occasionally sell physical labour. The *kamlas* are always on the search for some sorts of temporary works. The class of day labourers, basically the landless, is being pushed out of agriculture for livelihood. Still whatever, temporary alternative arrangements they would like to make are also agriculture related. The household heads who consider cultivation as their subsidiary occupation are also landowners. There are 54 (11.26%) household heads living in the area salaried different sources like driver, *bepari*, sub-contractor, village doctor, broker, etc. They personally supervise the agricultural works during their leisure time. There are also 3 (0.66%) moneylenders (brokers) in the village. But they are actually farmers. They considered money lending as their subsidiary occupation. In this category their sons live in foreign country and they sent money to them to be invested in agricultural activities as a form of debt. The occupational groups in the village, as pointed out earlier, also work within the village. Paddy and some other commodities are important in the village. Maximum product in the village is consumed by the villagers. The surplus is sold

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in the nearest village market *Khalifar Haat*, *Atkopalia Bazar* and *char Jobbar Bazar*. Again the villagers have to depend on many necessary goods and commodities which come from outside. So, the village economy is not self-sufficient. The rich and middle peasant households generally dominate all the economic activities in the village.

3.6 Income Distribution of the Villagers

Income groups depending on occupation really vary in the village area. The income generates from less than Tk.1000 to more than Tk. 13,000 per month. The following table 3.7 will show the income distribution of the villagers.

Table 3.7: Distribution of Household according to Income Range (Monthly)

Income Level (TK)	No. of HH	Percentage
1000-1999	5	1.1
2000-2999	190	41.9
3000-3999	63	13.9
4000-4999	12	2.6
5000-5999	97	21.4
6000-6999	4	0.9
7000-7999	3	0.7
8000-8999	7	1.5
9000-9999	0	0.0
10000-10999	38	8.4
11000-11999	0	0.0
12000-12999	1	0.2
≥13000	33	7.3
Total	453	100

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

There are 13 income groups identified in the study area. The first group, ranging from Tk.1000-1999, belongs to the landless, wage labourers and rickshaw pullers. Sharecroppers or small and marginal farmers constitute next income groups. Other income groups are comprised of various occupational groups, middle and rich farmers stated above. It is widely accepted that the household income has a strong correlation with the profession. The high income professional groups are found in all of the socio-economic power and position in their respective levels.

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There are also wide differences of income exist among the villagers. The monthly income of the inhabitants of Char Dumla has been evaluated in the table given above. Except for minor variation there seems to be a correspondence between the percentage of population and households in different income groups. The number of households in the income groups of Tk. 1000- 1999 is 1.1% and the population in these households is 0.46%, the number of households in next income groups (Tk. 2000- 2999) is 41.9% and the population of these households is 16.74% in the next income group (Tk. 4000- 4999) number households is 2.46%, in the next income groups (6000- 6999) number of households is 0.9% and population of these households is 0.96%, in the next income groups (Tk. 7000- 7999) number of households is 0.7% and population of these households is 0.63%, in the next income groups (8000- 8999) number of household and percent of population is 0.00%. In the next income groups (Tk. 10000- 10999) number of households is 8.4% and population of these households is 1.25%, in the next income groups (Tk. 12000- 12999) number of households is 0.2% and the population is 0.8%. In the highest income groups (Tk. 13000- above) number of households is 7.3% and population of these households is 0.29%. The overall tendency is that the pressure of dependents is higher in the lower income group and lesser in the middle income groups.

The villagers who are not directly involved in agriculture and do not possess any arable land are not included in classes. They have been treated as non-agricultural people. According to monthly income distribution pattern of the household in Char Dumla where find a few number of villagers belonging to the highest income range, for whom agriculture in the main source of income. Only landowners can be the criterion to measure the class structure of the villagers, it can be vital components of class structure. In a broad sense, it can be said that all the villagers are connected with agriculture either as their major occupations or subsidiary occupations.

3.7 Agro- Ecological Conditions and Land Classes in Char Dumla

The land of Char Dumla presents a dynamic situation where changes in physical and biological conditions allow a gradual change in production practices. A new development programme must anticipate these changes and facilitate adoption by local farmers of appropriate productive practices. This must be based on adequate information on likely and actual changes in agro-ecological conditions. The predominant cropping pattern depends on different land types and classes are defined in the village as clusters of land types which combine a number of physical characteristics with relevance for production potential. Well- defined land classes are important for local farmers to choose appropriate land use option and

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must be taken into account in a demonstration and intensification programme. Land classes should, therefore, be identified at the beginning of a *char* development programme.

Some *char* development programme's approach to land classification was based on a combination of farmer's own classification of their plots combined with objective criteria based on survey of seasonal water depth. Farmers' own classification in *char* land will, of course, not be available until he has used the land for a few years. In a protected *char aman* paddy remains the principle crop, grown in the entire cropping area, but option for *aman* cropping increase while condition for pre-monsoon and *rabi* cropping improve gradually. Physical factor must be related for distinguishing land classes in *char* area. The major land classes were distinguished by *char* development program. These classes were found to coincide largely with local farmers own classification in *uchu* (high), *majbari* (middle) and *nichu* (low) land classes. The simple classification in these land classes is shown in the chart 8 below following Wilde (ed.) (2000) and then described based on the combination of 4 criteria.

Chart 8: Classification of Land Classes in Char Dumla

Criteria	Levels	Land Classes		
		High	Middle	Low
1. Unusual water level during the <i>kharif</i> season (June-Sept)	0-20 cm	-	-	-
	20- 40 cm	-	-	-
	> 40 cm	-	-	-
2. Maximum water level during the <i>kharif</i> season (3-7 days)	10-30 cm	-	-	-
	30-50 cm	-	-	-
	50-100 cm	-	-	-
3. Usual Transplanting window (for T-Aman)	after 15 July	-	-	-
	after 15 August	-	-	-
4. Time field usually starts drying Naturally	15 Oct- 15 Nov	-	-	-
	after 15 Nov	-	-	-

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

High or Uchu Land Class and its Production System: This is a land that can be planted with T-*aman* early, because there is not risk for deep inundation by accumulating rainwater. The land is prone to dry temporarily in case of short dry spells, which may start to 'resalinisation' early in the *aman* season. HYV may do well in dry ones. Early planting or *rabi* crops is possible provided the salinity of the soil permits. The high lands considered are the early maturing HYV for T-*aman* paddy, e.g. BR 30 and BR 31, to escape early post-monsoon drought,

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especially when grown after *Aus*, a newer early maturing variety is BR 32 and a green manure crop inter planed is to an early produce.

Medium or *Majhari* Land Class and its Production System: The usual water levels in this land are somewhat higher than in the high class but inundation to more than 30-45 cm in the middle of the monsoon. This land is most suitable for HYV paddy and can be planted early, provided the preceding crops allow. Fairly early *rabi* planting is possible, if the *T-aman* crop is planted and harvested sufficiently early. In this land early and medium maturity HYV for *T-aman* paddy like BR 10 and BR 30 or 31 and 32 is possible.

Low or *Nichu* land and its Production System: This land is proving to fairly deep flooding at any time during the monsoon due to accumulating water. *T-aman* can only be planted once water levels starts declining from the middle of August to as late as the middle September. The land is not suitable for HYV paddy and farmers usually grow the *Kajashail* variety. Planting of *rabi* crops is not possible before late December to early January.

3.8 Constraints Depending on Crop Production

The cropping pattern is a temporary arrangement of crops to be grown on a plot in one cropping year, i.e. raising crop species on a given field during 12 months period. The cropping pattern may include single or multiple cropping, sequential cropping, inter-cropping, and relay cropping and triple cropping. Inter-cropping may be a mixed cropping i. e. raising crops in between rows of a main crop (Islam, 1985). The cropping pattern in a given field is determined by the physical, biological and socio-economic factors. In Bangladesh the physical determinants of the cropping pattern include topography in relation to flooding, soil type, climate, and length of the growing season, seasonal availability of moisture, availability of plant nutrients and risk of natural calamities. Biological factors influencing cropping patterns are the food habit of the people, types of varieties (local or HYVs) available, incidence of pests and diseases and the availability of draught power. Among the socio-economic factors the size of the farm, availability of labour, financial resources, socio-cultural factors and the ratio of input and output of the products are important (Ibid).

In Char Dumla the farmers grow different tropical crop, but rice is the most important because of its rank as the traditional food crop of the country. Though lately wheat contributes around 10% of the food requirements, still rice contributes to the crop farming covering almost 79% of the total cropped areas (BBS, 1986). Rice influences the cropping pattern and crop production system

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and, thereby, the whole farming system under irrigation condition, the crop management is much better and the yield is higher than under rain fed conditions are low due to the use of traditional technology and poor management. The lack of proper crop rotation and management has caused the productivity of the land to decrease resulting in lower yields. Most farmers in the country, especially in *char* areas, are subsistence and resource poor. Adaptation of new technology for crop production is influenced by the availability of agricultural inputs as well as the environmental and socio-economic conditions which prevail in the rural and *char* based area. Crop production technology, which does not suit the farmers' condition, is self-defeating and can not help to improve crop farming in the village. More than hundred different crops grow in Bangladesh and these can be broadly classified as cereals, fiber crops, sugar crops, pulses, allseeds, root and tuber crops, spices and condiments, narcotics, beusrages, vegetables and fruits (Zaman, 1982).

Among the cereals, rice is the most important crop in *char* area. The physical environment and food habit of the *char* people favor the rice cultivations. Moreover, rice has great genetic variability which allows for wider adaptation under varying environmental conditions. In Char Dumla varieties of rice such as Aus, deep water *Aman* and transplanted *Aman* are grown during different times of the year under varying times and constitutions. Topography, flood depth, soil type, rain fall or moisture regimes and temperature are the factors which considerably influence employment and sharecropping for the farmers, i. e. landless marginal and poor farmers. In Char Dumla crop production follows the Bengali calendar which begins in the month of *Baisakh* (in mid-April). Physical, biological and socio-economic constrains limit the crop production practices, cropping patterns and crops are to be included in a pattern and the productivity in the pattern have been the most important constraints in the study area. Some of these constraints are discussed below.

Stability of Land: All types of land are not suitable for all kinds of crops. Bangladesh has a wide range of land types and physiographic units broadly classified into three types of land. In Char Dumla different land types are present; the pattern should be single, double or triple crop pattern. In the high lands three component patterns can be grown whereas a one to two components can also be grown in the low lands. Highlands of the village are suitable for T-*aman*. Aus rice is also widely grown in this area. Summer vegetables, pulsar and oilseeds prefer well-drained highland during the *kbharif* season grown in the *char* area.

Size of Holdings and Land Tenancy: Smallholdings (depending on the topography of the land) are mostly used for intensive cultivation where as the

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large holdings determine the number of crops to be grown in a cropping pattern and the productivity of the patterns. In the study area farmers are owner cultivators and the tenants are under various kinds of lease, such as sharecropping, cash rent and mortgage. On the owner cultivators land, in this area, the number of crops in the cropping pattern and productivity of the land are higher than that for the tenant cultivators. Owners always put first priority on better crops selection and input use for their own land than they do for the land they cultivate as tenants. In Char Dumla large areas are controlled by the absentee landowners who operate land either through tenants or by using hired labor. In this reason, the cropping pattern and productivity of this area are low because of the low resource available to the tenants (mostly small farmers) and because of landowners' preference of crops to be grown on their sharecropping lands. Again on the small and middle farms of this area, the cropping intensity and crop production are comparatively better and higher than for the large farms. Because of the large farmers generally do not work in the field themselves, but run the operations through hired labour.

Soil Properties: Crop production and cropping pattern in the village greatly depend on soil properties which, in turn, are characterized by seasonal flooding, drainage condition and general soil types. Acid sulphate soils occurring in the coastal areas like Char Dumla are highly acid when dry and are not suitable for crop production.

Rainfall Distribution: The crops and cropping patterns in the study area are influenced by the amount and distribution of the pre-monsoon, monsoon and post-monsoon rain. The differences in the starting and ending dates of monsoon rain and the intensity in an area determine two *kharif* crops and dry land *rabi* crop has been filled in to the cropping pattern. The following chart 9 would show the data on rainfall distribution of *Noakhali* station and Char Dumla as well.

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Chart 9: Rainfall Data of *Noakhali* Station and Char Dumla

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Noakhali													
Minimum	0	0	0	0	65	306	448	242	189	13	0	0	1263
1 st Quartile	0	7	13	96	227	489	629	520	350	65	0	0	2395
Medium	0	26	63	153	383	632	663	605	438	167	16	0	3145
2 nd Quartile	2	57	110	285	456	746	812	793	521	339	64	11	4194
Maximum	31	173	401	511	910	1169	1295	967	696	587	256	46	5780
CDSP													
Char Dumla													
1996	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	453	289	355	65	4	-
1997	0	47	108	28	314	157	1072	490	688	107	No Data	No Data	5008
1998	0	58	220	75	353	218	926	816	377	266	75	No Data	5388
1999	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Wilde, Koen de (ed.), 2000: 114

Soil Moisture Availability: Moisture availability in the soil affects the cropping pattern and crops to be grown. The amount of soil water available for crop production varies according to the rainfall, soil types and water holding capacity of the soil in coastal areas. In the *kharif* season in Char Dumla, especially during July to September, the soil moisture is sufficient for the growth and development of plants due to high rainfall throughout the country.

Seasonal Temperature: Temperature restricts the growth of some crops to the cool winter months in the village. Rice cannot set grain in the winter. Some crops such as *Aus* and *T-aman* grow well in the summer months when the seasonal temperature is high, but do not grow well in the winter season.

Length of Growing Seasons: Cropping pattern as a particular piece of land is determined by the crop duration i.e. the period of the year covered by the crops included in the pattern. The duration of the crops grown is determined by the genetic make use of the crop varieties, the seasonal temperature regime, seasonal soil moisture regime and day length.

Farm Power Availability: Farm labour is an indispensable item of successful crop production. Human and animal labours are the major source of power for farm operations in the village. Lack of draught power in time for agricultural operations hampering the crop production and cropping patterns. In Char Dumla it has been observed that there has not been any shortage of manpower for crop production but definitely has a shortage of agricultural laborers at the peak farm seasons, e.g. at harvesting time of *Aus* or planting time of *T-aman*. Most farms of the area do not have draught and animals of their own and depend on hired power for land preparation and other farm operations where land preparation is

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related to rainfall and referable weather conditions. As these conditions are in function it is needed to be done within short time period. In this period the lack of suitable drought power makes it difficult to prepare land in time.

Socio-economic Factors: There are many socio-economic factor of the village which influences cropping patterns. Some of these are the farmers' resources in the area, size of the farms and quality of land, financial resources including the farm income and credit. In Char Dumla the middle and small farmers generally use intensive cropping patterns (whenever possible) to maximize their production. Occasionally, although in several times, the lack of credit facilities forces the local farmers to grow local varieties instead of HYVs which require higher instruments. The social status of the so called big farmers and land owners also limit crop production and cropping pattern in Char Dumla. There exist so many absentee land owners or big farmers who are not interested in adopting intensive cultivations. Rather, they use sharecropping or hired labour for crop production. Under sharecropping in *char* area, the tenants have very little option to adopt intensive cropping patterns since, in most cases; the tenant farmers do not find much incentive in terms of returns. Often, the lack of co-operation among farmers, limitations in market prices, lack of institutional responsibilities, lack of effective coordination among government institutions and the lack of modern technological knowledge and training make it difficult for the farmers to grow more in their land. These are the major constraints for the lack of more production in the study area.

3.9 Seasonal Variation and the Cropping Pattern

Agriculture in the coastal areas is essentially rain fed. The *char* land presents a dynamic situation where changes in physical and biological condition allow a gradual change in production practices. There are so many methods and techniques which must anticipate these changes and facilitate adoption by farmers of appropriate productive practices. Historically rainfall data for *Noakhali* station range from 3 mm in December to 733 mm in July. A frequently analysis of rainfall was carried out to estimate the livelihood of excessively high or low rainfall at specific times during the season in *char* area. The new production environment resulting from flood protection, water control and decreasing salinity in Char Dumla should be effectively exploited. Good knowledge of the production environment is a prerequisite for targeting improved crop production technology. The farmers grow different tropical crops but rice is the most important because of its rank as the traditional food crop of the country.

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In the *char* area a wide range of crops are grown. The important crops include different types of rice and other cropping seasons are widely spread throughout the year which include three distinct cropping cycles in the study area and these are-

- i) *The Kharif-I or pre-monsoon season, from April through June;*
- ii) *The Kharif-II or monsoon season, from July through October; and*
- iii) *The Rabi season, from November through March.*

Kharif-I & Kharif-II for Pre-Monsoon and Monsoon Crops: The *char* village possesses quite a large area of agricultural land, which is divided into sub-plots. The village belongs to the coastal *char* area of the district level and it is very much fertile. This fertile soil is too much suitable for agriculture. The village has large agricultural field, which are scattered throughout it. Paddy is the main agricultural crop in this village. Seasonal vegetable production especially in winter, and the *rabi* crops, viz. various pulses, *soyabean*, etc. are also getting more and more importance. More peasants are trying to have a general crop cycle which is to grow paddy twice i.e. *aman* and high yielding variety and vegetable or *rabi* crops once each in the same plot of land. The *Kharif-I* or pre-monsoon season started from April to June, various *Aus* varieties, particularly BR 14, BR 21 and a moderate paddy growth up in this season. In ordinary years the rain starts in by late April through June, the farmers will usually broadcast or deep dibble the seed. The *Kharif-I*, dibbling the seed into a standing chili crop is quite. The *Kharif-II* or monsoon season, starting from July through to October, several *T-aman* varieties like BR 10, BR 22, BR 30, BR 31, *Kazalshail* and *Rajashail* grown up in this season. Apart from overall yield potential, the choice of variety depends also on its growth duration in relation to the land of the available growing season. The following chart 10 would show the seasonal variation and cropping cycle in Char Dumla.

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Chart 10: Seasonal Variation and Cropping Cycle in Char Dumla

Name of Crop	Sowing Period	Harvesting Period
Aus Paddy	Mid March to mid April	Mid July to early August
Aman Paddy	Mid March to mid April	Mid November to Mid December
T-Aman Paddy	End June to early September	December to early January
Pluses	Mid October to mid November	Beginning February to early March
Spices	Mid April to mid July	September to December
Rabi Crop	Mid November to Mid January	March to May
Potato	Mid September to Mid November	Mid January to March
Soyabean	Early October to mid December	Mid October to mid April

Source: BBS, 2006

Rabi Crops: In *Char Dumla* the *rabi* crops planting starts immediately after the *T-Aman* harvest. With *khesari* and linseed sometimes broadcast in the stubble other crops such as chili, sweet potato and ground nuts are planted successively in well tilled land. Finally cowpeas and green grams are planted in lightly tilled soil which may continue up to early February. Some lands remain fallows after *T-Aman* for planting *Aus* paddy, especially land which is prone to early water logging with the onset of the rains. Late planted groundnut and chili may be damaged by early excessive rains which sometimes occur in April. There are major differences in the way the different *rabi* crops are grown by farmers. *Khesari* and linseed are usually broadcast in the *T-Aman* stubble without any tillage. The same method was tried for *soyabeen* (which is often grown that way in Indonesia) with mixed success. Green gram is grown by farmers with light tillage only. The other crops are grown in well tilled soil. Especially ground nuts require a fine seedbed. In the study area the farmers themselves are good judges of which *rabi* crops are suitable where and when. Among all of the crops tested by LRP, CDSP and the researcher the most successful were those which farmers planted by their own choice, viz. chili, groundnut and sweet potato, *soyabeen*, sunflower and onion through suitable according to the test result are hardly grown by farmers. The farmers observed that the problems with that sunflower and *soyabeen* are related to marketing rather than technical in the study area. For the late planted *rabi* crops (chili groundnuts), it is important to avoid places which are prone to early water logging. Mulching would be helpful for reducing vertical water movement and, therefore, salinity stress in *rabi* crops. Mulching materials, however, are not readily available in *Char Dumla*, except rice straw which is used for many other purpose including cattle feed.

Chapter-3: Socio-Economic Profile of the Study Area

Peasants depend to a great extent on chili, sweet potato, *khesari*, liversed, groundnut, *soyabeen*, pulses, garlic, black gram, *mugh* bean, onion and other *rabi* crops, because these are the safest crops of the study area. *Rabi* crops are grown both for domestic consumption and commercial purpose. Pulses covering 71 acres of the total area of Char Dumla are mainly *khesari*, *mung*, *masur*, *maskhalai*, *garikalai*, gram and motor. *Khesari* is the most common of the pulses grown in the study area. The crop is sown from mid-October to mid-November and harvested from February to mid-March. *Mug* is of two varieties. The early variety is sown in August- September and the late variety from December to early part of January. These are harvested from November to April. *Masur* is sown from middle of October to middle of November and harvested from February to middle of March. *Maskhalai* is sown during September-October and harvested from January to February. Motor and other *rabi* pulses consisting of year, beans, etc. are also grown in the study area. Spices, oilseeds, potato, sweet- potato and *soyabeen* and chili (*morich*) other important *rabi* crops are also grown in the study area. These are the most paying crops. It is sown in nursery around October. Onion (*piyaj*), garlic (*rasun*) grown at the same season are also included under these head. These are sown in November and December and reaped in April and May. However, on the basis of the above discussions the major cropping pattern of the village is shown in the following chart 9.

Chart 11: Major Cropping Pattern of the Village

Apr	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
<i>Kharif- I</i>			<i>Kharif- II</i>			<i>Rabi Seasons</i>					
<i>Aus</i>			T- <i>Aman</i>			Rabi Crops					
Chilli			T- <i>Aman</i>			<i>Khesari</i>					
Sweet Potato			T- <i>Aman</i>			Chilli					
Ground Nut			T- <i>Aman</i>			Sweet Potato					
Green gram			T- <i>Aman</i>			Ground Nut					
			T- <i>Aman</i>			Green gram					

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

All the cropping patterns in the area are organized around T-*Aman* grown during the monsoon season or the major and most reliable crop. T-*Aman* is transplanted over a long period, from mid July to early September. If the salinity allows, it may be preceded by *Aus* paddy grown in the early monsoon and followed by a *rabi* crop, grown on residual moisture.

Chapter-4 Social Organization of the Study Area

- 4.1 *Paribar* (Family): The Basic Social Unit
- 4.2 *Ghar* (House)
- 4.3 *Bari* (Household)
- 4.4 *Gushti* (Lineage)
- 4.5 *Para* (Neighborhood)
- 4.6 *Samaj* (Society)
- 4.7 *Gram* (Village)

4.1 *Paribar* (Family): The Basic Social Unit

A *char* villager's interaction in the community involves various social institutions, all or most of which are based primarily on the kinship pattern or kin relationship. The basic kinship units are- (1) the family of procreation (*paribar*) i.e. members of the same patrilineage, (2) *gushti* or *bangsa* who usually reside in a common neighborhood (*para*), and lastly (3) there is an informal village social unit named as the *samaj*, which is based primarily on kin ties and performs socio-economic, religious, normative and politico-judicial functions.

The household unit in Bengali term is referred to as *chula* or *khana*, where *chula* meaning "hearth group" and *khana* meaning "eating unit" or "eating group". In this study the term "household" has been used for either of these types. Here *khana* or *paribar* is the basic unit of social organization and also the generic term for "family" in Bangladesh. However, the term *paribar* is used polysemically in *char* villages and this is also found in the present study area. The members of a household unit or *paribar* are, most often, a joint unit or joint production and consumption based unit. *Paribar* most often refers to a group of people who share a common *chula* (literally "hearth") and live under one roof or within the same compound. It symbolizes and also refers to an economic unit. The members of the *paribar* are related persons of the *khana* (literally "to eat") i.e. household or eating unit. Within the household decisions are taken as to how the production factors at the disposal of the household shall be utilized and combined as well. The household is based on the kinship relations and the individual households are built around one elementary family. As it can be seen later, the composition of the households varies greatly. The households may consist of incomplete families, an elementary family living with other family members, or several elementary families living together in a household. *Paribar* thus is synonymous with *ghar* (literally meaning "housing unit"). Each elementary family or *paribar* lives in its own house or *ghar*. The *char* villagers determine the numbers of the *paribar* by counting the *chula* (commensal unit) to indicate the number of houses (*ghar*) i.e. households (*khana*).

The members of a *paribar* are bound by blood and kinship relations and extend beyond the sphere of one *bari*. The *paribar* exercises wide influence and power in the society. None can easily challenge it. Such an extended unit with considerable resources may have more than one head of family or *matabbar*. The *matabbar* is leader by dint of his leadership qualities. He is the patriarch holding undisputed way over the *paribar*, but with such a redeeming features of character as sense of justice tempered with an attitude of forbearance. Otherwise, absence of such virtues may bring about his down face and some other smaller or lesser personality of *paribar* may stage a showdown in any

pretext. Man's craving and desire for power has been strong everywhere and in all times. Naturally, the supreme patriarch must be constantly on his guard to consolidate his hold. There is no scope for laxity and weakness; otherwise he may be edged out by other lesser heads of the *paribar*. Consequently other individuals with superiors would emerge as rival. It is imperative in the *char* lands for its head *matabbar* to be ever alert and tactful to hold fast to his leadership and to exercise power with utmost caution for the general well being of the people in his area of influence (Baqee, 1998). The *paribars* of *Char Dumla* have been classified into broad categories, following Karim's (1990: 66) classification, and these include:

- i) *Nuclear Family: a married couple with or without children;*
- ii) *Sub- nuclear Family: a widow or divorced head of household who lives with his or her children;*
- iii) *Lineal Joint Family: A married couple lives with a widowed mother or father and unmarried brother and sister, if any;*
- iv) *Lineal Joint Family: A married couple plus one unmarried son and other unmarried sons and daughters;*
- v) *Collateral Joint Family: Two or more unmarried brothers who may have a widowed mother or father and also may have other unmarried brothers and sisters living all together; and*
- vi) *Lineal Collateral Joint Family: Two or more married sons living with their parents along with other unmarried brothers and sisters.*

There are 453 *paribars* or *khanas* residing in *Char Dumla*. The majority of the *paribars* in the study area belong to the nuclear types of family. However, the following tables 4.1 and 4.2 would show the size and pattern of family or *paribar* of the villagers.

Table 4.1: Family Size of the Villagers

Family Size	No. of HH	Percentage
Single	2	0.04
2-3	60	13.30
4-5	128	28.20
6-7	138	30.50
8-9	72	15.90
10-11	33	7.3
12-13	7	1.6
14-15	7	1.6
16 and above	6	1.3
Total	453	100

Source: Fieldwork in *Char Dumla*, 2006

Chapter-4: Social Organization of the Study Area

The above table shows that the majority of the households 30.50% are composed of 6-7 members, 28.20% of them are composed 4-5 members. Household above 8 members constitutes 27.70 % of them. Average size of household members in the village is 6.60. Existence of greater number of large families among the villagers is the manifestation of their strong family bond and kinship relations.

Table 4.2: Patterns of Family in the Village

Family Type	No. of Family	Percentage
Nuclear Family	319	70.42
Sub-Nuclear Family	38	8.39
Supplementary Family	40	8.83
Lineal Joint Family	23	5.07
Collateral Joint Family	18	3.97
Lineal Collateral Joint Family	15	3.31
Total	453	100.0

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The above data shows that a large percentage (70.42 %) of households in the village is nuclear families. 8.39% are sub-nuclear, 8.83% are supplementary, 5.07% are linear joint, 3.97% are collateral joint and only 3.31% are lineal collateral joint families. In all the patterns the village family structure that the number of nuclear families is more than other types of families. In the present situation, a village can not give subsistence to all due to excessive population pressure. Besides, the separate economic considerations many families move away to some distinct and living separate “*bari*” to find their better prospects of living. These factors have changed their family, attitude to get a extend showing a declined trend of joint families in their present household structures.

The above table shows that the broad categories of family in Char Dumla are non-joint and joint structure and each of this classification is further revealed by a synchronic sub classification. It is evident that the popular family type is nuclear in structure and it preponderates a great majority in *char* village. Joint families are not uncommon but large joint families comprising all related persons of two or three generations, as it prevailed traditionally in the villages, are not visible now a day.

4.2 *Ghar* (House)

A *ghar* is usually a house resided by a couple with children. Often it may consists of a big family (i.e. father, mother and children) having a separate establishment of its own. Then, again, the term *ghar* has a social connotation, which signifies a certain position in society. Such a tradition to look up to

aristocracy, wealth, culture or family *characteristics* perceived as belonging to the well-born. “In matrimonial negotiations a *ghar*’s credentials and cultural foundation are probed into general conditions where it takes two or three generations to establish the foundations of a *ghar*. It must also have another important aspect of possessing a considerable amount of cultivable land and cultural attainments” (Baqee, 1998: 50). The higher *ghar* do not mix with the commoners in the rural areas; they are a class by themselves. Their notion is more applicable in the case of females of such *ghars* who are secluded not only in their conservative ways of living and movements but also in their dress and hearing.

A *ghar*, thus, ranges from one-room shed to a well lay out and decorated multi-room unit. It may even comprise three or four structures around a common yard. The *ghar*, therefore, may or may not overlap and correspond with the household. The houses (indicating about the physical houses) in this study area are of three types: i) semi-*Pacca*, ii) semi-*Kacha*, and iii) *Kacha*. In the following table 4.3 different types of housing pattern of the village is shown.

Table 4.3: Types of Housing of the Village

Types of Housing	No. of HH	Percentage
Semi- <i>Pacca</i>	32	7.30
Semi- <i>Kacha</i>	160	36.60
<i>Kacha</i>	245	56.10
Total	437	100.00

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The table above illustrates that there are 56.10% *Kacha ghar*, 36.60% semi-*Kacha ghar* and 7.30% semi-*Pacca ghar* exist in the village. The *ghar* of the poorest cultivators consists of a single *ghar* with a compartment for cooking and cattle shed. Those with better circumstances have three or four *ghars*, where clumps of bamboos and grouper of betel nut and coconut trees surrounding every household shut out light and fresh air. The *Kacha ghar* have roofs of cottage types that are generally thatched. In case of semi-*Pacca ghar* the wall is generally built with bamboo matting and tin sheets for its roofing. On the other hand the *Pacca* or brick built houses are found very rarely in Char Dumla.

4.3 *Bari* (Household)

Another distinct and separate domestic unit in rural Bangladesh, and also in the study area of Char Dumla, is *bari*, which literally means home. Normally there are several *ghars* and several households remain in a *bari*, but a *bari* can also consist of only one household. The 453 households in the study area are part of about 280 *baris*. Each *bari* has a homestead yard in its midst and the

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house face this yard, which is the place where the domestic activities are carried out. Wealthy persons often have a wide verandah attached to their houses depending on the size of the homestead plot. In this village all the houses are *kacha*. There is only one *Pacca* house existing in the village and that belongs to a UP member. The rich and middle farmer families usually keep a *kachari ghar* (sitting room). The wealthy farmer families make separate living arrangements for their married sons, only if they want to stay with their parents. On the other hand poor, marginal and landless families cannot afford to make special rooms for their married sons. They sleep in the shade of a *verandah* or in the floor at night. Most of the families of the study village however, have a kitchen, although some families use a portion of their *verandah*, adjoining of the main room, as their kitchen. Cooking is done mostly by the wives and older girls. There are, however, seasonal variations in the location assignment of cooking related to the cropping cycle. For instance, in the rainy season (*barshakat*) cooking is done inside the kitchen, while in the winter season (*seet kal*) with plenty of harvesting, most families make an earthen *chula* in the open courtyard near the kitchen for cooking arrangement.

A *bari* is a household and in rural Bangladesh, especially in *char* areas, it consists of more than one hutment, shed or cottage. The *bari* is headed by an elderly male whom inmates obey and pay allegiance to. He guides the inmates in all affairs and is the lord or master or *korta* of the *bari*. Sometimes a younger person of the *bari* is also given the allegiance because of his financial or social strength and intelligence other enduring qualities. A head of *bari* is usually a large landowners who wields and exercise almost unlimited power over members especially his wife of his household. The inmates may have no say against his wishes. For example, in matrimonial affairs, mitigation or "*shalish*" or the sale of property, children learning, education etc. His words are final. The prestige and resources of *bari* depends on his wisdom and acceptability among the *bari* members. Such a strong man, however, in course of time may get isolated from the rest of his people. Some sort of psychological barrier come a between him and the others. The head of the *bari*'s power and sway over others eventually imparts him a rudeness. He became an arrogant unapproachable.

4.4 *Gushti* (Lineage)

Among the various social grouping *gushti* is the most extended and largest form. All the household belong to an agnatic lineage (*gushti*). "A *gushti* is a collection of *paribar* mostly belonging to a common origin (ancestor)" (Baqec, 1998: 51). "*Gushti* is the term for a group of households or families all of whom are agnatically related with the exception of in marrying wives and out marrying daughters" (Jansen, 1987: 52). All members of a "*gushti* can trace their

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common origin to a single deceased male ancestor” (Aziz, 1979: 24). Although “*gushti* is a much looser meaning as kinsman and it is stated that for membership in a *gushti* the common ancestor may or may not be necessary” (Islam, 1986: 67). Moreover, “a *gushti* is a group of families tied together by relationship often other than kinship” (Arens & Beurden, 1977: 178). Married woman often maintained a kind of dual *gushti* membership, both to the agnatic lineage into which they were born and the one they have married into. A *gushti* is spread over quite a large area across the neighborhood and village itself. All the members of a *gushti* are closely bound by blood or by matrimonial connection. There is cohesion among the members which developed over generations of close living. Many of the members of the *gushti* may live in other areas but they maintain link with the *gushti*.

The members of the *gushti* wield much power and as such can manipulate things in their *gushti*'s favor by whatever means possible, often with an eye to future benefits. Moreover, any crisis provides the *gushti* members with opportunities to renew and revise their overall image in the area. This also gives them an opportunity for integration among the members. The psychological unity of a *gushti* proves to be useful for a leading member who may seek an elective office in some local body. *Gushti* members may offer large friendly relations with other members of their locality outside the *gushti* or with their immediate neighbor through long standing association, such as sympathy and help from outsider boosts the moral of the entire *gushti*. Such possible relationship and help which are of course mutual, depend largely on the social environment and the attitude of the individuals outside the *gushti* circle (Baqee, 1998).

It has been made clear that the villagers of Char Dumla have a common conception regarding what the term *gushti* implies. There is much agreements about which household belonged to which *gushti*. Generally, poor household also wanted to be included in *gushti* of which they had relatively distant kin relations. The rich households, on their side, attempting to keep their lineage as “pure and good” as possible but not often derived kin relations with some poor households. There are also economic, social and political reasons why rich households disown their poor distant kin relations in the village. Unlike *paribar*, the *gushti* is not a property owning unit, but the *paribars* in a *gushti* have certain co-activities. The cooperation among the members of the *gushti* helps them considering that they belong to a common patrilineal stock.

Regarding the corporateness of the *gushti*, one group of authors (Hara, 1967; Bertocci, 1970; Arefeen, 1986) claim that village *gushtis* are not corporate, while the other group (Islam, 1974; Zaman, 1977; Bhuiuyan, 1978) describes *gushti* as a corporate unit. Recent socio-political and economic change further confuse

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the issue of *gushti* “corporateness” because some evidence suggest a decline in corporate- like qualities. Arefeen (1986) argued that the *gushtis* in his village are not corporate units because there is no longer an economic obligation by the rich members. With Arefeen’s criterions for judging the corporateness of a *gushti* it can be supposed that his generalization is accurate. Rather the corporateness of a *gushti* may be judge by whether or not *gushti* members are closely united under the common interest, especially political leadership of a *matabbar or pardhan*. The *gushti*, thus, corporately conserve it’s severally owned island and so present land owned by *gushti* members for becoming alienated. Islam (1974) pointed out that the corporateness of the *gushti* can also be observed in attitude of household heads display towards their landed property, especially cultivated land. Since cultivated land is difficult to obtain, easy to display, and is the source of much conflict, the household heads of the *gushti* agree that land should not go out of the *gushti*. This tendency to keep property in the *gushti*, even in the absence of collective property ownership by the group, reflects the corporateness of the *gushti*.

In Char Dumla the villagers have successfully kept titled to their property mostly within the patrilineage and almost always within the village. If a *char* villager wants to buy or sale a piece of land the usual custom for that villager is to speak to the *gushti matabbar or pardan* of the *samaj* with the expectation at a reasonable price within the *gushti* or *samaj*. There are different motives working behind this custom: firstly, selling land out side the *gushti samaj* weakens it, and an economically weekend *gushti samaj* will probably become politically weakened as well; secondly, villagers discourage outsiders from gaining access to village land; and thirdly, village land is mare readily accessible than buying land further away in another village. It has been observed in the present study that buying and selling of land within the *gushti* is not very restricted now a day because of the commercialization of agriculture and growing commoditization of land (Karim, 1990).

Gushti Identification and the users of Patronymics: The identification of *gushti* is not only complicated for any researcher but also the same to the villagers because in most of the cases villagers do not keep genealogical records. In the present study the *gushti* has been carefully identified for checking and crosschecking the field based data. There are 21 *gushtis* living in the study area. Each *gushti* has a patronymic of its own, which is locally known as *padabi* (the word *padabi* comes from *pad*, Bengali for “a position”, and by extension “a title”) (Ibid). The most visible criterion for identifying a *gushti* is the patronymic title, although similarity in patronymic titles do not necessarily mean that the patronymic titles are in use for individuals belong to the same *gushti* in Char Dumla: *sardar, miab, amir, bepari, sarkar, mullah, munsir, fakir, hawladar, bhuiyan, kazi, and masji*. In the village the same patronymic title is used

by more than one *gushti*. The origin of these *gushti* titles is, sometimes, occupational such as *bepari* designates a retail businessman or is based on religious position, *mullah* heads the religious congress or is based on economic and political leadership categories, and *miah*, *bhuyian* and *matabbar* means leader.

4.5 *Para* (Neighbourhood)

While *paribar* and *gushti* are kinship units of village social organization, the meaning for the Bengali term *para* is neighborhood. The term *para* has, perhaps, comes from *par* in Bengali which means border. "A *para* as a bank or mound is the root of a papal or bar tree where the villagers are accustomed to assemble and hence a village council" (Wilson, 1885: 399). It is a geographical concept prevalent in Bangladesh villages and at the same way Bangladeshi *char* villages. A *para* is a cluster of households. Although there is no clear geographical boundary or specific border line for a *para*, it is usually formed on an area of mound land where the villagers settle to lie. The settlement is usually surrounded by scattered agricultural land and next to it, another *para* may start.

It is likely that members of a *para* would include one or more *gushti* comprising of several nuclear or joint households. During the settlement in a particular neighborhood, the members of the same *gushti* or same religious group may prefer to settle close to each other. After the settlement, the *gushti* and *paribars* in a *para* may form a *samaj*. As the *para* dwellers lie close to each other, the information of a *samaj* comes with the people living in the same *para*. However, at the initial stage of settlement, each and every *para* may not have their own *samaj* based on *para* identity. All the *paras* in the study area have formed their respective *samaj*. It has been observed that there exist five *paras* and six *samajs* in Char Dumla where each *para* having at least one *samaj*.

4.6 *Samaj* (Society)

Samaj refers to the concept of a society as an entity which includes and transcends the *ghar*, the *bari*, the *paribar*, the *gushti* and the *para*. *Samaj* is at the apex of rural life. *Samaj* also connotes an association or community in a particular area with a definite stamp of its own and cultural uniqueness. *Samaj*, at times, takes on the meaning of class or society of elites engaged in advancing their personal interest and welfare. Recent works in the political anthropology of rural Bangladesh (e.g. Bertocci, 1970; Islam, 1974; Zaman, 1977; Thorp, 1977; Karim, 1983) have identified the *samaj* as the primary arena, symbolically and organizationally in which politics is played out. The term *samaj* comes from Sanskrit which designates people or organization (Ibid). The villagers in the study area use the concept of *samaj* in different ways. For them it often means a group of people who share a common identity through kinship and territorial

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proximity. But beyond that the term *samaj* also conveys a person affiliation with a particular group.

The *samaj* organization is often referred to or identified by its territorial unit, para and or by the name of its chief (*prodban*). Thus, for example, people says, "he belongs on *dhokinipara wapda samaj* (or southern neighborhood) *samaj*" i.e. "*ame bhuiyan samaj kori*" (I belong to *bhuiyan samaj*). When a particular has one *samaj*, people, often refer to it on the basis of its territorial unit, but if there is more than one *samaj*, people refer to it by the name of its leader. If a *pradan* in a specific *samaj* is very influential, the member of that *samaj*, often try to identify themselves with the name of their *pradan* which gains prestige or power for him. *Samaj* has been defined as a group of people living together on the basis of kinship, *jati*, religion, immigration and territory having a common socio political identity. Some of these factors (e.g. religion, kinship, *jati*) do not distinguish one *samaj* from another and the same is true for political identity (Sarkar, 1976).

Zaman raised a complementary issue. Different political groups may live under one *samaj* and in such cases religious faiths and practices may be the key factors of the union (Zaman, 1982). The factor of religion, however, may simply be redundant for *samaj* formation because virtually all the villagers are of Muslim *gushti* membership (kinship) and homestead proximity casually form a neighborhood and promoted sense of community. Thorp (1978) examined the world nice system of the Muslim of a Pabna village and referred to *samaj* as a residential brotherhood. He considered *samaj* a complex of geographically contiguous familiar formation of a voluntary association. Such activities may cause social confusion and rifts in the wake of unabated competition among the various *gushtis* or groups, which are the essential components of the *samaj* on whole, leading to disintegration of the society in the end.

The above discussion regarding the various social components relates largely to the *shabek* land tradition and social milieu where the *char* land presents a somewhat different scene. In *char* area there is very little scope of continuity and building of tradition which usually take generation. Devastating riverbank erosion engulfs old settlement, and so there is no legacy of the past or any heritage to be preserved and valued in the *char* land. Such physical hazards keep the *char* land in the state of perpetuated anxiety and tension. A rich family with high tradition may overnight become landless, and the progeny of such a family naturally loses the sophistication of these forbears in the face of constant struggle with a hostile nature. The farmer looming natural hazards make the people rough and rude as they are forced to take up even the nearest work for survival. But this picture is absent in the present study area. Because, this village was established as a *char* village about 55 years ago. This village has

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already established at a naturally stabilized stage. It has been observed that in this village two major factors determine the *samaj* composition: i) kinship affiliation and territoriality; and ii) social and religious festivals and functions.

Kinship affiliation is evident in the *gushti* membership and territoriality is decided by ascertaining the familiar living in a particular neighborhood where that particular *samaj* is formed. There is no clear geographical border line for a *samaj*, but its jurisdiction usually refers to identifying the *prodhans* house or the core point and all other houses and settlements as its peripheral units. The jurisdiction of a *samaj* tends to be dissimilar in different parts of the country. In Comilla village, as Bertocci (1970) observed, the *samaj* boundaries transcend the geo-social entity of village life to include as many as regions from eight contiguous *moijas* covering a territory just over 9 square miles. On the other hand Zaman (1977) suggested that the nucleus of a *samaj* coincides with the climate that a mosque serves. It has been identified that the *samaj* of the village presents Zaman's model. Here a neighborhood must have a mosque. In Char Dumla there are six mosques, two *maktabs* and six *samajs*. The contiguous settlement in the neighborhood and the growth of population usually formed a new *samaj* in the village. In the *samaj*, members can afford it, and then they will establish a new mosque of their own. As all people belong to only one village, they also belong to one particular *samaj*. A *samaj* is an institution which is vested primarily with the task of ensuring that people conformed to a morally proper mode of conduct. The *samaj* has the authority to inflict punishment on people who deviate from the established norms. In the six *samajs* of this area the composition of the *samaj*, to which the households of Char Dumla belong, has changed several times during the last decades. It has changed by taking up a few new households and it has expelled a few. However, the composition of *samaj* in Char Dumla is shown in the table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: The Composition of *Samaj* in Char Dumla

Name of <i>Samaj</i>	No. of HH	Percentage	Bari	Percentage	Population	Percentage
<i>Bhuyan Samaj</i>	66	14.59	36	12.80	421	14.30
<i>Nurun-nabi Samaj</i>	73	16.11	46	16.43	507	17.22
<i>Kibria Howladar Samaj</i>	61	13.47	49	17.5	469	16.85
<i>Shafique Ullah Samaj</i>	85	18.76	54	19.29	530	18
<i>Kadir Bepari Samaj</i>	92	20.31	52	18.57	574	19.50
<i>Dhakbin Wapda Samaj</i>	76	16.77	43	15.36	443	15.05
Total	453	100	280	100	2944	100

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

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The above table illustrates that the village Char Dumla have six *samajs* where *Kadir Bepari samaj* comprises the largest one in the village in terms of household (20.31%) and population (19.50%). While *Kibria Howladar samaj* is the smallest one comprising 13.47% households and 16.85% population of the village. These *samajs* are named according to the patronymic titles of the villagers who were the traditional land lords or *bkandans* of the village.

A *samaj* has a certain organizational structure. In Char Dumla the leaders of the *samaj* are called *matabbar* and they are the ones who will pass judgments on conflicts and misbehavior. The *matabbars* are generally old, landholder and respected people of the *samaj*. Most often, they are relatively well off economically and sometimes educated persons. They need to have knowledge and skills in mediating and settling disputes. There are also supposed to be impartial and balanced in their judgment and unwilling to take bribes from the parties. Often the *matbbarship* is hereditary and the eldest son of *matabbar*, if he posses the necessary skill, will take over his father's position. It is based on rich persons, lineage, family, *para*, mosque and *baat* (market), etc.

4.7 Gram (Village)

Organic Structure of the Village: In the light of above discussions it can be said that an individual is the basis of social hierarchies in the study area. This follows several stages of relations in the rural areas. Firstly, a rural and *char* village individual, from his birth to his death, associates himself with the existing any other social institutions in some way or other; secondly, two or more individuals from a household form the primary unit of production and consumption; thirdly, a family or *paribar* may consists of one or more households. A family or household is the smallest core unit where the socialization process or individuals starts. Fourthly, a few households form a *bari*, which commonly refers to an extended household group (Islam, 1974) or collections of households living together but occupying a separate space. In the study area 175 *baris* are single and 123 are extended household oriented. It is observed that whenever a household breaks down it forms a new household and goes for a separate *bari*. People belonging to different lineage very rarely live together within the compound of a *bari*. In this village some lineages lived together within the compound. Usually, the eldest male member of the *bari* occupies the position of the *bari* head.

Social Stratification of the Village: In the contemporary rural Bangladesh, including *char* village, the agrarian structure provides the evidence of inequality in the ownership of land having landowners at the one end and numerous landless and marginal peasants on the other end. There is still a lack of commonly agreed criteria for classifying rural households. From the empirical

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evidence on the population of Char Dumla the households of the present study have been divided into five categories such as landless marginal, small, middle and large farms. The *char* villagers themselves do not naturally use such categories. In this reason this part will give a short description of the system of social stratification as it pertains to the Muslim part of the population where 85% of the population in Bangladesh are Muslims. There is no tribal population in the village and the overwhelming majority of inhabitants are Muslim. In this regard there exists much literature on Muslim social stratification in Bangladesh.

Mukherjee (1971) collected information on Muslim stratification from West Bengal and East Bengal in 1940s. Most of important work on this topic in Bangladesh was carried out by Chowdhury (1978). He clearly showed that Bangladesh society is a class based society and in rural area the 'notion of caste' is absent among Muslims. Another recent effort to deal with the peculiar characteristics of Muslim stratification in Bangladesh has been made by Arefeen. He has stated that the Hindu and Muslim caste system have a number of similar features such as that society is organized on a hierarchical basis, the practice of endogamy and also hereditary occupations. However his main efforts are directed towards showing how Muslim caste differs from Hindu caste. The features that he found differ including the absence of the strict purity and pollution notion in the hierarchy, the lack of ritual sanction of the caste, the less rigid practice of commensality and endogamy and the individual's possibility of mobility among the Muslims. It has not been considered as necessary to enter into the debate, which discussed to what extent the Hindu caste concept is applicable to Muslim social stratification in Bangladesh (Chowdhury, 1978). In this regard a focus has been given to the discussion of Muslim stratification in Bangladesh, both generally and as it has been found from the internal aspects and investigations.

"Caste" in Muslim village societies of Bangladesh is of less importance than in most other areas of sub-continent. The traditional Muslims distinguish themselves between the *ashraf* (high born) and *arjal* (low born, synonyms in Bengal *atraf*), which is a common division of status among the followers of the Prophet, has not very much significance in Bangladesh today. This is partly because of the extensive adoption of *ashraf* titles and symbols the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In rural Bangladesh, the main economy was agriculture and therefore social status among the Muslims is mainly based on this aspect. In rural Bangladesh there is nearly a universal claim of '*sheikh*' status as one of the poor Mohammedan tribes and the other tribes are *Sayed*, *Pathan*, *Mughal*. Although people distinguish between real '*sheikhs*' and '*sheikh*' who work in the land themselves the nature of '*sheikh*' status is not a fruitful basis on which to discover the underlying principles of social stratification.

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In Karim's (1976) view the real nature of class or caste consciousness is prevailing among the Muslims of the district of *Noakhali*. It is the most democratic one in regard to 'Caste' and even 'Class' questions. The Muslims of *Noakhali* belonged to the Sunni sect. Some of the Muslims claim their origin to Arab settlers who came by sea to this coastal district. The Muslims of *Noakhali* are the collector stated, probably of a very mixed origin. They consider themselves the descendents of immigrants from the west and of converts made here; and there is evidence that they have constituted the great majority of the population in these parts for the last three thousands years" In this area all the Muslims are almost of *Sunnis* of *Hanafi* School. One of the important factors, which helped such a transition of probably the pervading, influences have the *mullah* and Islam, which rendered the whole community, "inter-marriageable".

Most of the people belonged to the lower strata of society. In fact the members of the lower strata of society could hardly survive in the struggle for existence in their native district and other area. One-way difference of status is expressed through the usage by the different patrilineages of names and title. Some title has traditionally been regarded as high status titles. Some of the lineage titles function as patronymics. The titles and name of the lineage title derive their significance from different sources. If a lineage has belonged to the rich landowner aristocracy or has a specific position in the revenue collection system or local administration of the pre-independence government administration, it may be given a certain title (e.g. *Chowdhury, Khan, Kazi*); each name refers to a certain position or task performed. A title or name can also be derived from specific position in the religious system (*moulana, mollah, imam* etc). The prestige of the different title will vary. *Moulana* refers, for instance to a religious leader with a better training than a *mollah*. Name to patrilineages can also be attached as a consequence of certain characteristics of a family or a specific occupation carried out by the member of the family. In such cases the names do not become patronymics. Respectable behavior is associated with the claim to a lineage title with a high status, which also often requires a certain material standard of living (e.g. refraining from physical work in agricultural activities). Poorer household belonging to a high status lineage will, to a certain extent enjoy the respect claimed by the lineage and occurring to expected rules. If the whole lineage becomes poor, it is difficult to continue to claim the title for a long period.

Traditionally religion has played a very important part in the conduct of behaviour and lineage status of the Muslims and in this sense the exclusiveness between *sharifs* and non-*sharifs* existed in the study area. It appears that many years ago there was a *sharif*-class belonged to is who laid distinct claim to foreign ancestry together with some sort of land control. This class used to practice some sorts of endogamy among themselves within the areas and

similar classes outside the areas. The vast portion of the rest of population was non-*sharif*.

In Char Dumla the five prestigious lineages are named 'Kbondakar' 'Bhuyan' 'Mia' 'Howlader' and 'Bepari'. One of the *Kbondakar* lineages claimed that they have forefathers who service the religious indigenous medicine and they claim that their grandfathers were carried high status due to their social services. *Bhuyan* lineage claimed that they have held a large amount of land. Then felt proud to express about how their grandfathers were carried around in comfortable status by the generations when they inspected the estates. Now a days people of the Char Dumla village, however, recognize the noble tradition of these patrilineages, even most couple of the generation already lost their traditional land owners and it was declined in economic strength and status. The other lineages 'Howlader' and *Bepari* have emerged during the last generation and today they owe their status to being business and having money. There are also ways of distinguishing families by their titles or lack of it. In the village they make distinction of households belonging to *ucha-bangsha* (high status lineage), *madhya-bangsha* (middle status lineage), and *nichu-bangsha* (low status lineage) (Jahangir, 1979). Economic position and the status of the lineage in terms of its tradition, as well as the existence of a title count when households are placed in these categories. There is often disagreement about where to place the lineages.

The distinctions found among the inhabitants of Char Dumla are applicable when categorizing people was *Kbandans* as *Bhuyan*, *Mia* (high status), who have a lot of land holders, and *sat gerastha* (low-middle status, cultivators). The *sat gerastha* or cultivators have no social stigma, i.e. those who do not belong to the lowest strata. In Char Dumla the only *Kbandanies* (*Bhuyan*, *Kbandokar*, *Mia*) lineages were regard as high status were considered as 'land owners' as long as they did not perform physical work in agriculture. It is even regarded as a great social distinction to have any ties with such persons who have attained a high position in the society for lineage claiming high status, *izzat* (respectable behavior) together with manner (language, eating habits, entertainment, dress, etc) is more important. *Izzat* is a relative phenomenon and one can gain or maintain *izzat* more or less. As Jahangir (1982) mentioned that *izzat* of a person (HHH) depends on certain factors and these are-

- i) *Whether he can provide his family with food (khana-para);*
- ii) *Whether he can maintain the privacy of women (purdha);*
- iii) *Whether he has a separate room to entertain guests (kachari ghar or Bouthogue khana); and*
- iv) *Whether his women bathe in the ponds or others or not.*

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In Char Dumla it has been observed that *izzat* was strongly associated with these factors. In addition, it has been also found *izzat* to be associated with money and credit, social standing popularity, religious strength and moral standard. The stronger economic base enhanced the possibilities to indeed hold on to the newly acquired land and money. The possession of such position increased the social status or the households concerned and their bargaining power. In the study village these combine effects were enhanced capacity to loosen the grip, if it was there, of the *jotdars*. So the economic aspects are more important in social stratification and social position holding as *izzat* in Char Dumla.

Chapter-5

Agrarian Relations in Bangladesh: An Overview

- 5.1 Agrarian Structure**
- 5.2 Land Tenure and Land Reform System**
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5.1 Agrarian Structure

The agrarian structure is here defined as the subset of institution governing the distribution of rights in agricultural means of production, notably land. These rights include not only ownership but also such arrangements as tenancy and mortgage, which creates a divergence between ownership and actual operation (Boyce, 1987). The agrarian structure can affect both the static and dynamic efficiency of agricultural production. Agrarian structure is generally understood to mean a set of institutions, norms (both written and unwritten) and socio-political and economic relationships governing the access to and use of land as productive resource (Abdullah, 1976). In this study, however, the researcher considers mainly the ownership of land, tenurial conditions and relations of land labour and credit as the focal point in the analysis of agrarian structure, which in turn refers to mode of productive organization that determine agrarian hierarchy while taking Beteille's (1974) notion that production is based on family labour, wage labour and tenancy, landlords, owner cultivators, tenants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers. These categories and their mutual relation constitute the heart as the agrarian hierarchy. The agrarian structure in contemporary rural Bangladesh that despite a minifundist character, the evidence of inequality in the land ownership of land having large landowners at the one end and numerous landless and marginal peasant at the other end (Sarker & Rahman (eds.), 1999).

A *char* village of Bangladesh had developed a socially structured land control system with a distinct process of her land system, land tenure, land revenue, sharecropping, labour market and credit system dispensation owing to her geo-physical, climate and socio-political reasons. In this sense land has become the touchstone of her social hierarchy which was directly or indirectly connected with land to accrue interests from the production of it. This has turned into the primary indicator of socio-economic and political status. Analysis of static efficiency effects typically proceeds via comparison of the relative economic efficiency of different components of the agrarian structure such as large farms versus small farms, tenant-cultivator versus owner-cultivator, and so on. Dynamic effects upon technological changes and growth have received less attention. Studies showed that the efficiency impact of agrarian structure of Bangladesh have focused on farm size and sharecropping to a greater extent and less to fragmentation, particularly on their static effects.

5.2 Land Tenure and Land Reform System

Land is not only the most importance resource in an agrarian economy like Bangladesh, but it is also the sole resource. Hence, the critical importance of the ownership of land in rural Bangladesh. Yet rural people are increasingly becoming landless and the pattern of the distribution of the ownership of land is becoming more skewed owing both to the high growth rate of population and the inability of marginal peasants to earn enough for their survival. Population pressure and laws of inheritance lead inevitably to the fragmentation of holdings. There is, in addition, a continuous rise in poverty and indebtedness contributing to the loss of land by the rural poor. Since there is little hope for an extension in the total area of net cultivable land, the pressure of ever-increasing demand for land could only in an increase in the value of landed assets.

Land Tenure System before the Advent of British Rule: In any study of the land tenure system of Bangladesh, it is necessary to cast a glance over the *Mughal* revenue and land tenure system. Under this system, there were only two grades of interest in the cultivator who enjoyed the residue. In the *Mughal* revenue administration, the Seminar (*Amal Gushar in the Ain- I Akbari*) was an agent of the Emperor for making due collections on behalf of the Emperor and was remunerated with a percentage out of his collection for his labour; he was not a “proprietor” of land. Certain allotments of land (known as *naukar*) were usually given to him rent-free for his maintenance. Again under the *Mughal* land tenure system, rents of land throughout Bengal were regulated by a definitely known and fixed customary rate prevalent in the locality embracing a village, *Taluk* or a-

- i. *Pargana*, and were called the “*Parganah rate*”. In the *Mughal* revenue administration, there were two categories of *raiyat*, namely:
- ii. *Khudkast Raiyat* who cultivated land in his own village as a settled resident in the village; and
- iii. *Paiskast Raiyat* who, as a non-resident *raiyat*, held his holding in a village to which he did not belong.

He usually cultivated land at an under-rent. By the time the British came to administer the country, the *Mughal* revenue-system had taken such deep roots that they needed time to gain an understanding of the facts governing the land system, and these facts were not easy to come by following the disintegration of the *Mughal* empire which left the *Zamindars* and other exploiting classes free to do

whatever they liked (Islam, 1978). In 1793, the British rulers, after several experiments, introduced the Permanent Settlement Act in Bengal.

Permanent Settlement Act 1793: According to the new rule of property, *Zamindars* were recognized or rather created as landed proprietors in the English sense of managing, transferring, and mortgaging land as they pleased. They were no longer to draw revenue from independent peasants but from a dependent tenancy. Out of what they realized, they were to hand over 90% to the state, but what they actually paid was a fixed lump sum, so that whatever might be the value of the estates in future, they were to continue hereditary possessions of these on condition of paying this sum fixed in perpetuity. *Zamindars* were also provided with extensive coercive power over their tenants. Besides, the introduction of Permanent Settlement led to an agrarian structure characterized by-

- i) *rack renting (kind rent, abwab, illegal exaction, frequent enhancement of legal rent, etc.) and inflexible demand for rent, irrespective of crop condition;*
- ii) *highly skewed land-ownership pattern;*
- iii) *absentee landlordism, divorced from the risk and responsibility of production and investment;*
- iv) *a long chain of intermediaries between the Zamindar and actual tillers;*
- v) *insecure tenancy (non-occupancy raiyat, under-raiyat, and bargadar);*
- vi) *extra-economic pressure on the working peasantry; and*
- vii) *vulnerability of the peasantry to exploitation by usurious moneylenders and traders.*

Losing their rights on the holdings, cultivators were still keen to stick to agriculture. Many of them moved down to an inferior state of becoming sharecroppers and or landless labourers. Sharecroppers, or *bargadar*, as they are called in this part of the Indian subcontinent, lease in land on an informal contractual basis from some landholders. A more common practice is to fix the share of a *bargadar* at 50% of the produce, but it is not a general rule. In some

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cases, it is even much less, depending upon the custom and tradition of the locality, and also upon the relative demand for land by the landless (Islam, 1979).

Even through the peasant-farming system dominated cultivation in this region, towards the end of the British rule, the area under sharecropping and the number of agricultural labourers grew to a considerable degree. Based on the Floud Commission report, it is estimated that between 1938 and 1940, sharecroppers cultivated about 19% of total cultivable land and another 75% by hired agricultural labourers. An estimated 12% of cultivating families lived, mainly or entirely, as sharecroppers; while another 18.6% were mainly or entirely agricultural labourers. Taken together they constituted more than 30% of the peasant population was absolutely landless or owned just homestead land. The size becomes much bigger, about 50%, if one includes households having less than one acre of land. Peasant households were fast becoming marginalized, but they continued to live on agriculture.

It appears that peasant households were becoming quite differentiated from the point of view of the size of land-holdings. The Floud Commission report also shows that an overwhelmingly large number of rural people (45.8%) had a holding size of less than 2 acres per households; 11% had between 2 and 3 acres; 16.8% between 3 and 5 acres; 16.1% between 5 and 10 acres; and the remaining 7.7% above 10 acres of holding size. The average size of holding per household thus came to 4.02 acres. The marginal farming households were fast becoming non-viable. The extraction of surplus by the superior landowners and moneylenders was hastening the process of their pauperization and proletarianization.

Agrarian relations that evolved under the Permanent Settlement were not only unjust, but grotesquely inefficient as well. The long chain of intermediaries appropriated the surplus from land, but very few of them accumulated enough to plough back the surplus into agriculture itself for socio-economic transformation. Different layers of middlemen mostly used to consume rent. Those with larger estates indulged in luxury and ostentatious consumption. The usurious money lending carried less risk and was more rewarding than investment in any productive activity. Consequently production suffered, agriculture remained backward, and the demand for industrial goods from agricultural population remained low. There was little diversification in the economy.

Land Reform since 1950: The Floud Commission recommended the abolition of Permanent Settlement Act along with the tenurial rights of other intermediaries, which were to be replaced by a direct settlement between the state

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and the cultivators. These recommendations could not be implemented straight away because of the continuation of the World War II and the political upheaval preceding the partition of India into two separate sovereign states in 1947- India and Pakistan. Bengal was also partitioned in this process- East Bengal a part of Pakistan.

Immediately after the partition, the East Bengal Legislative Assembly took up the task of land reforms, and in less than three years, the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act (EBSATA) was passed in February 1950. Its major provisions were as follows:

- i) *Abolition of rent-receiving interests of Zamindars and all types of intermediaries on payment of compensation at stated rates and bringing the tenants directly under the Government;*
- ii) *The raiyats hitherto holding lands under Zamindars and others were declared;*
- iii) *“mallik”of land subject to regulatory control of the Government with full rights of use, enjoyment of usufruct, transfer, and inheritance. Thus the raiyats were restored to their original position of owner-occupier existing in the pre-British period;*
- iv) *Subletting of land was prohibited;*
- v) *A ceiling was imposed on the ownership of agricultural land by a family. No family could acquire or hold more than 100 bighas (33.33 acres). This ceiling was subsequently raised to 375 bighas in 1961;*
- vi) *Acquisition of land in excess of the ceiling and certain properties irrespective of the ceiling limit, such as hat-bazar, forests, ferry-ghat, and fisheries;*
- vii) *Amalgamation and consolidation of holdings as a measure to discourage fragmentation of holdings;*
- viii) *Prohibition of transfer of agricultural lands to non- agriculturists;*

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- ix) *Preparation or revision of the record of rights of the newly declared maliks; and*
- x) *Vesting of lands in the Government under certain circumstances;* (GOEP, 1951).

Provisions of this Act underwent some significant amendments from time to time. The most important among them was a revision of the ceiling to landholding from 100 *bighas* to 375 *bighas* per family by an ordinance of 1961. This modification was extending to cooperative societies, provided the individual members transferred unconditionally their ownership rights to the society. For the redistribution of excess land acquired by the state, the Revenue Department in 1957 laid down an order of priority that included even non-cultivators such as ex-military personnel with long and distinguished service record; refugees, and ex-rent receivers with no land for consideration. It is to be noted, however, that, these lands were not freely redistributed. An applicant would get his share of land on payment of a certain amount of money called *salami* to the Government, and provided his application for land was granted. In August 1957, the *salami* was set as 5 to 10 times the amount of annual rent. In August 1958, it was made equivalent to 50% of the market price for land at the current rate. In 1962, it was enhanced to full market value of the land (Islam, 1993).

It appears that the great expectation of distributive justice and productive efficiency roused by the EBSATA 1950 suffered considerable erosion in subsequent years. Given the socio-economic realities, the Act itself did not have much to offer for change. It had actually given legal endorsement to the pattern of agrarian relations that had already been taking shape. It did not do much in the matter of initiating fundamental changes in land-relations of far-reaching consequences. There were emerging, in the meantime, some powerful interest groups whose self-seeking maneuvers were leaving the Act emaciated and out of tune with the realities of the situation. In the absence of democracy, the civil and military bureaucratic power clique, like any other colonial or authoritarian rule, was looking for a support base in rural area. The landowning rural elite became its chosen target for this purpose. The strategy was to win them over to its fold so that they can control the rural area on their behalf. The raising of land ceiling to 375 *bighas* per family was a deliberate act to this end. The large landowners were given the opportunity to expand their resource base and to assume positions of influence. Since their newly found power and privileges were the creation of the authoritarian rule, it was quite likely that they could be relied on as trusted agents of the rulers for the distribution of patronage among the loyal few and the

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suppression of discontent among the rural masses. Ayub Khan tried to institutionalize their position through the introduction of the system of Basic Democracy where they provided with political authority to exercise their socio-economic power (Islam, 1993).

There was very little to be achieved in the matter of the redistribution of the acquired land. The popular belief that *Zamindars* were, by and large, big estate-holders and the acquisition of their land would release quite a big proportion of the cultivable area for redistribution was not substantiated by factual evidence. First, only a small number of *Zamindars*, hardly 2% of the total, were big landlords. Secondly land settled with *rai-yats* under any form of tenure-holding could not be taken over for redistribution. Thirdly much of excess land, if any, could conveniently be kept within the family by way of land distribution among family-members through deeds showing each member as constituting a separate household or even by way of *benami* transaction. Fourthly, big landowners had the choice to keep the preferred plots for themselves and leave the inferior ones for government acquisition. Consequently, much of the acquired land was uncultivated or uncultivable. And finally, the enhancement of land ceiling to 375 *bigha* per family by a 1961 Ordinance eliminated even the residual possibility of land acquisition to a substantial level for redistribution among the poorer farmers. The *jotdars* assumed a pivotal position for land management and rural development (Islam, 1978).

From available statistical data it can be seen that the total area acquired by the Act of 1950 came to 163,741 acres. Also the total land acquired (i.e. acquired through the Act of 1950 and other government measures) by 1959 was 234,746 acres, of which 68% was wasteland. Assuming that roughly 68% of the land acquired under the Act of 1950 was wasteland, Abdullah calculates that the total arable land that the Government could take over under this Act was no more than 65,469 acres. The farm area in Bangladesh today covers about 22.5 million acres. This means that the Act of 1950 could contribute to the acquisition of hardly 0.3% of the total cropped area in Bangladesh. Given the number of marginal and landless farmers who constitute an overwhelming majority of rural population, the redistributive effects of the Act, if there were any real honest attempts for redistribution, were quite negligible. But the partition of 1947 itself led to a kind of redistribution. In its immediate aftermath, a large-scale migration of population took place to and from this territory, resulting in substantial changes in landholding pattern. This might be a major factor contributing to the decline in landless or near landless. According to the 1951 census, 17% of agri-households were found to be landless, while this category of peasant households constituted more than 30% of total

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number of households in the Floud Commission report for 1938-1940. Once emigration slowed down, forces determining the pattern of landholding in the country changed. Consequently landlessness showed upward trend again. By 1961, government policies began to be directed in the interest of surplus farmers. Inequality was on the rise, and there was very little to gain in terms of productive efficiency. Marginal farmers were losing out to bigger ones; and the affluent farmers, fed liberally on government subsidies, did not make much of investment themselves. Semi-feudal practices, e.g. usurious money-lending, land-purchase, hoarding, business in forward and backward purchase and sales of agricultural commodities, etc. were thought to be preferable in terms of getting surer returns to risky investment in agriculture.

Changes after the Liberation: Immediately after the independence, it fell upon the new government to look into the problems of agrarian relations and to initiate measures for correction. According in 1972, the Government announced a program whereby the ceiling to landholding was brought down to 100 *bigha* per family (GOB 1972). This was flexible in cases of cooperative farming and organized plantation. The *khas* land with the Government was to be distributed among landless peasants and marginal farmers having not more than 1.5 acres of land. The landless were to be especially encouraged to form cooperatives for settlement on large blocks of *khas* lands. It was also decided that the recovered and accreted *char* lands by rivers would not go back to the original claimants, if there were any; and landless peasants. The Government, in addition, declared exemption from payment of land revenue for agricultural households having less than 25 *bigha* of land.

The inefficiency of measures of 1972 made the Government realize that they would have to initiate changes of a more fundamental nature in agrarian relations so that there could be real tangible improvements in agriculture. This was attempted in 1975 when the Government declared a series of drastic measures for reevaluating the rural economy. According to them, the land ceiling was to be reduced to 70 *bighas* per family. But measures of more far reaching consequences were proposed in relation to the organization of production. The whole of agriculture was sought to be brought under a system of compulsory cooperatives (Islam, 1993). The output would have to be distributed according to the ratio of one-third for land, one-third for labour, and one-third for the use of capital that includes plough bullocks, seeds, fertilizer, irrigation, etc. In the management of cooperatives, there would have to be proportional representation of land, labour, and capital. The capital formed in agriculture would be used by the cooperatives for the improvement of productive efficiency in agriculture and also for the

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diversion into rural industries, which would similarly be run under the overall management of the cooperatives. Landless labour would thus be absorbed in a gainful process of production in rural activities. But this policy could not be implemented owing to political turmoil in 1975.

The deepening crisis in economy and the sharecropping of contradictions in production relations, however, have continued to exert pressure on the Government to initiate reform measures. Consequently, a Land Reform Committee was formed in 1982. On the basis of its recommendations, the Government promulgated a new Land Reform Ordinance in 1984. Its major provisions were as follows:

- i) *The existing family ceiling was not to be reduced but those families owning land up to 60 bigha (20 acres) were prevented from acquiring any more land;*
- ii) *The tenure-rights of the sharecropper were recognized; he was to enter into a 5 year agreement with the landowner during which time he could not be evicted; one-third of the produce would go to the landowner and the sharecropper each respectively while the rest was to be shared in proportion of cost-sharing between the landowner and the bargadar;*
- iii) *Proxy (Benami) ownership transaction was declared illegal and punishable;*
- iv) *The minimum daily wage for agricultural labourers was fixed at 3.50 kg of rice or its equivalent in cash;*
- v) *None could be evicted from his homestead; and*
- vi) *Free distribution of khas land among only landless peasants was to ensure; (GOB, 1984).*

However, the 1984 Ordinance is yet to be implemented fully. But the problem in Bangladesh today is so deep and complex that even if the reforms are fully implemented, it touches only the fringes of the issues. The table 5.1 below presents a comparative statement of farm size distribution in Bangladesh on the basis of finding in Agricultural Census of 1960 and 1983-84.

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Table 5.1: Size Distribution of Farm Household in Bangladesh

Items	Figures for Farm households as %age							
	Agricultural Census 1960				Agricultural Census 1983-84			
	Small	Medium	Large	Total	Small	Medium	Large	Total
Percentage of total Farm Holding	51.63	37.68	10.69	100.00	70.34	24.72	4.94	100.00
Percentage of area of farm holding	16.25	45.69	38.06	100.00	28.98	45.09	25.92	100.00
Average size of Farm holding	1.11	4.29	12.00	100.00	0.9	4.1	11.9	100.00

Source: BBS, 1979; 1983-84.

It appears that Bangladesh agriculture is overwhelmingly characterized by the operation of small farms. The number of farms is remaining somewhat stable. The percentage farms in this category, however, are declining due to increase in the total number of farm. In 1983-84, small farms accounted for 70.34% of the total number of farm households in 1960; they were 51.63% of the aggregate. Medium and large farms constituted 37.68% and 10.69% of the total respectively in 1960. The corresponding figure for 1983-84 is 24.72 and 4.94 respectively. The share of farm areas under different categories has also shown concomitant changes. Areas under small farms has gone up from 16.25% in 1960 to 28.99% in 1983-84, while that under large farms has gone down from 38.06% in 1983-84.

The share of medium farms in terms of area has not changed much. This account for 45.09% of the total cultivated acres in 1983-84, as against 45.69% in 1960. More important, however, is the fact that the average size for each of the three categories has declined. For large and medium farms the shift is negligible; but for small farms, the marginal worth of change should be quite substantial. From 1.11 acres in 1960, the average size for small farms has come down on 0.9 acre in 1983-84. A more detailed breakdown of farm size distribution in 1983-84 is presented in the table 5.2 below.

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Table 5.2: Distribution on Number and Acres of Farm Households 1983-84

Size of Farms (Acres)	Member Farms (%)	Area of farms (%)
00.05-00.49	24.06	2.74
00.50-00.99	16.37	5.08
01.00-01.49	13.28	6.96
01.50-2.49	16.63	14.20
Small farms	70.34	28.98
02.50-04.99	17.98	27.45
05.00-07.49	6.74	17.64
Medium farms	24.72	45.09
07.50-09.99	2.30	8.62
10.00-14.99	1.78	9.14
15.00-24.99	0.69	5.47
25.00 and above	0.17	2.70
Large farms	4.94	25.93
Total	100.00	100.00

Source: BBS; 1983-84: 32.

It shows very clearly the crises that have been deepening in land and peasant relationship in Bangladesh agriculture. Of the small farms, the majorities are practically non-viable. In all, 24.06% of the farms are below one half of an acre in size; another 16.37% lie between 0.50 and 0.99 acres. All farms below 1.5 acres in size constitute 53.71% of the aggregate. But together they account for only 14.78% of the total farm area. On the other extreme, 0.17% of the farms covering 2.70% of farmland are in size group of 25 acres and above. Another 0.69% in the 15.00 to 24.99 acres group operates 5.47% of area under cultivation. Inequalities are obviously very sharp. They are becoming very sharper. But the point to note is, even the bigger farms are not very big if look at the conditions obtaining in many neighboring countries. A farm of 7.50 is now defined as large. This was probably though otherwise in 1972 when farms up to 25 *bighas* or 8.2 acres were exempted from payment of any rate to the government. They were then just thought to be self-sufficient. It is not that their economic strength today has improved. But in overall situation of losses of land entitlements, landlessness and general poverty the owners of these farms are being treated as sufficient well off. The distribution also shows why the so-called land reform measures are, by themselves and for all practical purposes, an exercise in futility. It is not likely that there would be even 1% of the cultivated area acquirable as Land Reform Ordinance, 1984. In reality, however that 1% also will remain unacquirable as the process of its lawful redistribution within the family will continue.

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There is not much land above the 60 *bighas*, or nearly 20 acres ceiling of farm holdings fixed by the government that may become acquirable after making allowance for prospective or retrospective redistribution within families. In this regard the table 5.3 below shows the pattern of changes in the distribution of farm holdings in Bangladesh agriculture since 1960-1984.

Table 5.3 Distribution of Farm Households in Bangladesh Agriculture

Size (Acre)	Number of Farms (000)			Area (000 Acres)		
	1960	1968	1983-84	1960	1968	1983-84
Under 0.5	803	842	2417	205	250	622
0.5-1.0	690	873	1644	499	664	1152
1.0-2.5	1677	2175	3005	2826	3683	4799
Small farms	3170 (51.63)	3890 (56.64%)	7066 (70.34%)	3530 (16.25%)	4597 (21.32%)	6573 (28.99%)
2.5-5.0	1615	1807	1806	5735	6462	6226
5.0-7.5	699	632	677	4193	3831	4000
Medium farms	2314 (37.69%)	2439 (35.51%)	2483 (24.72%)	9928 (45.69%)	10293 (47.74%)	10226 (45.09%)
7.5-12.5	442	360	479	4179	3347	5266
12.5-25.0	188	149	----	3066	2362	--
25.0+	26	30	17	1044	963	613
Large farms	656 (10.68%)	539 (7.85%)	496 (4.94%)	8269 (38.06%)	6672 (30.94%)	5879 (25.92%)
Total	6140 (100.00%)	6868 (100%)	10045 (100%)	21727 (100%)	21562 (100%)	22678 (100%)

Source: GOEP, Agricultural Census-1960: 29; GOEP, Master Survey of Agriculture, 1968: Table 1(A); BBS, 1983-84: 32.

The number of large farmers of Bangladesh has come down by about 24% between 1960 and 1983-84. But the decrease is only 8% when the figure for 1983-84 is compared with those of 1968. In the case of medium farms, the absolute number of farms has not changed significantly. The area under medium and large farms, however, has not changed that much. Table 5.3 shows clearly that peasants of Bangladesh hold on to their tinny plots of land even when the farm size becomes non-viable. It is also evident from this table that more than 95% of farming households own less than 7.50 acres, which also account for nearly 75% of the cultivated area. Government policies and programs in agriculture must be designed primarily to help the small and medium farms to raise their productivity.

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If land reforms have to take any sense, the land ceiling will have to reduce to something between 20-30 *bighas* per family. This means that there would be no large size farms, as it is understood today. From the point of view, the economic efficiency only make sense, as the smaller farms in Bangladesh are to be found more intensively and more efficiency cultivated. Land holding will continue to break up into pieces in the natural course of subdivision among the inheritors. As a consequence, by the turn of the century, perhaps, many more groups will appear from this sense. But simultaneously almost all the farms will end up being too small to be proper economic use. As there should be a limit to the large size of farms, there has to be also a limit to the small size as well as if efficiency contradictions are to be satisfied. More than 53% of the farms households that is, those below 1.5 acres in size, are already threaten with total disintegration. If things are allowed to continue as they are more than 90% of farm households may face the same fate in another two decades.

5.3 Pattern of Land Ownership

In the rural area of Bangladesh particularly in the *char* lands the pattern of ownership of productive assets particularly land releases a set of forces that determines the relationship between various groups of farmers centering on land. The ownership of land structure, which is its turn, determines the land-mass relation is rather scanty in Bangladesh particularly in the *char* land. The agricultural census undertaken in the past (before liberation) can provide information on operational land holding rather than land ownership, which are of dubious nature (Hossain, 1981).

Generally, different empirical analysis of agrarian structure of Bangladesh shows on evidence pertaining to the distribution of land ownership and the concentration of land holding, together with the extent of landlessness labour arrangements, tenancy system, rural credit market and so forth. There is still a lack of commonly agreed criteria for classifying rural households. The agriculture and livestock census, 1983-84 divided rural households into four groups i.e. landless, small farmers (below 2.49 acres), middle farmers (2.50 acres to 7.49 acres), and large farmers (7.50 acres and above). But elsewhere (Hamid, 1977) 3 acres and 5 acres have been used as dividing lines respectively between small and medium farms. This should not be granted. Throp has found that the possession and use of 6 acres or more seems indisputable to constitute a person as a big man in rural society. Due to this factor, a particular land holding size does not have the same importance in all parts of Bangladesh including *char* areas. At the risk of over implication, rural and *char* land household can be categorized in the following

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sectors: rich peasant, middle peasant, small peasant and landless. The ownership of land in *char* village in Bangladesh is highly concentrated. Within these broad categories, we can sub-divide them again primarily; those with 7.01 acres and above are rich peasants. Table 5.4 shows that in 1977 they were very insignificant in number (4.07% of the rural households). But they controlled 30.37% of the total farm area. In this regard the table 5.4 below would give an idea about the distribution of land ownership in Bangladesh in 1977.

Table 5.4: Distribution of Land Ownership in Bangladesh, 1977

Land Ownership Groups (in acres)	% of HH	% of Acre
Zero	11.07	0.00
0.01- 1.00	47.44	9.30
0.01- 2.00	16.43	14.43
2.01- 5.00	17.47	33.31
5.01- 7.00	3.52	12.59
7.01- 15.00	3.27	19.08
15.00 & above	0.80	11.29

Source: This figure for 1977 is compiled from Jannuzi & Peach, 1980.

It appears that Bangladesh agriculture is overwhelmingly characterized by the prevalence of small farm. From this table a dramatic proliferation of small and marginal farm relative consolidation of middle farms and relative decline of large farms are observable. More important the average size of all categories has declined over the last three decades. The incidence of landlessness is very high because of the exercise pressure of population on limited land resources. The latest agricultural census undertaken in 1998 enumerates 17.8 million rural households; of which 1.8 do not own any land and 11.0 million own land of less than 0.30 acres, which can not be a significant source of income. However, the number of large landowners is also very small. Households owning land of more than 25 acres are only 19000 (0.1%), and only 369000 (2.1%) own more than 7 acres. The land occupancy survey of 1978, which is the earliest source on the pattern of distribution of landownership in Bangladesh, reported 8.5 % of the households controlling 48 % of the land area (Jannuzi & Peach, 1980). The 1996 agricultural census showed that the land area operated by rural households declined from 9.2 million hectares in 1996, indicating that 82000 hectares went out of agriculture every year because of the expansion of urban areas, the increase in homestead land and the development of rural infrastructure (Hossain, 2001). According to agricultural census reports, the average size of farm holding declined

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from 5 acres in 1960 to 2.50 poor are in 1983-84 and further, to 1.50 acre are in 1996 (BBS, 1996). However, Changes in the pattern of distribution of landownership and landholding are reported in the tables 5.5 and 5.6 below.

Table 5.5: Changes in the Distribution of Landownership, 1987-2000

Size of Landownership (Acre)	% of HH		Share of Landownership (%)	
	1987- 1988	1999-2000	1987- 1988	1999-2000
0.00- 0.50	47.1	49.0	4.1	4.7
0.50- 1.50	13.1	15.6	6.2	8.0
1.50- 3.50	21.4	19.2	22.2	22.2
3.50- 7.50	11.6	10.2	25.7	25.1
7.50 +	7.5	6.0	41.8	40.1
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: The figures for 1987-88 and 1999-2000 are compiled from Ramchanran, V. K. & Swaminathan, M. (eds.), 2002.

Table 5.6: Changes in the Distribution of Landholding, 1987-2000

Size of Land Holding (Acre)	Farm Holding in the Group (%)		Cultivated Land Operated by the Group (%)	
	1987 - 1988	1999 - 2000	1987 - 1988	1999 - 2000
up to- 1.00	37.6	47.9	8.2	15
1.00-2.50	34.5	32.8	27.1	31.1
2.50- 5.00	17.7	15.2	28.6	31.7
5.00- 7.50	10.1	4.1	36.1	22.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: The figures for 1987-88 and 1999-2000 are compiled from Ramchanran, V. K. & Swaminathan, M. (eds.), 2002.

The picture depicts a trend toward pauperization rather than differentiation and the peasantry in Bangladesh. Households owing to 0.50 acres of land known as Bangladesh as functionally landlessness, made up 47% of total rural households in 1988 and their number increased marginally to 49% by 2000. Only 7.5% households owned land more than 7.5 acres in 1988. Controlling 42% of the land their number declined to 6% by 2000 and their share of land to 40%. Farm households defined as those that cultivate some land for agricultural production have declined from 65% to 63%. The proportion of farms holdings land of more than 5 acres have decline form 10.1% to 4.1% over the period, and the land

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operated by them has declined from 36% to 22.2%. The proportion of marginal farms holdings up to 2.5 acres has increased 72% to 81%, and their share of land from 8% to 15%. Thus marginal and small farmers dominate the agrarian structure of Bangladesh although they control a small share of land. The average size of land holding has declined from 2.25 acre to 1.75 acres.

In Bangladesh the landowners authority remains in many respects absolute, even through there has been substantial diminishing of their power and privileges. They no longer act as agents of the state to collect land revenue. They retain their absolute ownership right in land, although the size of large landholding has been distinguished by means of fictions transfers of land. According to the first estimate, small farm households (0.05-2.49 acres) comprised 61.8% of the rural households and 28.98% of farm area were under their control. The percentage of middle farms (2.50-7.49) was 16.3% of total farm area. Large farms amounted to 38% of rural household and controlled 25.92% of total farm area (BBS, 1989: 105). A study in 1987 also indicates considerable inequality in the distribution of land ownership. 50% of the rural households controlled only 3.7% of the total land. At the other end of the scale the 1 % of the rural household owning more than 15 acres controlled nearly 15% of the total land. While another 18% was owned by the 3% of the households owning between 7.5 and 15 acres households owning more than 5 acres constituted the top 8% of the rural households but they owned nearly 48% of the total. The Gini concentration ratio of land ownership distribution is estimated at about 0.65 (Hossain (ed.), 1994). It becomes clear from the above discussion that there are acute inequalities in the distribution of land ownership in rural Bangladesh (Sarker & Hossain, (eds.), 1996). However, in the following table 5.7 the distribution of number and area of farm holdings of Bangladesh are shown.

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Table 5.7: Distribution of Number and Area of Farm Holdings of Bangladesh, 1996

Farm Size	Categories	No of Households	Number of Farms (%)	Operated Area (Acre)	Area of Farms (%)
Small	00.05-00.49	3356400	28.429	894990	10.89
	00.50-00.99	2437231	20.65	1697574	20.65
	01.00-1.49	1757073	14.89	2057977	25.04
	1.50-2.49	1872089	15.87	3568410	43.42
Total Small Farm Size		9422793 (79.9%)			
Medium	02.50-4.99	15765446	13.36	5345383	64.54
	5.00-7.49	501244	4.25	2936355	35.46
Total Medium Farm Size		207790 (17.61%)			
Large	7.50-9.99	147651	1.25	1243502	35.98
	10.00-14.99	100259	0.85	1150769	33.30
	15.00-24.99	39635	0.34	709066	20.51
	25.00+	10121	0.06	353121	10.21
Total Large Farm Size		297666 (2.50%)			
Total			100		100

Source: BBS, 1996; 1999

The table shows that very clearly the crises that have been deepening in land-peasant relationship in Bangladesh agriculture. Of the small farms, the majorities are practically non-viable. In all, 79.9% of the farms are below 2.50 acre in size; another 17.61% is in between 2.50 to 7.49 acre in size. 63.96% farms occupy on an average of 0.05 to 1.50 acres of farm size. All farms below 1.5 acres in size constitute on an average more than 50% of the aggregate. On the other extreme, 2.50% of the farms covering 7.50 to above acre of land in size. 0.06% of the farm owner has more than 25.00 acres of farm land. 7.50 to 15.00 acres of farm size owners are 2.1% of farm owners. Inequalities are obviously very sharp. It even tends to be sharper. But the point to note is, even the bigger farms are not very big, if the conditions obtaining in many neighboring countries are taken into consideration. A farm of 7.50 acres is now defined as large. This was probably through in 1972, when farms up to 25 *bighas* of 8.2 acres were exempted from payment of any rate to the government. They were then just thought to be self-sufficient.

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It is not that their economic strength today has improved. But in overall situation of losses of land entitlements, landlessness and general poverty the owners of these farms are being treated as sufficient well off. The distribution also shows why the so-called land reform measures are, by themselves and for all practical purposes, an exercise in futility. It is not likely that there would be even 1% of the cultivated land are acquirable, as the process of its lawful redistribution within the family will continue. There is not much land above the 60 *bighas*, or nearly 20 acres ceiling of farm holdings fixed by the government that may become acquirable after making allowance for prospective or retrospective redistribution within families. However, in the following table 5.8 the percentage of number and areas of farm households are shown.

Table 5.8: Percentage of Number and Areas of Farm Households

Size of Farm (in Acres)	Percentage of Total Farm (in Areas)			Average Farm Size (in Acres)		
	1968	1983-84	1996	1968	1983-84	1996
0.05- 0.44	1.16	2.74	4.48	1.16	0.93	0.87
0.50- 0.99	3.08	5.08	8.51	3.07	0.26	0.27
1.00- 2.44	17.08	11.16	28.19	17.08	1.88	1.87
2.50- 4.99	29.97	27.45	26.78	29.97	3.45	3.39
5.00- 7.49	17.77	17.64	14.71	17.77	5.91	5.86
7.50- 12.49	15.52	17.76	12.00	15.52	8.46	8.41
15.00- 24.99	10.95	5.47	3.55	10.95	29.55	29.24
25.00+	4.47	2.76	1.77	4.46	36.06	35.30
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: GOEP, 1968: Table 1(a); BBS, 1983-84

The number of large farmers in Bangladesh has come down by about 20% by about between 1968 and 1996. But the decrease is 13% when the figures for 1968 are compared with those of 1983-84. In the case of the middle farms has not changed significantly. In the case of the small farm size the absolute number of farms has not changed significantly. In the case of the small farms, there has been a 27.03% increase in the number of farms if the comparison of 1968 data 1.16% with that of 1996 data 28.19% is taken into account. Not only the number of small farms has gone up but the area has also gone up sharply. The area under the medium and the large farms, however, has not changed all that much. The table above shows clearly that the percentage of Bangladesh hold to their tiny plots of land even when the farm sizes become on viable. It is also evident from this table that with more than 95 of farming households owning less than 7.5 acres, who

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also account for nearly 75% of total cultivated area, government policies and programs in agriculture must be designed primarily to help the small and medium farms to increase their productivity.

If land reform has to take any sense, the land ceiling will have to be reduced to something between 20 to 30 *bighas* per family. This means that there should be no large size farms, as it is understood today. From the point of view of economic efficiency only it makes sense, as the smaller farms in Bangladesh are to be found more intensely and more efficiently cultivated. Landholding will continue to break up into pieces in the natural course of subdivision among the inheritors. As a consequence, by the turn of the century, perhaps, many of the large will disappear from the scene. But simultaneously almost all the farms will end up being too small to be proper economic use. As there should be a limit to the large size of farms, there has to be also a limit to the small size as well if efficiency considerations are to be satisfied. More than 53% of farm household, that is, those below 1.5 acres in size are already threatened with total disintegration. If things are allowed to continue as they are, more than 90% of farm household may face the same fate in another two decades.

Intersectional Farm Size Distribution: Bangladesh has a unique pattern of intersectional farm size distribution. This country has 94,22,779 small farms, 2,07,7784 medium farms, and 2,97,681 small farms. The pattern of the distribution of the households is not uniform all over Bangladesh. Here the table 5.9 shows the number of farm households in different categories and in different regions of Bangladesh in 1996.

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Table 5.9: Number of Farm Households in Different Categories and in Different Regions of Bangladesh, 1996

Bangladesh and Other District Areas	Number of Farms			Percentage		
	Small Farm	Medium Farm	Large Farm	Small Farm	Medium Farm	Large Farm
Bangladesh	9422779	2077784	297681	79.86	17.62	2.52
Bandarban	16360	15436	2695	0.17	7.43	0.91
Barisal	248337	37238	2920	2.64	1.79	0.98
Bogra	282787	49698	6159	3.00	2.39	2.06
Chittagong	255819	38553	2902	2.71	1.86	0.97
Comilla	439667	42778	2055	4.67	2.06	0.69
Dhaka	55723	11610	1307	0.60	0.56	0.44
Dinajpur	186557	72349	14848	1.98	0.71	4.99
Faridpur	137387	38610	4466	1.46	1.86	1.50
Jamalpur	197180	35705	3565	2.10	1.72	1.20
Jessore	220998	51189	6497	2.35	2.46	2.18
Khulna	105626	33089	6115	1.12	1.59	2.05
Kushtia	138355	27475	3495	1.47	1.32	1.17
Mymensing	432234	87693	8544	4.59	4.22	2.87
Noakhali	242740	31254	6763	2.57	1.50	2.27
Pabna	141229	40439	6062	1.50	1.95	2.04
Patuakhali	132518	41761	9745	1.41	2.01	3.27
Rajshahi	159241	35656	4655	1.69	1.72	1.56
Rangpur	222218	46407	5634	2.36	2.23	1.89
Rangamati	22550	24310	5105	6.24	1.17	1.72
Sylhet	157824	44844	8310	1.67	2.16	2.79
Tangail	333211	56753	5699	3.54	2.74	1.91

Source: BBS, 1996

The above table shows that an overwhelming majority of farm households is small in every region, yet these cover quite a large range of sizes. Comilla has the highest percentage of small farms (4.67%) closely followed by Mymensing with small farm concentration of 4.59%. In 6 of the remaining 19 old districts the percentage varies from 3% to 4%. They are in the descending order, Bogra 3.00%, Chittagong 2.71%, Tangail 3.54%, Noakhali 2.57%, Rangpur 2.36%, Barisal 2.64%, Jessore 2.35%, Jamalpur 2.10%. In other districts namely Khulna,

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Bandarban, Kushtia, Faridpur, Sylhet, the small farms concentration in the descending order is between 1.5% and 2.5%.

The distribution of the number of large farms is likewise uneven. Apart from Bangladesh, it is nowhere above 5%, yet it ranges from 0.69% in Comilla to 4.99% in Dinajpur. Six districts, viz. Rajshahi 1.56%, Kushtia 1.17%, Khulna 2.05%, Patuakhali 3.27%, and Sylhet 2.79% have it above to 0.69%. The distribution of the number of medium size farms similar diversity ranging from 1.32% in Kushtia and 2.73% in Tangail to 7.43% in Bandarban. In some districts, the percentage of farm households belonging to medium size vary between 2% to 2.50% which are Rangpur, 2.23%, Sylhet, 2.16%, Patuakhali, 2.01%, Bogra, 2.39% and Comilla 2.06%. It appears that from the point of view of the viability of the size of land holdings, the distribution problem is least unfavorable in Dinajpur, and is nearly so in Rajshahi. The problem is quite acute in the district of Comilla, Noakhali, Chittagong, and Dhaka.

5.4 Tenancy in Bangladesh

The extent of tenancy in Bangladesh has remained relatively stable for long period of time. In 1960 only about 18% of total land was under tenancy and in 1977 it fell to 17.5% (GOEP, 1960; BBS, 1980). The following table 5.10 would show the extent and changes in the pattern of land tenure or tenancy from 1960 to 2005 in Bangladesh.

Table 5.10: Changes in the Pattern of Land Tenure in Bangladesh, 1960-2005

Tenure Group	Percentage of Farms					Percentage of Land Operated				
	1960	1983-84	1987	1996	2005	1960	1983-84	1987	1996	2005
Owners-Farms	60.8	62.6	56.5	66.29	60.08	53.6	58.5	58.2	59.04	55.08
Owner-cum Tenant	37.6	36.6	29.5	23.59	36.74	45.2	40.9	35.1	38.85	42.51
Pure Tenant	1.6	1.4	14.0	10.18	3.18	1.1	0.6	6.6	2.11	2.40
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: BBS, 1996; 2005

The data in the table shows the distribution of different groups of cultivators over the years. While 60.8% of rural households were owners' farmers in 1960, the

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percentage increased to 62.6 in 1983-84 but decreased to 56.5 in 1977. On the other hand the percentage increased to 66.29 in 1996 but decreased to 60.08 in 2005. The percentage of owner-cum-tenant farms was 37.6% in 1960 and 36.0% in 1983-64 with a further decrease in 1987 (29.5%) and 1996 (23.59%). But increase in 2005 (36.74%). An owner-cum-tenant household that claims to own some land (other than homestead land) and, at the same time has temporary possession of additional land taken in from a landowner (Jannuji & Peach, 1980: 134). The percentage of pure tenant farms was reported over the years with a slight decrease in 1983-84. In fact, the increase was significant (14%) in 1987. But decreased 1996 (10.18%) and 2005 (3.18%).

Thus this shows the trend of tenancy in Bangladesh which appears to be quite high. The percentage of pure tenant farms had been steady over the years with a slight decline in 1983-84, 1996 and 2005. It is observed that in 1987, the tenant farms (Owner-cum-tenant and pure tenant) comprised 43.5% of the total farm households, an increased over previous years. The next year 1996, the tenant farms accordingly comprised 33.77%. An increase in 2005 (39.92%). There are very pure tenants having no land of their own. Most of the tenants are owner-cum-tenants, that is, they have some land of their own and rent some more to create a viable holding. Owner-cum-tenants work larger sized holdings than do owner cultivators.

By this practice they can enlarge their operated area so as to enable them to make better utilization of their unused family labour, equipments etc, along with their land at their own disposed. The 1987 BIDS survey defined pure tenants as those having no cultivated land of their own, as opposed to the agricultural census definition of having no land at all and found pure tenants to be about 3.185 of all cultivators in 2005. Their average size of holding was only one acre, and they controlled 2.40 % of total cultivated land. There is no precise as to what amount of land cultivated under tenancy. Jannuji and Peace reported that 235 of the total land were cultivated under tenancy. It appears that most of the cultivable land in Bangladesh is not tilled by the owners themselves but by the labour power of others i. e the family labour of tenants and the wage labour of hired workers, recruited from amongst the numerous poor peasants, semi-proletarian and proletarian classes (Adnan, 1986: 4). The extent of tenancy, however, is found to be higher in 2005, 1977 and 1978 which were conducted under much closer supervision than other national level surveys. According to the 2005 agricultural survey, 44.91% of owned land (excluding homestead) is cultivated by pure tenant and owner-cum tenant households. In the previous years 1977 survey, 22.87% of

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owned land is cultivated by the pure tenant and owner-cum-tenant households (Jannuji & Peach, 1980).

The percentage of land operated for owner farmer did not vary significantly but this decreased quite remarkably for owner-cum-tenants. Jannuji and Peach (1980: 102), however; observed that if the category of owner-cultivator is strictly defined to apply to those landowners who cultivate with family labour only, then only 10.47% arable land was under such cultivation. However, the table 5.11 below shows the farm area by type of tenure in Bangladesh.

Table 5.11: Farm Area by Type of Tenure in Bangladesh

Type of Tenure	%of Farm (1984)	% of Farm (1996)	% of Farm (2005)	% of Area (1984)	% of Area (1996)	% of Area (2005)
Owner	62.53	66.95	60.08	58.51	58.51	55.08
Owner-cum-Tenant	36.04	23.57	36.79	40.94	39.59	42.51
Tenant	1.38	10.18	3.18	0.55	1.90	2.40
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: BBS, 1983-84; 2005

The tenure types according to the farm areas have also been changed in the course of time. The owner type of tenure has sharply changed, in 1984 it was 62.53% of farm which increases up to 66.95% in 1996 and again decreases to 60.08% in 2005. The owner-cum-tenant has dramatically decreased 12.83% if we take into consideration the comparison between 1983-84 and 1996; and again it increases up to 13.22% of farms. The tenant pattern of tenure is 1.38% in 1984, which increases up to 10.18% in 1996 and again decreases to 3.18%. From 1984 to 1996, percentages of the area of land of the owners have increased, it is to some extent it trend in the case of owner-cum-tenant, and on the other hand percentage of areas of the tenant have decreased. Furthermore the extent of tenancy varies considerably from region to region in Bangladesh. In this regard the following table 5.12 would illustrate the variations of tenancy in different districts in Bangladesh in 1996.

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Table 5.12: Tenancy in different Districts in Bangladesh, 1996

Bangladesh and other Districts Areas	Owner Holdings	%	Owner-cum-Tenant Holdings	%	Tenant	%	% of Owner-cum-tenant & Tenant
Bangladesh	11807547	66.23	4206077	23.59	1814577	10.18	33.77
Bandarban	29795	0.25	6885	0.16	9025	0.50	0.66
Barishal	248358	2.10	93710	2.23	24354	1.34	3.57
Bogra	356787	3.02	144405	3.43	40497	2.23	5.66
Chittagong	413301	3.50	113297	2.69	39104	2.15	4.84
Comilla	450111	3.81	199707	4.75	24186	1.33	6.08
Dhaka	99647	0.83	26455	0.63	14045	0.77	1.40
Dinajpur	292423	2.48	105154	2.50	58639	3.23	5.73
Faridpur	180760	1.53	77490	1.84	17642	0.97	2.81
Jamalpur	236760	2.01	96105	0.23	47855	2.64	2.87
Jessore	275283	2.33	87425	2.08	28009	1.54	3.62
Khulna	142647	1.21	43978	1.05	24572	1.36	2.41
Kustia	191945	1.63	68370	1.63	22795	1.26	2.89
Mymensing	547918	4.64	168042	1.62	65572	3.61	5.23
Noakhali	256451	2.17	86466	2.06	30205	1.66	3.72
Pabna	213109	1.80	68450	1.63	43226	2.38	4.01
Patuakhali	160498	1.36	61090	1.45	21740	1.20	2.65
Rajshahi	175403	1.49	79184	1.88	41947	2.31	4.19
Rangpur	267503	2.27	106281	2.53	66451	3.66	6.19
Rangamati	34920	0.30	13225	0.31	21495	1.18	1.49
Sylhet	244974	2.07	47406	1.13	26280	0.15	1.28
Tangail	356207	0.30	164284	3.90	46593	2.58	6.48

Source: BBS, The Bangladesh Census of Agriculture (Rural), 1996.

The above table indicates that owner holdings are higher in Mymensingh (4.64%) and lower in Bandarban (0.25%), owner-cum-tenant holdings are higher in Comilla (4.75%) and lower in Bandarban (0.16%) and owner-cum-tenant and tenant (jointly) are higher in Tangail (6.48%) and lower in Bandarban (0.66%). However, considering the scenario of Noakhali the owner holdings are 2.17%, owner-cum-tenant holdings are 2.06% and both the owner-cum-tenant and tenant are 1.665 respectively. The overall scenario indicates that the tenancy status is at a medium level in Noakhali comparing to other parts of the country.

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Moreover different studies on 62 villages in Bangladesh based on survey data show that the percentage of tenancy cultivators as well as of cultivated area under tenancy is higher in the “high adopts”, villages compared to low adopt once (Hossain, 1981). In this regard the following table 5.13 would give a picture about the incidence of tenancy in different villages of Bangladesh at different levels of HYV adoption.

Table 5.13: Incidence of Tenancy in Bangladesh Villages at different Levels of HYV Adoption

Indicators	Low adopter village	Medium adopter village	High adopter village	% of differences of High over Low
Tenant farmers as percentage of cultivator	39.4	42.3	43.0	9.1
Rented outland as percentage of own land	20.3	10.1	13.6	33.0
Rented in land as percentage of cultivated land	21.0	22.8	25.8	22.9

Source: Hossain, 1981.

The table shows that the adoption of modern varieties as a positive impact on the incidence of tenancy. This implies that consequence upon the adoption of HYV of rice, land owners temptation for unearned income may influence this process of land transactions and impede the reserve process of increased profitability through tenancy eviction (Saha, 1997).

The most common form of tenancy relationship is share tenancy. In Bangladesh the predominant tenancy arrangement is sharecropping under which the gross output is shared equally between the tenant and the land owner. Nearly 84% of all tenancy households reported sharecropping in Bangladesh (Jannuji & Peach, 1980). The pattern of sharecropping is not, however, universal. The extent and terms of sharecropping varied from region to another. The terms were generally 50:50 at harvest time (as reported by 93.3% of tenants). Some sharecroppers were required to make additional payments or pay a higher share of the crop to the land owner. Thus variations in share payment in cash or in kind or in certain proportion of both normally to prevail. This may be due to the differences in quality of land, variety of crops and technology, the relative strength of tenants' vis-à-vis the land lords and a host of other related factors involved in tenancy

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market. Tenancy arrangements were almost oral and unstable in the sense that sharecroppers could be evicted from rented land in any time. In most cases, sharecroppers bear all production cost and pay half the output as rent. However, there have been changes in tenancy arrangement as reported by the 2005 agriculture census. It reports that the sharecropping system is giving way to fixed rent tenancy. With the adoption of new technology, landlords are now observed to be cautious enough to take decisive role through the practice of cost sharing in the cultivation HYV of crops (Hossain, 1981; Rahman, 1990). Though the evidence of cost sharing is not high, this provides an indication of the decisive role of the landlords in the choice of crops (Saha, 1997). A number of large landowner in Bangladesh may prefer (beyond a certain of his own cultivation) family sharecropping arrangement to wage based cultivation so as to enable him to contract surplus labour of the poor tenants in the form of rent.

Fixed rent tenancy both in cash or in kind and cash rental payments are gaining prominence with the spread of the cultivation of modern varieties. In case of kind payments are made after the harvest and contracts are made on a seasonal basis. Land is also transacted under a credit arrangement when the borrower mortgages land to the lender as collateral for the loan. The lender cultivates the land in lieu of interest charges till the loan is repaid. If the borrower cannot repay the loan after the specified number of years, the lender has the right to purchase the land, often at a price lower than the market share. This transaction known as '*daishudi*' is sometime the first step in the process of land transfer through purchases and sales. The widespread unemployment and underemployment in the face of extreme pressure of population on land and the lack of alternative job opportunities outside agriculture compel the small and marginal landowners to climb to his own tiny holding supplemented by some more land rented in. In the face of competition for land in the rental market, their bargaining power vis-à-vis the landowners is reduced to a great extent of much so that they helplessly become dependent on the landlords. On the other hand, if they fail to get a piece of land from their landlord, they are reduced to the rank of agricultural labourers which may be considerable to be much more degrading. In these circumstances, the poor peasants strive for the rented land even though the return on sharecroppers, labour is lower than the market wage rate in most cases (Hossain, 1982). This again provides incentive to the landlord to rent out a part of his holding to one with excess family labour. Thus the landlord exploits the tenants' cheap labour. The landlord for realizing his objective (i.e. maximum rent through exploitation of tenants surplus labour) would now rent out his land in small parcels to a number of tenants who will put as much labour per unit of land as physically and technologically possible (Hossain, 1977). The following table 5.14

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would show the changes in the incidence of tenancy in Bangladesh since 1987 to 2000.

Table 5.14: Changes in the Incidence of Tenancy, 1987-2000

Landownership Group (in Acre)	Tenant Farmer (%)		Cultivated Holding Rented (%)		Share of Tenancy Market (%)	
	1987-88	1999-2000	1987-88	1999-2000	1987-88	1999-2000
Less than 0.50	62.0	82.0	84.6	90.3	35.3	46.8
0.51-1.00	46.5	51.2	45.4	53.1	15.8	18.2
1.01-2.50	41.6	50.0	30.5	30.0	34.9	21.4
2.51-5.00	25.4	36.1	9.4	12.6	10.0	8.0
5.10 and above	13.6	21.2	2.5	6.8	4.0	5.5
Total	42.50	57.20	22.10	33.10	100.00	100.00

[Note: In 2000, 64% of the rented land was transacted under the sharecropping arrangement.]; Source: BBS, Census of Agriculture, 1996; BBS, 2001.

Several information obtained shows that the tenancy cultivations is widespread and has increased over the last 1987-2000 period. The table shows that the proportion of tenant farmers has increased from 42.5%-57.2%, and the land under tenancy cultivation has increased from 22.1%- 33.1%. Most of the tenants are small landowners who find it economical to rent land to increase the capacity use to the farm rehabilitation. It is also more socially prestigious to self family employ and family labour on rented holdings than to work as wage labourers on another's farm. Nearly 47% of the tenant land was operated by households owning less than 0.50 acres and another 40% by households owning from 0.50-2.50 acres. Two major factors have contributed to the upward trend in the incidence of tenancy. First, with rapid rural-urban migration of households taking place, many urban settlers become absentee landowners. They get the land cultivated by their resident relatives. Second, with increased non farm employment opportunities stimulated by the development of infrastructure and the rural labour market has become tight and the wage rate has been increasing faster than the price of agricultural product. As higher productive employment opportunities in the rural non-farm sectors come up, the better educated and capital rich households find it more economical to rent out land engaged in non farm occupations. So the supply of land in the tenancy market has been rising while the demand has been falling.

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The importance of the different tenancy arrangements has also been changing. The 1960 Pakistan Census of Agriculture reported that in East Pakistan 91% of the rented land was transacted under the share-tenancy system. The 'exploitative' tenancy arrangement provides the disincentives to agricultural instruments and the adoption of input-intensive new technologies with the spread of modern rice varieties since the late 1970s, share-tenancy is giving way to seasonal fixed rent tenancy and to some context, to annual and medium-term (three to four year) leasing arrangements. The 1996 agricultural census noted a decline in the area under share-tenancy, from 74% of the rented land in 1983-84 to 62% in 1996. Now tenants growing input – intensive modern rice varieties (MVs) go for fixed rent arrangement that allow them to reap the harvest of additional investment in agricultural inputs. But they continue the sharecropping arrangements for the rainfall rice varieties, to share with land owners the rest of harvest failure. The land tenure institution is thus changing under the pressure of market. In this case social, political and demographic keep force to facilitate the adoption of the new technology (Ramachandran & Swaminathan (eds.), 2002).

5.5 Labour Market

Agriculture is of one and central importance in the Bangladesh economy. It could not be otherwise for a sector where about 60% of Bangladeshi workers and their principal employment are engaged and in which about half of the gross domestic product originates. It is precisely for this reason that agricultural labour force constitutes an important element of the agrarian system in Bangladesh. Perhaps the obvious factors constitutioning Bangladesh development are the size and character of the existing natural resource endowments. Cultivated average is approaching its physical limits, inherent and environmental characteristics connected with climate, soil quality, rainfall and flooding are becoming more important cost-rising influences for Bangladesh agriculture.

The mainstream of rural working class rendering physical labour to carry out various agricultural activities growing crops, rearing livestock and poultry. Before British rule in India there was no organized agricultural labour market and no provision of wage labour in agriculture. Landlords then usually distributed their land to sharecroppers (*bargadars*). Sometimes they themselves cultivated a part of their land with the help of slaves, perennial labourers (on annual contract) or hired labourers paid in kind and also by free board and lodging. Sharecroppers and small cultivators engaged family members and in addition, had to adopt exchange (locally known as *badla*, *kamla*, *gabur*, etc.) on the principal of strict reciprocity. Slavery was abolished through enacting a law in 1843. Exchange of labour was

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more prevalent till the early 1906 s when increased landlessness and introduction o cash money or economy replaced the system of exchange by hiring on payment, from this time, labour was paid in kind, at least partially, and the system is still in practice in rural areas.

The land tenure system was introduced during the British rule and it rapidly increased the number of landless people, who in most cases, ultimately turned into agricultural day-labourers forced by repeated famines. British ruler took a number of steps for the development for agriculture, but all the efforts targeted the landed cultivators, not the landless day-labourers. About 26% of the rural households subsisted on labour as their only or principal occupation. This 13 million rural Bengali were fully or partially dependent on wage labour. In 1900, about 6,00,000 rural people (7% of the total rural population) of Bengal had labour as the primary occupation. By the early 1970s this had increased twelve folds of about 72,00,000 people (27%). The master survey of Agriculture (1965-66) conducted by the government of East Pakistan disclosed that 25% of the cultivators earned wages for their labour, while three-fifths of these wage-earning cultivators were landless. The following table 5.15 would show the percentage of labour force in Bangladesh since 1961-2000.

Table 5.15: Agricultural Labour Force Survey 1961-2000 in Bangladesh

Year	Sector	% of Labour Force
1961	Agriculture	85%
1974	Do	71%
1981	Do	61%
1984	Do	59%
1996	Do	63.2%
2000	Do	62.3%

Source: GOEP, 1968; BBS, 2001

The common trend was that of an increase of waged agricultural labourers. Recent reports of Bangladesh indicate that the proportion of agricultural labour force is on the decline, reportedly from 85% in 1961 to 79% in 1974 to 61% in 1981. A similar survey carried out in 1995-96 indicate that agricultural labour force is on the highest, increased, reportedly from 63.2% to 62.3% in 1999-2000 (BBS, 2001).

There are three types of labour relations that have co-existed in rural Bangladesh that is casual day labour (hiring on a daily contract) annual contract labour

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(attached workers) and seasonal labour (hiring on a piece-rate contract). Casual day labour or hiring on a daily contract in the shortest contract and varies from half a day (or one '*bela*') to several days (usually one hat period that is the period between two *bat* days). Casual workers, known as a *dinmajur* or *kamla* are employed a daily basis, depending on the need for job. They are paid wages on a daily basis at the prevailing market rate. The labour-hours vary from six to twelve hours. The shorter work-hours are usually for physically heavy work such as land preparation and transplanting. For longer hours, the employer usually provides snacks and meals. Casual employment provides labourers with the greatest freedom and also with the greatest insecurity. Day-labourers benefits from wage hikes in the busy season but also have to suffer starvation during the slack season. The 1987-88 survey found that 29% of all rural households and 42% of the land-poor households supplied labour under this arrangement. The 1999-2000 survey estimated the numbers as 12% and 20% respectively. The average number of days of employment per year for agricultural wage-labour has declined from 205 to 177, as the worker gets more remunerative casual jobs in the non-farm sector. The wage rate of agricultural labour has increased, however, from \$ 0.94 to 1.19 over the period.

Annual contract, hiring on a seasonal or attached workers or *bandha majur*, stay usually at the employers house and get cash wage and also food and clothing. The working conditions for *bandha majur* are precarious and considered of low social esteem, as the employer can ask the workers to do any job at any time. The duration of the work hour also is much longer than the other types of labour contracts. Poor households keep their children as apprentice attached workers on large farms, where they receive free meals and lodging but not cash wage. In some cases annual contract labourers are bonded with some kind of debt slavery and work for the employers to repay their debt. From the survey that labours transactions on a seasonal or annual basis have been on the decline. In 1987-88 the *bandha majur* were kept on 16% of the farm households; the average number of such workers per farm household was 0.27%. During 1999-2000, only 8% farm households hired this category of workers and the average number of workers was only 0.14%.

Contract or seasonal labourers or *chukti* or *thika majur*, are hired to complete a specific operation for a piece-rated wage, depending on the size of the parcel of land on which the work has to be done. These types of labourers are engaged for 2 to 4 months during the winter season, usually for harvesting crops. They migrate from one region to another. They receive wages in the form of food and paddy or cash. The paddy component is often a share of the crop harvested and varies between one twelfth and one fifth. In the past working condition for

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waged labourers were almost uniform throughout Bengal, although there were regional differences in wage payment. In most places the greater part of the wage was paid in cash, although mid-day meal rice and side dishes was provided by the employers. A morning snack of puffed rice or water soaked rice (*panta bhat*), betel leaf and nut and green coconut also provided. The importance of piece-rated employment has increased substantially over the period for busy agricultural operations such as land preparation, harvesting and transplanting.

According to Bangladesh Labour Force Survey 1999-2000, a labour force of 6.03 crore (male 3.75 crore and female 2.28 crore) in engaged a variety of profession, the highest (62.3%) still being in agriculture. A similar survey carried out in 1995-96 indicate that a labour force of 5.6 crore (male 3.5 crore and female 2.1 crore) was engaged in a range of profession, the highest (63.2%) being in agriculture. The survey also indicated that 40.1 of the labour force were engaged as family labourer while 29.6% was self-employed. Daily or *dinmajurs* and annual contract or attached labourers were 17.9% and 12.4% respectively. On the other hand, according to the labour force survey 1999-2000, 36.7% labour force was engaged as family labourer and 32.4% was self employed. Out of the remaining labour force 17.6% was engaged as daily or *dinmajur* and 13.3% as attached labourers. It is worthy to note that during the two survey period the number of self-employment workers increased 3% while agriculture is increased by 7%. A large part of labour force still remaining outside the formal labour market and regulated wage system, although the number of workes entering the labour market has been on the increase. With the increased in the population of the country, the total number of agricultural labourer is increasing, but the rate of employment in the agricultural sector compared of that in the non agricultural sector is decreasing. The wage level has significantly increased during recent year. As noted earlier, the importance of the agricultural labour market itself as a source of unemployment of rural workers has also been declined. In the following tables (5.16 and 5.17) the situation of hired labour in the farm holdings of both Bangladesh and Noakhali district are shown.

Table 5.16: Hired Labour in Farm Holding in Bangladesh in (000)

Status	Types of Hired Labour		
	Permanent(Attached)	Contract	Casual
Small Peasant	450	157	7624
Middle Peasant	237	300	7724
Large Peasant	19	160	1971
Total	765	617	17319

Source: Agricultural Sample Survey, 1992; BBS, Census of Agriculture (Rural), 1996.

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Table 5.17: Hired Labour in Farm Holding in Noakhali in (000)

Status	Attached	Contract	Casual
Small	00	3	287
Middle	01	3	190
Large	01	3	6
Total	02	9	538

Source: BBS, 2001.

Although there are regional variations in the rural labour market, over the year the growth in the rural labour force has been quite impressive. In 1974 BIDS study reported about 80% of cultivators hiring at sometime or other (Hossain, 1978), Boyce's (1989) compilation of data by districts does not show that much intensity. The percentage of farm using wage labour in the 40s and 50s (Boyce, 1989) Rahman and Das (1985), however, present an elaborate discussion of the pattern of the rural labour market in the four villages in the district of *Noakhali*. The factors determining the growth of the labour market is many, the crop circle of rice cultivation, the changing occupational structure of the rural households etc. However, the labour-hiring system does not automatically imply to capitalistic forms of agricultural production. Irrespective of the nature and organization of production, the use of wage labour is inevitable. The above study shows that casual hired labour is much more prevalent than permanent hired labour. The entrance to the casual labour market and the prospect of finding a new job are restricted by the segmentation of the market into various localize units, by the existence of the *sardari* system or patron client relation. Moreover, rural interlocked transactions (informal credit, mortgage and *dadan*) and other patronage network have an important learning on the labour market. There is evidence that the small farmers or tenants or labourers receive loans for consumption from the rich peasants in return for the pledging of their future labour to the creditor (Rahaman, 1979; Jansen, 1987). Here it is reasonable to conclude that the present pattern of the rural labour market does not conform to the exigencies of capitalist agricultural production. Adnan (1986) aptly observed that unlike capitalism the underlying relations of production here is such that the growth of the labour market is neither a necessary nor a systematic consequence.

5.6 Agricultural Policy in Bangladesh

A set of pre-decided principals are to be followed through planned and systematic manipulation of natural resources like soil and water for the sustained development of agriculture. Agriculture was the main source of government income in Bengal from the ancient period but the rulers of ancient, medieval, and

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the British periods paid very little attention to the development of agriculture. Agriculture in Bengal got an institutional framework with the introduction of the Permanent Settlement during British rule. Under the permanent settlement *Zamindars* became proprietors of the land against payment of a fixed annual amount of land tax on a regular basis. The law barred *Zamindars* from appealing for remission or suspension of taxes on the ground of any natural calamity and stipulated that in the case of a *Zamindar's* failure to pay the tax in due time, his estate would be sold in auctions. The Permanent Settlement was designed to enhance agricultural output with the help and supervision of *Zamindars*. This objective, however, was rarely fulfilled (Hossain, 1996).

Repeated famines and an acute shortfall of income from land revenue ultimately forced the British government to form a number of commissions and committees, which forwarded various recommendations for the development of Bengal's agriculture. These included abolition of the permanent settlement, scaling down the volume of debts to the repaying capacities of the indebted families, allowing sharecroppers to retain two-thirds of their produce, building up necessary infrastructure for agricultural education, research, training and extension, launching co-operative movement, etc. A number of important organizations and institutions were established as a result of the implementation of some of these recommendations. Among these are the Cooperative Credit Movement (1904), Department of Agriculture (1906), Agricultural Research Laboratory (1908), Debt Settlement Board (1936) and Bengal Agricultural Institute (1938).

The Permanent Settlement was abolished by the State Acquisition Act of 1950 during the Pakistan Period when cultivators were given proprietary rights on the land they cultivated. The Pakistan government, however, paid little attention to agriculture largely, because an urban group dominated in the policy formulating bodies and the economic policy formulation was dominated by the import-substituting industrialization paradigm. The East Pakistan Agricultural Development Corporation (now BADC) and the East Pakistan Agricultural Bank (now Bangladesh *Krishi* Bank, BKB) were established during the early 1960's with the mandate of subsidizing distribution of inputs (seed, fertilizer, pesticide, agricultural machinery, etc) and providing credit to farmers at concessional rates. The *Comilla* approach also emerged as an acclaimed model of integrated rural development. These newly established institutions played a vital role in boosting agricultural production through the adoption of the seed-water-fertilizer technology launched by the government during the mid-1960s. But compulsory procurement of rice at below market prices and imposition of excessive taxes on the export of raw jute frustrated growers considerably.

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Agricultural Inputs Policy: The policy of supplying agricultural inputs to farmers at highly subsidized rates continued in Bangladesh during the first few years after independence. The government however, soon adopted a policy of gradually shifting to laissez-faire economy and curtailed the monopoly of BADC. Between 1971 and 1981 the use of fertilizer (kg. or ha.) in the country increased from 11.0 to 30.9; land under the mechanized method of irrigation rose from 3.8% to 11%; and cultivated area covered the high yielding varieties of rice and wheat grew from 2.5% to 22.7%. The price subsidy provided by the government for all fertilizers was 68% in 1973/74 but decreased to 47% in 1979/80 and was fully withdrawn after 1980. But following an acute crisis of urea in 1994/95 (GOB, 1998), the government intervened in open market operations and allowed BADC to distribute fertilizer through select dealers. The government also provided a fixed price support for fertilizers. At the same time, the government policy of lifting restrictions and taxes (fully and partially) from import of irrigation machinery proved very conducive to the expansion of irrigation.

Policy changes also included allowing private sector participation in minor irrigation, withdrawal of restrictions on imports of wheat and rice by private traders, and innovations in open tendering for government procurement of rice. Disbursement of micro-credit, rescheduling of agricultural loans of indebted farmers, remission of land taxes for holdings up to 25 *bighas*, crop diversification programmes and special programmes for disaster-stricken farmers were other major steps adopted to boost agricultural production. These policy measures appear to have had a positive contribution in improving the food situation in Bangladesh (GOB, 2001).

The government of Bangladesh announced a National Agriculture Policy in April 1999. The overall objective of the policy was to attain self-reliance in crop production. It outlined the strategy for development of crop agriculture, the dominant sub-sector that gives three-fourths of the contribution of agriculture to the country's GDP and about one-fourth of its aggregate GDP. At present, paddy covers about 75% of the cultivated area in Bangladesh. Such a single-crop dominated production system is not acceptable from the economic, environmental, or nutritional point of view. The new agriculture policy has, therefore, stressed crop diversification programmes for improving the nutritional status in the country. The National Agriculture Policy also aimed at improving seed distribution programme of BADC and ensuring fulfillment of at least 10% of the total demand by BADC supplies. In the light of the prevailing seed rules, the private sector will continue to retain opportunities for production, import and marketing of seeds side by side with the public sector. The already introduced

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seed buffer stock system will continue to ensure normal supply of seeds of major crops at the time of natural calamities.

According to the National Agricultural Policy, distribution of fertilizers in the private sector will continue, but the public sector will import fertilizers, if necessary, to ensure its supply and availability in time. Use of balanced fertilizers in order to maintain proper soil quality has also been highlighted. Moreover, efforts will be made to increase irrigated area and reduce irrigation cost by promoting appropriate technology. The policy also expressed its commitment to the mechanization of agriculture as well as to providing credit facilities for the purpose. To ensure environment-friendly and sustainable agriculture, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) will be the main policy for controlling pests and diseases. Farmers will be motivated to use mechanical, cultural and biological methods in controlling pests. Use of any chemical pesticide harmful to the environment will be discouraged and eventually banned. To ensure fair prices for both growers and consumers, the marketing system will be improved. Agro-processing and agro-based industries will be encouraged. Efforts will be made to increase the export of agricultural commodities. The Agricultural policy also focused on a two-dimensional agricultural research management programme: one with low cost appropriate technologies for small, marginal, and medium farmers, including women, with a view to resolving their identified problems and the other, utilizing applied research resulting from adoption of advanced research methodology. As envisaged by the policy, the government will take necessary steps to update the agricultural system in the light of the agreement on agriculture under WTO, SAFTA and other international treaties, while, at the same time protecting the national interest.

Livestock Development Policy: Formulated in 1992, the livestock development policy, the first of its kind, is being followed by the government for the development of the livestock sub-sector which contributes 6.5% of GDP (GOB, 1994). It has proposed various steps for the extension of poultry and animal husbandry as a means of self-employment as well as income-generation in rural areas. With a view to ensuring sufficient supply of protein diet, the livestock policy has laid emphasis on attaining self-reliance in the production of milk, meat and egg within the shortest possible time. The strategies that have been underscored in the policy to achieve the objectives are importing high yielding breeds, improving local breeds through cross breeding, encouraging small-scale dairy and poultry farms, imparting training and providing all necessary inputs, including credit. In line with the policy, exporting milk and other dairy products are being discouraged while imports of various inputs and equipment relating to

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poultry and dairy industries are being encouraged to support local entrepreneurs. As indicated in the policy, the Department of Livestock Services, through its field level offices, is implementing various programmes like artificial insemination, vaccination, treatment, feed and fodder production and training. Other governmental agencies, NGOs, people's representatives, and religious leaders have also been engaged in these programmes. The policy has also given priority to the expansion of education and research in related fields.

The National Fisheries Policy: Announced in 1998, this policy stressed scientific management of water bodies that include 1.4 million ponds and a large number of other seasonal submerged areas covering nearly 4.86 million ha and the 225 km. long coastal area of the Bay of Bengal (GOB, 1999). Pointing out the potentiality of fisheries as a source of animal protein as well as in rural employment and poverty alleviation, the comprehensive policy has laid emphasis on the availability of inputs like fish fries, feed and credit. Any private initiative in this regard, working in tandem with government efforts, has been encouraged in the policy. The Department of Fisheries, in cooperation with local governmental organizations and NGOs, will train people in pisciculture. Pisciculture demonstration farms will also be set up throughout the country to motivate them. Open water bodies and paddy fields will be brought under pisciculture during the monsoons. Various acts have been enacted for the development of fish resources including imposing restrictions on fishing with current nets, catching fish fries, and egg bearing fishes, and acquisition of fallow ponds. The National Fisheries Policy has also assured support for the development of an export-oriented shrimp industry and semi-intensive shrimp culture without disturbing the mangrove environment.

National Forest Policy: This was formulated in Bangladesh for the first time in 1979 and amended in 1994 to keep pace with the changed situation. A major objective of the National Forest Policy 1994 is to combat environmental degradation following rapid destruction of forest areas which is, at present, actually 5-6% of the total area of the country only, although official statistics claim it as 12-14% by including denuded and degraded forests. The amended forest policy has stressed an all-out effort to increase forest areas to 20% of the land area of the country by 2015. As the minimum forest areas required for the sound ecology of the country cannot be met by the rehabilitation of denuded and degraded forest lands, the forest policy has attempted to spread plantation programmes throughout the country by launching a massive social movement. In addition to regular afforestation programmes, waves approaches like social forestry and agroforestry will also be undertaken. Emphasis has also been given to

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planting various fast-growing species. Moreover, a green belt is being developed in coastal areas of the country to save people from natural disasters like tidal bores and floods. Plantation is also going on in the fallow lands around public, private and social institutions, roadsides and sides of railway and embankments. According to the policy, social and public organizations and NGOs as well as the participation of the people has to be ensured in these programs. The involvement of the people will be on a profit-sharing basis and these programs will not only grow and protect trees but also help employment and income generation. Priority has also been given on developing state-owned reserved and protected forests for maintaining biodiversity (Wakil, et. al., 2003).

Credit Policy: The practice of farmers receiving credit from *mahajans* existed even in Vedic India (2000 BC to 1150 AD). The *Arthashastra of Kautilya* provides an elaborate account of the ancient money lending system. References to money lending are also found in the writing of Manu. Muslim traders from Baghdad first spread the idea of formal banking in the subcontinent during the Abbaside period. The growing trade of Bengal and the resultant increase in the circulation of money during the *Mughal* period led to the development of banking. In cooperation with the *mahajans*, the *Mughals* established the Hindustan Bank in 1700. This was the first banking institution set up in the subcontinent. The farmers who were at a remove from trade and commerce-oriented banking were left with informal sources like moneylenders, village merchants (*mahajans*) and shopkeepers who charged interest at exorbitant rates and had emerged as the wealthy section of the society.

During the Sultanate and *Mughal* periods, rulers granted lower revenue rates and provided agricultural credit to farmers. Widely known as *Taccavi*, such loans enabled poor peasants to buy seed, bullocks, agricultural tools and implements, and enabled them to boost production by bringing new land under cultivation through reclamation. The Permanent Settlement introduced by Lord Cornwallis in 1793 was also aimed at solving credit problems in agriculture. It was hoped that *Zamindars* who were granted proprietary rights on *Zamindari* lands would be induced to invest capital for agricultural development. The British rulers took initiatives for the development of formal banking in the subcontinent to reduce dependence on non-institutional moneylenders.

The newly developed credit agencies served the trade and commerce of urban areas exclusively. Thus such organized sources of finance did not reach villages, which came under immense cash economy at that time. The 'Cooperative Credit Movement' launched by the British rulers in 1904 covered a small section of

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agricultural borrowers. Merchants-moneylenders used to make double profit from the debtor farmers, who not only had to pay regular interest but also had to sell their produce to the creditors. This type of obligation kept the growers away from competitive markets and deprived them from getting the proper price. In some parts of Bengal, especially in Dhaka, landlords were also involved in the money lending business, posing a serious threat to the stability of agricultural system. Landlords-cum-moneylenders could exert two fold pressures on the debtor-peasants by dictating the terms of credit and at the same time by making them pay rents and debts. Rich peasants were usually found giving paddy loans for both consumption and seeds which the borrower-cultivators had to repay after harvests. Such loans could be repaid in terms of cash or in kind on the basis of the real value of the grain borrowed.

There were a good number of alien moneylenders like *Kabulis* and *Marwaris*, who had taken up this profession with great success. With the emergence of new credit agencies, these expatriate sources of credit gradually disappeared during the 1930s. In many parts of Bengal there were organized moneylenders on *banias* who formed a community by caste. Among the *bania* community, *Sahas* and *Suvarna Vaniks* were the most influential sections who even grabbed the lands of the *raiya*s through money lending. Exploitation by moneylenders climaxed in the Great Depression of 1928, when drastic fall of prices of agricultural produces like rice and jute reduced the income of the farmers as well as the availability of credit. The rich moneylenders availed the opportunity and grabbed the lands of the indebted cultivators. A considerable amount of land was transferred in this way from cultivating farmers to non-cultivating groups, which ultimately affected total agricultural output. The Bengal Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee Report' revealed that the total volume of outstanding debts of the indebted farmers of Bengal in 1929 or 30 was about 1000 million rupees. The Bengal Board of Economic Enquiry found out that 77% families of Bengal in 1934 were indebted. The indebted peasants started launching movements in many places. Communist leaders often played leading roles in these demonstrations. As interest and usury were strictly prohibited in Islam, sometimes these movements turned into communal conflicts. There were clashes in many places between Muslims and *mahajans* who were mostly Hindu by religion, though some Muslims also used to practice lending under the *dadni* system (Rushdi, 1989).

Various surveys conducted following 'The Great Depression' advocated a number of measures to free cultivators from the vicious cycle of indebtedness. Meanwhile, the Government of India Act of 1935 extended the franchise to farmers, which added a new dimension to the prevailing political environment in Bengal. The

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political parties focused on the mounting problem of indebtedness and used their campaigns for winning popular votes. Under political pressure, the Legislative Council enacted the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act in 1935 that prescribed establishment of Debt Settlement Boards in every union consisting of local leaders. But these boards were not able to work properly because most of the debts were covered by usufructuary mortgage.

The government amended the Bengal Tenancy Act in 1938 for better functioning of the Debt Settlement Boards and declared all mortgages as void. According to the amended Act, the owner would get his land back after 15 years as most of the net debt (principal) as well as the interest would be cleared off. The Bengal Money lending Act of 1933 was also amended in 1940 to regulate the rates of interest charged by moneylenders. Though operations of the Settlement Boards had temporarily eased the stifled situation, the amended act ultimately blocked agricultural production due to lack of credit since moneylenders suspicious of recovery were not ready to continue their lending business. Legislative measures were imposed without opening up any alternative channel of finance to meet the demand of the cultivators. As the creditors were not interested in mortgage, the farmers had to sell their land to manage cash money. Frequent transfer of lands resulted in the fragmentation and subdivision of lands and ultimately landlessness. The activities of the Debt Settlement Boards were finally winded up in 1945.

Between 1947 and 1971, a network of institutional banking developed in East Pakistan with 36 scheduled banks, many of which provided agricultural credit facilities. A specialized bank on agricultural credit called The Pakistan Agricultural Development Bank was established in 1961. Some other local participatory rural credit mechanisms including the Comilla Cooperative Model (1959) emerged during this period and played a pioneering role in the distribution of agricultural credit on easy terms. After independence, the government attempted to reinforce the national economy by mobilizing more resources as agricultural credit to meet the increasing need of farmers. More branches of nationalized banks and agencies were set up in rural areas. Thus specialized banks like the Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB), Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (RAKUB), Bangladesh Cooperative Bank, four commercial banks (the Sonali Bank, Janata Bank, Agrani Bank and Rupali Bank), and the Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) were used to meet the needs of farmers. These banks and the BRDB had disbursed about Tk. 30.06 billion and 28.51 billion throughout the country in fiscal year 1998/1999 and 1999/2000 respectively.

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Branches of BKB and RAKUB that deal with more than 60% of the government allocated agricultural credit are now being set up in every union of the country. Short, mid and long-term credit are being granted to the farmers to help them in various activities such as growing seasonal crops, buying bullock or agricultural machinery, or establishing poultry or dairy farms. Some special programs are also being undertaken for landless and marginal farmers and rural women. In the year 1999/2000, a total of Tk. 1.23 billion was disbursed as collateral free micro credit to finance 17 such special programs. All the programs aim at alleviating poverty, and cover 25% of the total agricultural credit distributed by the government, while crop production claims 60%. The Rate of interest for loans under these programs ranges from 10 to 15%.

Though a good portion of the agricultural loan earmarked by the government remains undistributed every year (Tk. 2.64 billion and 4.79 billion in 1998/99 and 1999/2000, respectively), many needy farmers are not able to avail of loans because of clumsy procedures and the collateral problem. Moreover, damage of crops due to natural calamities and irresponsible use of credit sometimes make debtor peasants bankrupt. As a result the non-repayment of agricultural credit (Tk. 65.25 billion on 30 June 2000) has emerged as a great national problem.

Established in 1983, Grameen Bank began a non-conventional micro-credit programme to provide collateral-free loans to the impoverished. The borrowers are required to join the bank in self-formed groups of five. If a member fails to repay a loan, all members risk having their line of credit suspended or reduced. Group members provide one another with mutual assistance and advice to ensure individual repayment. Although, Grameen Bank charges a rate of interest higher than other banks, it has emerged as a successful model of rural development, incorporating agriculture and other income generating activities and subsidizing the usual problem of loan defaults. Under the micro-credit programs of the Grameen Bank its clients, mostly women, are getting involved in small businesses like rearing poultry or dairy cattle, pisciculture, horticulture or cottage industries, and are becoming self-reliant. Many other NGOs have also undertaken similar microcredit programme. Grameen Bank and three prominent NGOs, BRAC, ASA, and PROSHIKA had distributed Tk. 39.15 billion in 1999/2000 and recovered an outstanding loan of Tk. 39.43 billion during the same year. Loans outstanding on the balance of these organizations totaled Tk. 2.5 billion in June 2000 (GOB, 2004).

Private Banks, both local and foreign, are also now granting agricultural credit. Total loans disbursed by local private banks during 1994/95 were Tk. 518.70

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million. The amount rose to 2.5 billion in 1999/2000. The figures on agricultural loan provided by foreign banks were Tk. 441.20 million in 1998/99 and Tk. 3.71 billion in 1999/2000. In addition, professional cooperative associations granted loan to members out of their own savings. These cooperatives are Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank, Union Multipurpose Co-operative Societies, Fishermen Co-operative Societies, Sugarcane Growers Co-operative Societies, Agricultural Co-operative Societies (Dept.), Agricultural Co-operative Societies (BRDB), Milk Co-operative Societies, Landless Farmer Co-operative Societies, *Khamar* (Farm) Co-operative Societies, Oil Producer Co-operative Societies, *Pan* (Betel leaf) Cultivator Co-operative Societies, and Groundnut Co-operative Societies. The loans disbursed by these cooperatives to their 5.22 million members amounted to about Tk. 9.8 billion in 1996/97. Formulated in 1999, the National Agricultural Policy has attached due emphasis to the availability of institutional agricultural credit in time, to activating national, district, upazila and union level committees, and to simplifying the credit disbursement system. Banks and financial institutions have been asked to maintain a balance between simplification strategy and credit recovery and to ensure recovery of the disbursed credit.

Marketing Policies

Farming in Bangladesh is gradually being commercialized with the application of modern inputs, like seeds, HYV seeds, chemical fertilizers, irrigation water etc. With increasing production per unit of land. Modern varieties involve the use of large proportion of purchased inputs where as traditional agriculture uses inputs of cowing and other organic matter available within the farm. Modernization of agriculture thus involves higher investment as well as more risks, namely physical loss through natural calamities and price risk. In modernizing subsistence, agriculture markets and marketing policies play the most crucial role. Inadequate market facilities, imperfect market structures, inefficient marketing systems and inappropriate marketing policies will naturally hinder the process of modernization and the acceleration of growth. A successful production system or program requires apart from HYV seeds and improved production technologies, a satisfactory delivery system of inputs and positive and effective pricing and marketing policies for the output. Crop marketing pattern are determined by a number of factors that include the extent of commercialization of agriculture. Farm size cropping pattern nature of the crops sustaining power of group action by farmers asses of land and access to credit, availability of transportation, warehousing and processing facilities market practices and government pricing and marketing policies. The small size of farmer and lack of sustaining power and group actions by farmers may result in large sales immediately by small farmers.

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Small individual marketed quantities with unsatisfactory transportation system necessitate collection of the crops by small traders from widely dispersed areas. Availability of warehousing and processing facilities provide the farmers with alternative choices.

Unregulated market practices may obligate the farmers to sell their crops from the farms at a lower price. Government policy may promote or restrict the choice of the farmers in selling their crops; price controls by government may discourage production and storage by growers and traders. Very small farmers and dependency of overwhelming majority of the people on agriculture for their livelihood dominated Bangladesh agriculture. According to 1996 Bangladesh Agricultural Census there are 11,01,98,242 farms households with an average size of 2.31 acres (BSS, 1996). Small farms (0.05 to 2.59 acres); constituting over 79.87% of total households. The limited cultivated land is cropped once, twice or thrice in a year and the poor farmers try to grow as many crops as possible to maximize their income. All types of farmers sell part of their crop and may buy back the same crops (food-grains) in the off-season at a much higher price for consumption and seed. Naturally the marketing system of Bangladesh has to be atomistic, fragmented and widely dispersed all over the country, in order to serve over near about 10 millions small farm households.

Policy of the Government

The general and basic agricultural marketing policy of the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) has been seeking to promote the free play of the market forces in determining the prices, remove controls and regulations, and encourage large participation of the private sector and provide reasonable facilities for its proper performance. Side by side with the private sectors, government operated public sector agencies and policies work with the following objectives (GOB, 2005):

- i) *Operating price support measure to ensure fair returns to the farmers to sustain the tempo increased production;*
- ii) *Maintaining a security food reserve and buffer stock of food-grains or fertilizers with the object of stabilizing prices;*
- iii) *Operating the public sector food distribution system (PFDS) to maintain prices within the reach of the common man;*

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- iv) *Operating relief measures for generation of income and alleviation of poverty; and*
- v) *Providing market infrastructures like market transportation, communication, storage and processing facilities.*

Improving bargaining power of the growers through provision of credit, promotion of cooperatives, provision of market information, regulation of malpractices, etc and adopting appropriate tariff and fiscal measures to ensure markets for the local crops and promote the export of surplus crops. Operation of the market forces in this subject to government interventions through the above policies and programs. In Bangladesh several government departments, and agencies are engaged in some kind of marketing functions in respect of agricultural inputs and output including forest, fisheries and livestock products.

Price Policy: The determination of agrarian performance, of the growth of output and the distribution of the resulting increases in income, are many. The availability of technology, the resource base, physical infrastructure, the agrarian structure, and the formal and informal institutional matrix, the macro policy environment- all plays a role. It would be highly contingent for the policy maker if one could identify particular factors as being the critical one; so that all efforts could be aimed at overcoming one clearly defined dominant constraint. Adherents of such single factor approaches are not it short supplies. Unfortunately reality is more complex, and it is rarely possible to point to just one area of intervention where action will be sufficient to unblock the process of agricultural development. One of these determinants of performance is obviously the price regime the confrontations of the farmer. Evidence from around the world shows the farmers do respond positively to price incentives, particularly once commercialization had made some progress. Ten million farmers constitute the point of origin of the domestic food grain market in Bangladesh. Understandably, it is the better off farmers, who have enough land to grow a surplus over their subsistence needs, who contribute the lion's share of the marketed surplus. Barely subsistence or deficit farmers may also be forced to sell at harvest times but will usually diversify into other crops if that is feasible and gives higher returns.

From farmers, the produce reaches the consumer through private trading networks, consisting of a variety of petty traders, wholesalers and retailers. The market at least at the growers' level is reported to be reasonably competitive with low trade margins over cost of transports processing and storage. Evidence presented later on the behavior of marketing margins raises some questions about

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their however, government price policy consents of interventions in this market, as buyer and seller as well as non-market interventions through the public food distribution system. However, the government also has an alternative source of supplies to manipulate food imports. The timing of imports and their release through market or non-market channels are an important component of price policy. Traditionally, agricultural price policy has been seem as one way of transferring resources from agriculture to industry in order to accelerate economic development. Agricultural price policy thus has to accomplish an exceedingly delicate job of reconciling the interests of producers and consumers, agriculture and industry. In recent years the consensus of opinion appears to have shifted from the need to “squeeze” agriculture to the opposite one of providing farmers with adequate incentives.

Broadly two aspects of price policy may be distinguished relating respectively to long-term trends and seasonal fluctuations. Sometimes a distinction is made between ‘inter year’ and ‘intra-year’ fluctuation. Until fairly recently agricultural price policy in Bangladesh, including Pakistan period has been consumer oriented rather than production oriented, i.e. its function was to keep prices low to consumers rather than offer incentives to growers. Domestic procurement was generally at less than market prices, “cordonning” (i.e. preventing free movement of rice between regions) was widely resorted to though seldom very successful in practice, and the supplies procured together with imports, were distributed to urban consumers at highly subsidized prices. Providing incentive was perhaps more important in the case of jute⁴ pricing. Fertilizer and irrigation pricing policies were major exceptions in that they were explicitly and successfully, production oriented, but the choice of input subsidies rather than output price support was undoubtedly at least partly motivated by their perceived role in helping keep food price low. In more recent years, there have been important changes in the government’s perception of the role of price policy and in the policies themselves. This has come about, for good or for bad, largely as a result of donor pressure. The third year plan stressed the importance of “an articulated food policy with its focus on price support for expansion of food production and market stabilization” (GOB, 1973: 27). The following main changes have occurred in the practice of pricing policy: procurement prices are supposed to be “incentive price” the statutory ration system has been significantly c contracted, with smaller quotas and prices much closer to market prices; open market sales are being resorted to in order to curb price rises in urban markets; subsidies on fertilizer have been eliminated and those on irrigation equipment reduced; and a much larger share of fertilizer trade has been handed over to the private sector. Since the notion of an ‘incentive price’ rescuer in most discussions of agricultural price policy in Bangladesh, a few words about it are in order. The government sets

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a uniform countrywide procurement price for a particular crop season (*Aman* and *Boro*), based on average cost of production plus a 15% markup.

5.7 Agricultural Credit

Agricultural credit as an input has a special significance since more than fifty % labour force are engaged in agriculture sector and agriculture still remains at the subsistence level in Bangladesh. The Government has waived interest on classified agricultural loan up to Tk. 5000 and has also withdrawn all certificate cases against concerned loaners. As a result, 15 *lakh* farmers have been relieved of interest charges amounting to about Tk. 5 core in 2003-04 (GOB, 2004). This is going to make far-reaching contribution towards augmenting agricultural production. The payment period of principal amount is extended from 30 March 2005, as fixed earlier, to 30 March 2006. Disbursement of agricultural credit rose from Tk. 841.85 core in 1992-93 to Tk. 4048.41 core in 2003-04. During FY 2004-05, disbursement stood at Tk. 4956.78 core up to June 2005 against the target of Tk. 5537.91 core, which is 89.50% of the target. The overall situation relating to agricultural credit during FY 1992-93 to 2004-05 is presented in the following table 5.18.

Table 5.18: Agricultural Credit Disbursement, Recovery and Outstanding Balance (In Crore Tk.)

Financial Year	Target	Disbursement	Recovery	Balance
1992-93	1474.41	841.85	869.23	5692.84
1993-94	1643.08	1100.79	979.12	6222.00
1994-95	2161.72	1605.44	1124.11	7045.22
1995-96	2434.27	1635.81	1340.02	7769.07
1996-97	2394.22	1672.43	1646.38	8256.00
1997-98	2525.83	1814.53	1779.29	8515.04
1998-99	3270.01	3245.36	2039.65	9702.51
1999-00	3331.00	2851.29	2996.29	10648.90
2000-01	3265.92	3019.67	2877.87	11137.26
2001-02	3326.64	2954.91	3250.27	11355.58
2002-03	3560.53	3278.37	3516.31	11913.35
2003-04	4348.94	4048.41	3135.32	12705.95
2004-05	5537.91	4956.78	3171.15	14408.94

Source: GOB, Bangladesh Economic Review, 2005: 80.

5.8 Agricultural Marketing

The mechanism to reach agricultural products, inputs and services to target groups, including producers, consumers and intermediaries. A huge number of people are engaged in the marketing of agricultural products like rice, jute, vegetables, fruits, cattle, milk, poultry, eggs and fish. The history of agricultural marketing is as old as agriculture. Exchange of commodities had been prevalent in Bengal's agrarian society but the reinforcement of cash economy during British rule made agricultural marketing easier and eliminated many of the problems of conversion. As peasants are very responsive to the fluctuations of market prices of crops, the cropping patterns of an area depend to a great extent on the marketing of crops. From time immemorial, farmers were found shifting their priorities regarding selection of crops and in assessing their comparative profitability. Cotton was a promising crop of Bengal during the seventeenth and eighteenth century because Bengal at that time was one of the world's major exporters of textiles. But cotton started losing its market with a decline in textile exports since the early nineteenth century and cotton production came down to a very low level towards the mid-nineteenth century.

Indigo was another product to emerge with a significant potential at one point but failed to hold the market for long. Cultivation of indigo declined since the 1850s, when, the native crop jute began capturing market to become a major cash crop of Bengal. Jute is still a major crop of Bangladesh involving large number of people in its marketing and manufacturing, but it is not as profitable produce now as it was in the past. The British rulers, in view of its strained relation with China, encouraged the cultivation of two import substitution crops, tea and opium during the first half of nineteenth century. Though tea has continued to be profitable since then, opium was replaced by profitable alternatives like oilseeds, cereals and potato just after the *Sipahi Bidroho* (1857). Sugarcane was a profitable crop for a long time but was threatened by the rapid growth of the sugar industry in Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century.

As most farm families in Bangladesh own very limited land, they grow just enough crops to meet their own needs. About 53% households of the country having 0.05-2.49 acres of land produce at the subsistence level. Major contributors in the supply of agricultural produce in the market are the middle (2.5-7.49 acres) and large (7.50 acres and above) farmers, who are only 11.7% and 1.7% of the farming community respectively. The institutional network to deal with marketing of even major commodities such as rice, jute, cotton, sugarcane and tea is not adequate in the country. The Department of Food, Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation, sugar

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mills and the Cotton Board maintain their own purchase centres. But most agricultural produces reach consumers through various types of middlemen. The Department of Agricultural Marketing, a government agency, has the responsibility of ensuring fair prices of agricultural commodities for both buyers and consumers. The department has a total manpower of 375 and advises the government in this regard. The agricultural produces exported from Bangladesh include PRAWNS and shrimps, tea, raw jute, vegetables, and spices. The country received \$133 million from exports of these items during 1998/99. Agriculture based manufactured commodities like jute goods, raw hides and skins, leather and leather manufacture, and frozen foods also constitute a good portion of the country's export trade.

In its agricultural policy announced in 1999, the government of Bangladesh came up with various strategies for the development of agricultural marketing. Emphasis was laid on establishing a proper marketing network to facilitate timely marketing of farm produce. The policy also identified certain steps to reduce the control of middlemen and to ensure fair prices of crops for both growers and consumers. The agricultural policy, first of its kind in the country, had pleaded for the development of agricultural industries that was neglected during the periods under British and Pakistan rule.

To the British, Bengal was just a supplier of raw materials as well as a readymade market for their manufactured goods. The commercial value of an agricultural commodity at one time, therefore, varied depending on its usefulness to the British manufacturers. The Pakistani rulers took initiative for the agriculture based industrialization but those industries were set up to serve the interest of urban groups, and not farmers. At that time, compulsory procurement of rice at below market prices and imposition of excessive taxes on the export of jute was bitterly criticized. The East Pakistan Agricultural Development Corporation (now Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation or BADC), established during the 1960s, played a pioneering role in the distribution of agricultural inputs. Seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and agricultural machinery procured under government control were distributed to district and *thana* level licensed dealers who delivered these items to the farmers at a government-determined price while their income was established as a pre-fixed commission. These policies of marketing of agricultural produces as well as inputs were changed drastically after the independence. During the last three decades, the government winded up control and shifted to an open market economy and encouraged private initiatives in the procurement and distribution of agricultural inputs and food grains. Export led industries are now being favored to compete in the international market. To

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support local entrepreneurs, the government is encouraging imports of various inputs and equipment relating to poultry and dairy industries, but not milk and other dairy products (Wakil, et. al., 2003).

Marketing System of Productive Crops in Rural Village: The rural people sell their surplus crops and procure their necessity of life and agricultural inputs such as, chemical fertilizer; pesticides and seeds in the rural primary markets locally call 'haat'. Growers' local traders and small retailers operate these markets. The markets generally sit twice a week and have few permanent structures.

Rural Assembly Markets: In the rural assembly market traders come from outside to procure the local surplus. Because of the availability of a large number of internal traders, the commercial or the big growers bring their crops to these markets for sale. Permanent structures as well as processor of agricultural produce, such as rice-husking mill owners, commission agents, stockiest and wholesalers, and banking and communication facilities are available in these markets. These markets too, usually operate twice a week, the bigger ones may, however, operate on all days.

The Secondary Markets: The secondary markets are operated entirely by the traders. These are big market of national importance, where the commission agents, stockiest, wholesalers, processors and exporters operate. These are connected by national roads or highways or all weather, waterways they have permanent structures and sit on all the days of the week. Terminal markets big processing centers receive their surplus from these markets.

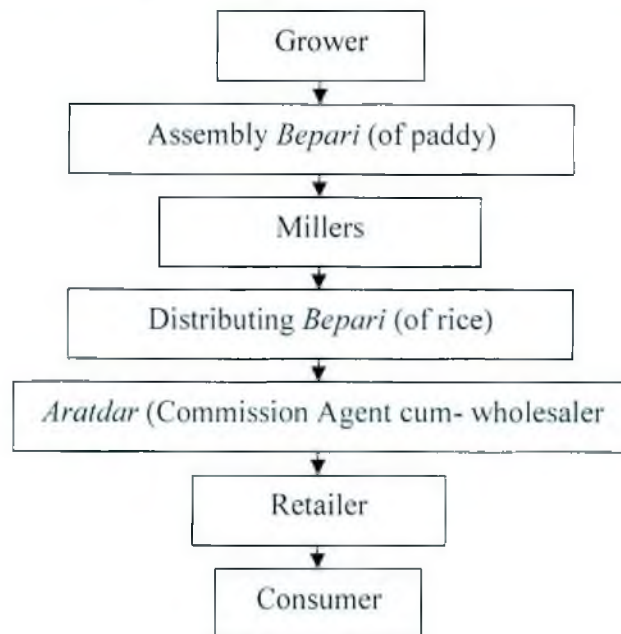
Urban Wholesale Markets: Urban wholesale markets for food items are mostly operated by the commissioned agents, who arrange the sale of crops brought by distributing traders. The retailers visit the markets daily or bi-weekly or weekly to procure their supplies for sale to the consumers.

The Terminal Markets: The terminal markets for export crops are operated by the wholesalers, commission agents, processors and shippers. Most of the rural markets are very old, while there has been considerable increase in the supply and demand of the crops or products; there has not been a corresponding expansion and improvements of markets facilities. The cultivators bring their products from their home or the nearest markets to the local or up country traders who transport the same to the assembly markets from where after overnight or short- period storage, these crops are generally brought into the market. The crops may pass through processing, for example the milling of rice or the baling of jute. Food

crops are brought to urban wholesale markets by the traders and sold to retailers through the *aratdar* (commission agents). Marketing systems of the major crop in Bangladesh, viz. rice is discussed below in some detail.

Paddy or Rice: Innumerable growers all over the country produce rice. Almost all growers with an area of 0.5 acre and more grow at least one rice crop a year. The average yield per holding would be 2 tons of rice or 3 tons of paddy. The growers generally sell the marketable surplus after retaining the quantity required for consumption till the next harvest and the amount needed as seed. But small and deficit grower also sell a portion of their crops to meet the immediate need for cash even though they do not pass any surplus and buy back grains later in the season at a higher price. In Bangladesh, the markets of rice are divided into two sub-sectors- Public and Private. The public sector holds the quantity procured locally under the price support programme. The dominant marketing channel of paddy or rice in the private sector (UNDP, 1989) is shown in the chart 12 below.

Chart 12: Marketing Channel of Paddy or Rice in Bangladesh



The growers sell their paddy to *kutials*, *farias*, *beparis*, rural rice mills or government procurement centers. They sell mostly in the nearest rural primary or assembly markets. The growers, on an average, contracted four or five different buyers before marketing a sale. There is no system of grading, growers, however, sell in lots of different varieties.

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Kutials (professional koshers), who are may be known by different names in different areas, buy from growers, parboils and mill the paddy and sell the resultant rice to the local consumers as well as to up-country *beparis*.

Assembly traders, locally known as *farias* and *beparis* are itinerant traders operating in the rural primary and assembly markets. They buy from the farmers, homes or rural markets and sell to millers or upcountry *beparis* and also to government procurement centers. Rice mills, which are found across the country, may operate as custom millers as they may provide parboiling, drying, and milling and storage facilities. They usually buy paddy at the mill premises or from assembly markets through their employees or agents and operate as rice wholesalers. They sell the rice from the mills to local or distant *arotdars* or wholesalers. They also parboil and mill the paddy to government and private traders for a fixed *charge*.

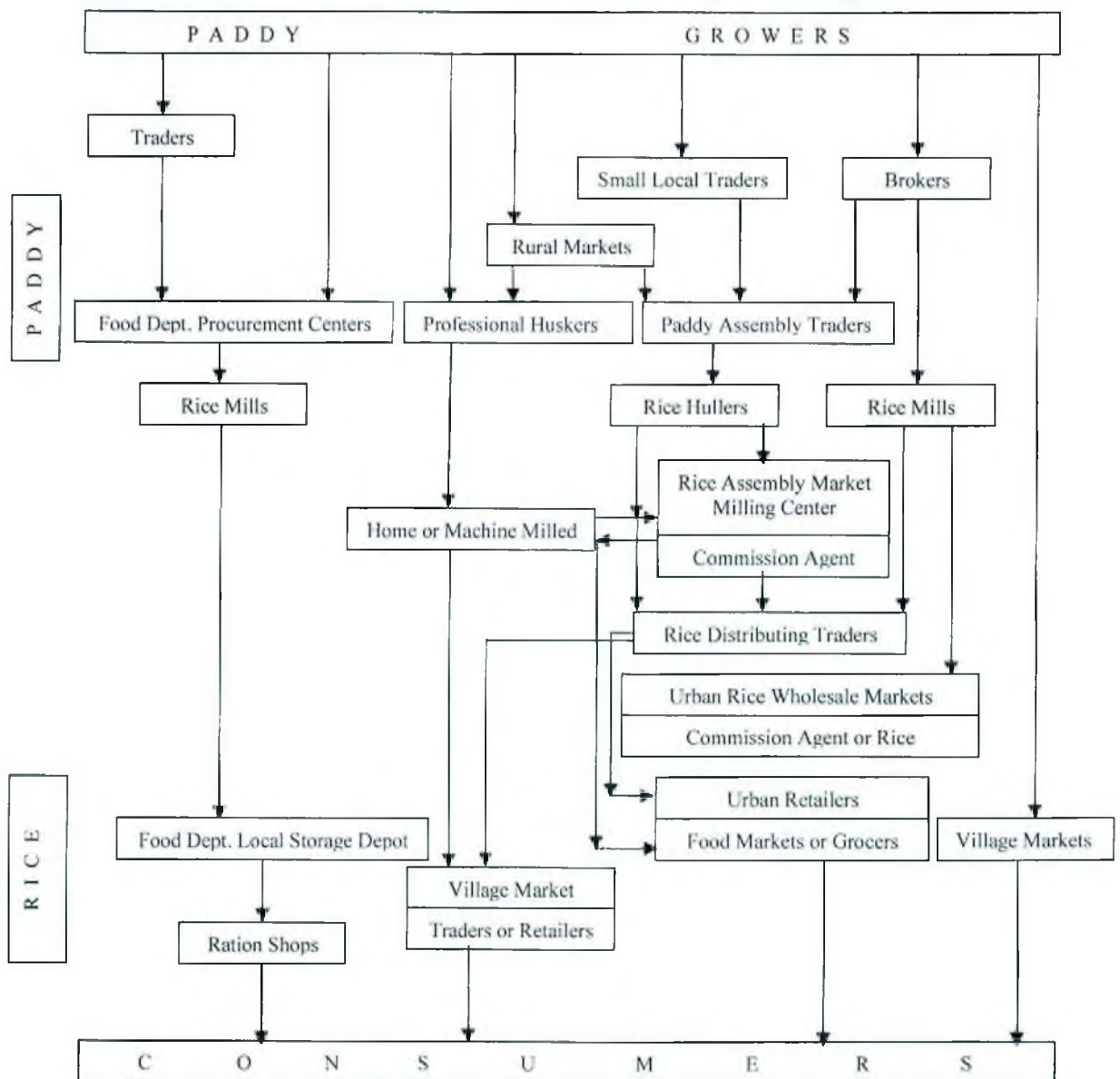
Arotdars (commission agents) or *arotdars-cum-wholesalers* are generally functional middlemen who operate in big assembling, distributing and consuming markets. They have their own premises in the market and act as agents of both buyers and sellers and provide temporary storage for the producer. They sell the produce to local retailers and to wholesalers of distant markets, receiving a commission of their services to the buyers and sellers. Sometimes, they also operate as wholesalers, buying rice from millers and selling to retailers or distributing traders. Some of them also own rice mills and sell their own rice in their premises. They wield considerable market power and leverage because of their strong financial position obtained through advances to *baparies* and credit sales to retailers. Retailers constitute the last link in the marketing channel. They are small traders having business premises in the retail markets. They buy rice from *arotdar-cum-wholesalers* or wholesalers either for cash or on credit, and usually keep stocks for a week or so in their shops. Some may occasionally procure rice from milling centers or-distributing markets.

In the public sector, the Food Department (FD) operates the PFDs purchase of paddy or rice or wheat of Fair Average Quality (FAQ) in the 800 permanent and temporary procurement centers set up all over the country. Procurement staffs buy from any party though, as a policy, they are supposed to give preference to genuine growers. Procurement through agents (appointed government dealers) generated collusion between the procurement staff and AGDs resulting in lower price to growers, as a result of which the system was abandoned. Paddy is milled in the private rice mills before distribution. Food grains are stored in the local and central depots and distributed through different channels to different clients. Total storage facilities with the FD are estimated at about 2 million tons spread to

upazila level, out of which effective capacity for food grains is estimated at 1.3 million tons.

Distribution of government food grains to consumers is effected not through Food Department retail establishments but through appointed ration shops as retail outlets, which are owned, financed and operated by the private sector businessmen. They sell the rationed articles to the authorized consumers at the price fixed by the government which is generally lower than the market rate and receive margins at the prescribed rate. The marketing channels of major crops (UNDP, 1989: 118) are shown in the chart 13 below.

Chart 13: Marketing Channels of Major Crops in Bangladesh



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5.9 Agricultural Machinery: Traditional and Modern

Machinery for Land Preparation: It includes all sorts of hand tools, equipment and accessories that are used in agricultural farms for land preparation, at the initial stages of crop production. Use of machinery depends on the type of soil and soil conditions, sources of power, socio-economic conditions of farmers etc. A single crop often needs different kinds of machinery at different stages of its growth. Land preparation is the first and most important stage in the crop production process. In Bangladesh several kinds of traditional, improved, and imported machineries are used for this purpose (Wakil et. al., 2003).

Traditional

Spade (Kodal): This is the most ancient agricultural implement abundantly available in Bangladesh. It has two parts a steel blade for cutting soil, and a wooden handle for operation. There are different sizes and shapes of spades available in different regions of Bangladesh. Spades are generally made by village blacksmiths and in small workshops in towns. Farmers use spade for seedbed preparation, weeding, cutting and removing soil, making dikes, and other household activities.

Indigenous Country Plough (Langal): A very old implement used by the farmers for many centuries for land preparation. There are several local names, such as *Nankol*, *Nahal*, *Akkoing*, *Bangla langal*, *Shiami langal*, etc. It is perhaps the most widely used implement in Bangladesh. The plough bottom and the handle is made from a single piece of wood. However, in some regions the bottom and handle are made separately and then fixed together. The plough bottom may be wider or narrower depending upon the soil condition and size of bullock.

Ladder (Moi): The ladder, also locally named as *chongha*, *chongham*, *hapta*, *septa*, *dolon*, *dolna*, *batta*, *keyai*, *basoi*, etc. is used to level the ploughed land and also to break soil clods after cultivation. Often it is used to cover crop seeds after broadcasting.

Mallet (Mugur): The main purpose of *mugur* is to break the large soil clods when breaking of clods by laddering is not satisfactory. It is also known as *uja*, *kurish*, *shappaya*, etc. It is generally made of bamboo or wood (Ibid, 2003).

Modern

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Power Tiller: An engine-operated soil tilling unit. During the sixties power tillers were first imported from Japan on a limited scale. Since the late eighties, however power tillers have been gaining popularity in Bangladesh due to the acute shortage of animal power in cultivation.

Hydrotiller: It consists of a rotary tilling unit, a pontoon and an engine. The machine is suitable for cultivating marshy land where a power tiller cannot be operated. It can cultivate about 1 ha of land or day.

Tractor: A self propelled machine which is used for cultivation, carrying loads, hulling, etc.

Weeder: Four categories of weeders are generally used in Bangladesh and these are: (i) *Nirani*, (ii) *Achra* (Rake), (iii) Hand hoe, and (iv) Rotary weeder. Since ancient times *nirani* has been in use to control weeds. It has several local names, such as *Seni kachi*, *niri kachi*, *senipachoon*, *pashri*, *kurmi*, *kburpi*, *pacboon*, *dabuki*, *pushri*, *punja*, *tengi*, *tengari*, *douti*, *tanakodal*, etc. A man can operate a *nirani* with his hand in dry land. Rake or *Achra* is used in controlling, thinning and loosening of soil crust of land having seedlings of about 1-2 weeks. It is also known as *bidha*, *bindha*, *nangala*, *nangula*, *batnangula* etc. It can be used in row crop cultivation.

Pest Control Devices: (i) *Pichkary*: An indigenous implement generally used for applying insecticides manually. It is made of bamboo. Farmers can easily make a *pichkary*. (ii) *Sprayer*- Several types of sprayers are used in Bangladesh, the Knapsack type being the most common. A sprayer consists of a liquid tank, a pressure chamber, and a nozzle. (iii) *Rat trap (Idurer fand)*- There are several types and categories of rat traps in Bangladesh (Wakil, et. al., 2003).

Irrigation Machinery

i) **Traditional water lift (i) Counter poise-bucket lift (*Duf*):** This device consists of a long bamboo pole pivoted as a lever on two posts. It is locally known as *tara*, *duf*, *kerka*, etc. A weight, usually a large stone, is fixed to the shorter end of the pole. This weight serves as a counterpoise to a bucket suspended by a rope or a rod attached to the long arm of the lever. A man pulls down the rope or rod until the bucket is immersed in the water of a dug well. The bucket is then drawn up by the counter weight. Dug wells are usually made by hand tools such as spades, shovels etc by manual labourers following a traditional method. Centrifugal pumps are also employed to lift water from these types of wells.

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(ii) **Swing basket (*Seuti*):** The swing basket is one of the ancient water lifts. It has several local names, such as *seuti*, *beot*, *sechni*, *ucha*, *bocho*, *uchi*, *shayot*, *uri*, *dobki*, *beith*, *bichuni*, *ichuni*, *lui*, *duri*, *jhajra*, *dobka* etc. The basket is raised and water thus lifted is discharged into the field. It is generally used for lifting water from surface water sources.

(iii) **Doon:** A manually operated boat shaped trough closed at one end and open at the other. Other local names are *donga*, *kunda*, *kon*, *junt*, etc. Water is lifted by the counter weight on the lever. It is mainly used for lifting water from surface water sources (Ibid).

Modern pumps

(i) **Power Pump:** In Bangladesh various kinds of power operated pumps are currently being used. Among them the one used for pumping water from surface water sources (pond, river, *beel*, etc.) is known as the low lift pump (L.P).

(ii) **Shallow Tubewell:** The other form of power pump in use is the shallow tubewell; it consists of a pipe made of steel or PVC and a well point forced into the ground by driving the pipe with some suitable means.

(iii) **Deep Tubewell:** These are constructed like shallow tubewells but their depth is greater than that of shallow tubewells. The depth of deep tubewells depends on the hydro-geological characteristics of a particular formation. They are generally 45-100 meters in depth.

Traditional Harvesting: Sickle is the only implement used to harvest both rice and wheat crops. It has been used throughout the ages in Bangladesh. It is variously known as *kachi*, *kanchi*, *chari*, *chakrey*, *kaicha*, etc. It has two parts: (i) a slightly curved serrated blade made of mild steel, and (ii) a handle made of wood.

Dao is another tool made of steel used for various jobs such as cutting of jute, bamboo, sugarcane, etc, and for cleaning bushes. It is also locally known as *haisa*, *shole*, *bagi*, *seni-dao*, *jat*, etc.

Modern Harvesting: A reaper or mower is a power-operated harvesting machine. These are generally used to cut grass in large government farms. However, a mower only cut and lays down the crop in rows in the field. Afterwards, the mowed crop is collected manually and carried to the threshing floor.

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Traditional Threshing, *Molon*: It is not a machine, but a widely used method of separating grains from the stalk of a plant in rural Bangladesh. Here, two to four cows or bullocks are tied together and made to walk over the harvested crop in a circular path (Wakil, et. al., 2003).

Modern Threshing

i) Pedal Threshers: The threshing drum is attached to a shaft with a bush and a bearing. The operator stands behind the thresher and holds the bundle of paddy over the threshing drum so that panicles remain on the threshing drum. While rotating the operator makes the threshing drum to rotate clockwise using the pedal. The spikes separate the grain from the rice plants.

(ii) Power Thresher: Both threshing and winnowing action is accomplished through a power operated thresher consisting of a metal frame, a threshing drum, a blower assembly and a cleaning assembly.

Traditional Drying: In Bangladesh crop drying is generally accomplished through the traditional sun drying method in home yards or open fields.

Traditional Winnowing

(i) *Kula*: It is the most common winnowing implement traditionally used in rural Bangladesh. It is generally made from woven bamboo splits. *Chalon* is generally made from woven bamboo splits like a *kula* but it is circular in structure and its platform is perforated. Hand operated winnower is becoming popular among farmers. A man can clean 300-400 kg of paddy per hour. It can be operated even in bad weather conditions. A hand-operated winnowing machine consists of a hopper, a blower, a frame, and an outlet. A power winnower consists of a power source, an oscillating screen, and a blower. The power source may be an engine, or a motor. It is mainly used in farms, rice mills, and seed industries.

ii) *Parboiling*: In commercial rice mills, rice parboiling includes both soaking and steaming. The following structures or machineries are used.

iii) *Doloin*: Another manually operated centrifugal husking device. Grains are poured in the hopper and become dehusked by the frictional discs. *Doloin* is generally found in Chitragong Hilly areas.

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Modern Milling: (i) Small Engleberg hullers- About 85% hullers are of this type and 70-75% of the total paddy in Bangladesh are processed by this milling system. The Engleberg huller consists of a cylindrical rotor fitted in housing. The bottom half of the housing is fitted with a slotted sheet called sieve. The rotor is driven by a motor or an engine with a suitable drive arrangement. (ii) Large Engleberg rice mills employ a slightly improved system for rice processing. These rice mills have neither a paddy cleaner nor a rice grader. (iii) Mini automatic rice mill has the salient features of a modern rice mill and consists of a pair of rubber rollers for shelling (dehusking), a husk aspirator for separating the husk, a paddy separator to separate paddy during shelling operation, and a polisher to polish the brown rice (iv) Large automatic rice mills- use modern techniques for rice processing. The paddy is pre-cleaned before soaking at high temperature and parboiled under pressure by steaming. Then paddy is dried in a dryer and husked by rubber roll sheller, or disc hullers. The unhusked paddy is separated from the brown rice by a paddy separator and is recycled back to the huller disc (Wakil et. al., 2003).

Storage Structure

Gola: It is a large rectangular or cylindrical container constructed over a bamboo platform. Generally, rich farmers construct *golas* to store their paddy. It is also locally known as *varar*, *zabar*, *mora*, *motka*, *auri*, etc.

Matka: It is a large earthen pot looks like a large pitcher made of clay. In one such container farmers can store 40-50 kg of paddy.

Gunny Bag or Chhala: It is made from woven jute is widely used for transportation, marketing and storage of grains everywhere in Bangladesh. Even in government cold storages, grains are stored in gunny bags for short and long term storage.

Mud Bin or Kuthi: It is also made of mud and is generally larger than *matka*. It may be rectangular or cylindrical in shape. Farmers can store about 100-500 kg of paddy in it.

Godown: It is mainly a brick built-house containing enough ventilation and moisture reducing devices. The capacity of a *godown* varies from 500-1000 m tons of grains. There are about 750 *godowns* to preserve nearly 0.6 million m tons of food grain in Bangladesh.

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Silo: It is a modern storage structure used generally government procurement institutions. Silos are used mainly for bulk storage of imported grains. These are equipped with modern emptying and filling devices (Ibid, 2003).

Bahuk: It is mainly made of bamboo split and is specially made to carry goods on the shoulder in rural areas where road communication is poor. The device is usually 1.5-2.0 metre in length and 3-6 cm in breadth. A man can carry a 50-70 kg load up to a distance of 3-5 km.

Animal Cart (*Garur Gadi*): Animal cart or ox-cart is generally used for carrying crops from fields, and transporting, carrying fertilizers, seeds, and agricultural products for marketing. It consists of two wheels made of wood, a bamboo platform, and a yoke. It is locally known as *garur-gadi* or *mohiser-gadi*, depending on the type of draught animal. The platform is usually 100-130 cm wide and 5-6 metre long, and can carry 500-1500 kg goods to a distance of 15-20 km.

Push Cart (*Thela Gadi*): It looks like an ox-cart, but is operated by the pull and push action of labourers. Usually, 3-4 persons are engaged in operating the cart. A pushcart can carry a 500-1500 kg load to a distance of 5-10 km.

Horse Cart (*Ghodar Gadi*): In some rural areas horse carts are still in use. It consists of a wooden platform and two wooden wheels fitted to an axle. The length of the horse cart is about 4.5 metres. It is pulled by a horse and can carry a 400-500 kg load to a distance of about 5-6 km.

Rickshaw Van (*Van Gadi*): With the development of road communication, animal-carts started disappearing gradually from rural Bangladesh and are being replaced by the mechanical carrier locally known as *van gadi*. Rickshaw vans are now the main transport medium in many rural areas due to their speed. A man can pull 500-1500 kg of goods to a distance of up to 30 km or day using a rickshaw van. However, on the basis of the above discussions the tools and techniques used for agricultural production in rural villages of Bangladesh are shown in the chart 14 below.

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Chart 14: Tools and Techniques used for Agricultural Production in Bangladesh

Farm Operations	Farm implements
Land preparation	Wooden ploughs: iron mould board ploughs; power tillers; tractors
Seeding	Manual and power seeder
Weeding	Wetland weeder; dry land weeder; handhoe
Irrigation	<i>Done</i> ; hand pump; treadle pump and power pump; shallow tubewell and deep tubewell
Spraying	Knapsack sprayer; power sprayer, foot pump sprayer for orchards
Harvesting	Traditional hand sickle; power drawn reaper
Threshing and crushing	Pedal thresher for rice and wheat; power thresher for rice and wheat; manual and power maize sheller; animal and power-drawn sugarcane crusher
Drying	Solar dryer; batch dryer; large automatic dryer for rice mill

Source: Wakil, et. al., 2003

In Bangladesh somewhat increasing concentration in the distribution of lands is still discernible, in spite of the proliferation of small and marginal farms with relative consolidation of middle farm and decline of larger ones. The non-egalitarian land legislations have indeed no distributive effects and thus the landholdings authority of the powerful minority who can control over half of the country's land, has by no means been challenged. In Bangladesh a high proportion of agricultural land is 'vested' with the government, over half of which has already been distributed. The land legislation, particularly the land redistribution programs, no doubt have their influence on the pattern of land holding distribution, but the influence is not significant to remove the extreme farm of inequality. Indeed there is hardly any evidence to suggest a considerable decrease of inequality in the distribution of land. As the available evidence indicates, the ceiling laws of collaboration with the program of 'operation *barga*' could rather add strength to the force of marginalization of the peasantry without any appreciable reduction of land concentration in the hands of larger owners. In the process of marginalization, a trend of re-peasantization and a new type of differentiation at the medium signed level, compared to the observed peasant landlord type of differentiation in Bangladesh appears to be in motion.

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Tenancy, labour and credit markets are, nevertheless observed to be more exploitative in Bangladesh. The landlord in Bangladesh can evict any tenant at any time for which they can not create pressure for higher share than the customary 50% rate, bearing all the costs of production; pure tenants are not allowed to take institutional loans, while landowners can get credit against the total amount of owned land though they operate only a part of it. In the context of Bangladesh, our focusing on terms and conditions of various formal and informal contracts involved in land labour capital, credit, markets, brings out their crucial interlinkages to shape the nature of production relations. Bangladesh to adopt mechanism to disperse their exploitation over different markets. In Bangladesh, on the contrary, while the landlords' power over the tenant is institutionalized by the state itself, the landlord may not feel tempted to resort to interlinkages of various markets to exploit the tenants from other markets. As a result, that if larger amount of surplus is extracted in the form of ground rent, the tenant will be left with lesser amount of residual surplus for which landowners' temptation to extract will not be large.

Despite some initial remarkable changes in the production system in Bangladesh, the diffusion of new seed-fertilizer-irrigation technology for about three decades could bring only a moderate label of technological transformation. It is often argued that technology adoption is indeed capital biased and depending on the amount of additional requirement of capital. It may lie outside the capacity of the tenants and small owners' cultivators to adopt it. In Bangladesh, we observe that even if small farmers and tenants initially lag behind in adoption of the new technology, eventually they catch up and ultimately they may use it even more than the large owner farmer. It has been observed that in Bangladesh the expansion of cropped acreage in paddy and wheat takes place, at least partially, at the expense of almost all minor or cash crops such as pulses oilseeds, spices, soybean, jute and sugarcane, the importance of which in the overall economy is, nevertheless, well recognized. In Bangladesh, the increasing trends in area, production and productivity are observed to be higher for food grains compared to non-food grains, implying that recent growth in crop production is based on cereal crops.

The agricultural growth performance was not satisfactory. The green revolution technologies that have been adopted in Bangladesh do not appear to have much impact on the growth performance in agricultural sector. Whatever might be growth rate, the major sources of these rates still emerge from yield component, the prominence of which is being reduced through the shift in acreage in favor of cereals and reallocation of land from low to high yielding cereals and the resultant

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increase in overall output value per unit of land. This indicates that the areas of land, the traditional factor of production can, by no means, be an important source of growth. The reallocation of land from local to HYV cereals as an emerging important of growth in Bangladesh may, nevertheless, be considered to be the impact of the water-seed-fertilizer technology. This impact is however, not felt to be strong enough to bring any satisfactory rate of growth in either of the economies. The relative agricultural productivity of different farm size categories in Bangladesh does not appear to undergo any significant change as an effect of the diffusion of new technologies, though productivity gap between small and large farms under traditional technologies is mostly being narrowed down when new technologies are adopted.

As reads the relation of tenancy with productivity no systematic and significant difference in production ties between owner farms and tenants are observed to exist in either the economies. The production performance on owned land is, nevertheless, significantly higher than that on rented land of the same cultivator, implying that if tenants get ownership rights on their rented land, they would produce more in Bangladesh. It has been observed that technological change in Bangladesh does not necessarily stimulate production investment. The high transactions in land market in technological developed areas may corroborate this finding.

Notwithstanding the above observation, the more striking finding is that savings and surplus are substantially higher for larger farmers than the smaller ones who utilize significantly a larger portion of their surplus and savings for productive investment compared to their larger counterpart in Bangladesh. This is the major contradiction of rural Bangladesh, emanating from structural duality into sharp focus that the surplus farmers who have the resources do not have the necessary inclusive to invest in agriculture and the small and marginal peasants who want to grow more crop do not have access to resources. For Bangladesh, the overwhelming direction of the agrarian economy appears to be towards stagnation in production levels and growing polarization and mass impoverishment. The earlier analyses focusing on terms and conditions of various formal and or informal contracts in land, labour, and credit markets and their interlinkages along with the act of productive investment and surplus appropriation may provide some pointers towards the process of capitalist transformation and its limits in Bangladesh. In the content of Bangladesh, the road ahead is contingent on the remove of the stranglehold of the non-producing vested interests that by now have been able, with the support of the state to consolidate their position. In absence of political solidarity of the vast majority of peasants against the exploitation by a small

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minority of the property owner the path ahead of Bangladesh is likely to be harder than ever before.

Although the availability of land for agricultural production has been declining for rural households, the bases of land productivity has increased because of the rapid expansion in the coverage of irrigation, the adoption of modern rice varieties during the dry seasons and the increase in physical and human capital. The incidence of tenancy has increased and, thus, the land-poor are having more access to sharecropping opportunity in the village. Share tenancy is giving way to fixed rent in the tenancy market to facilitate the adoption of different inputs such as intensive, modern rice varieties and so on. The daily-wage contract is giving way to piece rated contracts in the labour market in response the tightness in the market. These trends have had a positive effect on the livelihood of tenants and agricultural labour households. A major change in the livelihood system has been reduction in the dependence of land-poor households on the agricultural labour market.

Chapter-6

Agrarian Class Structure in Char Dumla

- 6.1 Concept of Class Structure
- 6.2 Historical Background of Agrarian Class Structure
- 6.3 Class Differentiation in Agrarian Structure
- 6.4 Class Relationships of Rural Communities in Bangladesh
- 6.5 Class Structure in Char Dumla
- 6.6 Cropping arrangement
- 6.7 Mortgage System in Char Dumla

6.1 Concept of Class Structure

“Class” in the popular mind is rightly associated with economic differences. Economic differences exist of course in all societies and in every society they have some kind of structure in the sense that they divide the population in the groups and categories which acquire a social identity. Economic differences can again be of various kinds and, in talking about class, it is crucial to identify those economic differences which are socially significant (Beteille, 1974). So, “class” is one of the major and basic element of social stratification that inequalities each and every individuals or “categories” within a society. It divides the individuals or a group of any society on the basis of their place and positions in the strata. So, every society at any point of views and time is a set formulation of classes. In order to know as a society accurately specially in agrarian society, the study of class structure and class interrelationship is very much important. The researcher specially concern here with the agrarian society like char village of Bangladesh and understanding of agrarian class relationships in the char based rural community in Bangladesh.

There are many definitions of “class”. The concept of ‘class’ has undergone many changes during the last hundred years. It has been in a number of ways by different scholars in different approaches. Primarily, the term “class” is used to stratify a society, to differentiate a society mainly on the basis of economic criterion (Chowdhury, 1982)

“Class” is not an abstract and formal scheme but as a system of social relations (Ibid). Michael Young said, “the soil grows cost the machine makes classes” (Young, 1961: 24). Dahrendorf (1959: 76) writes, “class is always a category for purpose of the analysis of dynamics of social conflict and its structural roots, and as such it has to be separated strictly from stratum as a category for purpose of describing hierarchical system at a given point of time”.

G. Gurvitch (1965:3) opposes the concept of social class and social stratification in the following term, “this essentially nominalist and individualist conception entirely replaces social classes by the concept of social classification which might overlap that of class, but designate a totally different phenomenon”. Historically the concept of “class” has been most closely associated with the institution of property, although it has also been defined independently of property in terms of conflict. If we defined class in terms of the ownership, control and use of property it helps in the identify some of the most important features of the societies is in which land is a fundamental basis of social cleavage. The Marxian concept of class assigned priority to property over occupation.

According to Marx classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production by their relations (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to means of productions, but their role in the social organization of the share of social wealth of which they disposed and the mode of acquiring, etc. Another point of view Lenin argued that “classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owning to different place they occupy in a definite system of social economy” (Lenin, 1971: 421).

“A social class in Marx terms is any aggregate of persons who perform the same functions in the organization of production” (Bendix & Lipset, 1954). A social class is then contributed by the function which its members perform in the process of production and production relations. These classes are distinguished from each other by the difference of their respective position in the economy (Chowdhury, 1982). Marx also consciously looks at social classes in terms of conflict and class consciousness. This led to the difference to his views of “class-in-itself” and “class-for-itself”. A “class-in-itself” is a class consisting those of people occupying the same relations to the means of productions, irrespective of their acknowledgement of awareness of this. They are lacking in any common class identity, political mobilization or other ideological bonds. In other words “class-in-itself” is based on the criteria of relations of production access to the means of production and the extent of labour appropriation through the relative use of family hired labour. But in the “class-for-itself” is fully fledged consciousness class pursuing its own interest against those of the opposing class, aware of their common identity and organized politically (Marx, 1977).

In Marx’s own works, the term has a number of applications, but the essential aspects of Marx general model of social class are clear. Bendix and Lipset (1954) have identified five variables that determine a class in the Marxian sense:

- i) *Conflicts over the distribution of economic rewards between the classes;*
- ii) *Easy communication between individuals in the same class positions so that ideas and action programmes are readily disseminated;*
- iii) *Growth of class consciousness in the sense that the members of the class have a feeling of solidarity and understanding of their historic role;*

- iv) *Profound dissatisfaction of lower class over, its inability to control the economic structure of which it feels itself to be the exploited victims; and*
- v) *Establishment of a political organization resulting from the economic structure, the historical situation and maturation of class consciousness.*

According to Marx the organization of production is not a sufficient condition for the development of social classes. There must also be a physical concentration of masses of people, easy communication among them, repeated conflict over economic reward and the growth of class consciousness. So, Marx's theory was based on some predictions, which he had developed from contemporary society. His view on social class was two dimensional – owners of the controllers of the means of production and the non owners of the means of production or the workers, those who sell their labour power- the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (Marx, 1964). In terms of community on the small peasant and taking Marxian view Bendix and Lipset (1954: 11) argued,

“The small peasants from a vast mass and live in similar condition but are isolated from one another and are conscious of their common interest and predicament, hence they do not constitute a class. In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that divide their mode of live, their interest and their culture from those of other classes and put them into hostile contrast to the later, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no unity, no national union, and political organization, they do not form a class”.

Marx did not consider this small peasant a “class” at all as because they were not aware of their class interest but he added that the poorer peasants became agricultural labourers and were forced off the land in the urban working class.

Lenin has determined social ‘class’ based on social relations of production and the forces of production. Analyzing Lenin's statement, Gamin Smith comments that, “In term of social relation of production, we are talking about people who can either control the important resources of the society (the means of production) or not. And in terms of the force of production, the organization of labour in such that either the controllers' materials or people separated from control do it” (Smith, 1997: 436).

On their analysis both Marx and Weber have considered the ownership patterns of the means of production to identify ‘class’ which is economic class. Their theories are the shadow for further studies in any form of societies and

their class structure. According to Marx, that a “class-in-itself” is simply a social group whose members share the same relationships to the forces of production, and a social group fully becomes a class when it becomes a class for itself (Marx, 1977). So Marx’s theory of ‘class’ is not fully applicable in the study village as the existing social groups are not members of true sense of social classes according to his theory, rather they are distinct economic as well as social groups who share a specific relationship to the means of production. Marx looked at social class in term of conflicts and contradiction. But in fact, the conflicts as predicted by Marx never occurred between the owner and non-owner class. According to Marx, we can conclude that the agrarian social classes in Char Dumla are the classes in itself, not the classes for itself whose members are conscious about their conflicting relations with owner classes.

According to Weber (1947) “class’ refers to a group of people who have a similar level of wealth and income.” In the Weberian point of view that the term ‘classes’ which is the tropical probability of enjoying material and social benefits as a result of control over goods and skills and hence benefiting from the facts that these things can be used to reproduce an income within a given economic order (Weber, 1947). He further argued that the class is a class-

- i) *When a member of people have in common a specific component of their life chances as so far as,*
- ii) *This component is representative exclusively by economic interest in the position of goods and opportunities for income, and*
- iii) *Is representate under the conditions of the commodity or labour market that is where such people share a common class situation?*

According to Weber “class’ is ambiguously of economic interest and indeed only those interests involve in the existence of ‘market’. Nevertheless the concept of “class interest” is an ambiguous one even as an empirical concept it is ambiguous as soon as understand by it something other than the factual direction of interests following from the class situation, for certain average of those people subjected to the class situation” (Ibid: 64-66). Class is any group of people who are found in the same socio-economic situation. ‘Property’ and ‘Lack of Property’ are the basic components of all class situations.

Weber analytically distinguished three orders within society – economic, social and political- and corresponding to these identified three dimensions of stratification. According to Weberian concept of view “class” are determined three characteristics. These are:

- i) *Individual shares a particular casual facet of their lives;*

- ii) *These facets are represented exclusively by economic drive in the position of goods and opportunities for property accrual; and*
- iii) *Class situation is essentially a market situation.* (Bendix & Lipset, 1954)

Thus Weber emphasized the importance of “markets” rather than simply ownership and non- ownership of property as the basis of inequality, i.e., level of skill and demand for skills determining differences in rewards. Weber’s definition of class was in terms of a group of people who shared the same typical chance for a supply of goods, external living conditions and personal life experiences in so far as this chance is determined by the power to dispose of goods or skill for the sake of income in a given economic order. “Class situation” is, in this sense, ultimately market situation (Craib, 1997). Like Marx and Weber, most modern sociologists use economic factors as the basic criteria for determining social classes.

6.2 Historical Background of Agrarian Class Structure

The British Indian Association argued in 1939 in its evidence before the Land Revenue Commission that the tenancy legislation had created a system of lordship over actual cultivators having less privilege by higher *raiyyats* with greater rights. Amongst this “higher *raiyyat’s*” there are three groups: One group sublet their holdings in entirely, another group selected with *bhag-chasis* and hired labourers, and the third group let out their lands in part and cultivated some portions themselves or by their family labour. And the Indian association’s view these “higher *raiyyats* resembles the Russian “*Kulaks*” who managed to enlarge their holdings by renting land, often added with the farming little trading and a persistent money-lending, they developed their cultivation through the employment of low paid wage labour (Datta, 1986).

Permanent settlement have driven deep to every class of society- the *Zamindars*, the tenure holders, the *raiyyats* and the under *raiyyats*. In this view the bulk of the population dependent on agriculture and their livelihood and they belonging to three groups viz; cultivating owners, tenant-cultivators and *jhum* cultivators, agriculture workers.

In the opinion on of the British Indian Association, the cultivators were under-*raiyyats*, *bargadars*, agricultural labourers, etc. and they formed the peasant population - the higher *raiyyats*, i.e. the occupancy *raiyyats* were divided into three groups:

- i) *Those who sublet their holdings in entirely;*

- ii) *Those who had settled with bhagchasis and hired labourers; and*
- iii) *Those who let out in part and cultivated some portion themselves or lay their family labours.*

The 'higher' *raiya*s resembles the Russian *Kulaks*, exercise "over landlordship" and over the actual cultivators. According to 1931 Census the cultivators were divided into three classes:

- i) *"Cultivating Owners", i.e., cultivators who had some sort of right in the land they tilled;*
- ii) *"Cultivating Tenants", i.e., those who were not tenants but were entitled to remain in possession on lands cultivated by them during the season and were required to hand over a proportion of crops at the end of the season to the person with a tiller in the land; and*
- iii) *"Labourers", i.e. those who had no rights tiller or interest in the land and cultivated for wages in cash or kind; (GOB, 1931).*

As a stated earlier, agricultural production was overwhelmingly organized on small peasant farms being operated by individual's peasant families depending on their domestic labours. It is generally expected that plough being worked by a pair of buffaloes was capable of cultivating between 15 *bighas* (5 acres) and a maximum of 25 *bighas* (8 acres) (Calebroke, 1794).

Scanty area statistics for the Eighteen century make it difficult to present statistical profiles of peasant holdings for the entire province. In Dinajpur there were peasants who held up to 165 *bighas* (55 acres) of land but these were a small percentage of the cultivating population (Martin, 1976). Holdings as large as these were not widely prevalent in Bengal since peasants with seven to ten acre of land were categorized as the 'influential *raiya*t' in eastern Bengal (Ibid). Positioned below these were those peasants who are identified in - sources as the 'poorer' or the 'inferior classes of *raiya*s'. These were peasant who held less than five acres of land, possessed only a pair of bullocks and a single plough. Cultivated with the use of their family labour alone and had no reserve stocks to tide over eve on season of scarcity (Datta, 1986).

Peasant stratification in eighteen-century Bengal can not therefore be explained in terms of massive differences in landholdings alone. The picture of the eighteen-century peasantry as one polarized between a 'rich peasant class' and untouchable landless groups tends to provide a false image of rural stratification given the general smallness of peasant holdings, the virtual

absence of absolute landlessness and a seemingly widespread shortage of resources we can perhaps only speak of two brought strata in the peasantry “poor” and the “middling” (Bernstein, 1979). The “poor” were those peasants unable to reproduce themselves through household production because of insufficient land and other means of production. The “middle” peasants has lands which were considered adequate for their social and economic reproduction as well as for the generation of small surplus which they presumably invested for some improvements in their lands or for the cultivations of better great crops or both depending upon the nature of the current agricultural season. They may also have used their surpluses to give loans to their poorer counterparts in times of need (Datta, 1986). Thus Datta has divided the peasant society into “poor and middling categories”. A “rich” peasant “class” did exist and that their activities were causing concern both to the local *Zamindars* and to the state.

Henry Calebrooke (1794) describes three types of peasants in Bengal:

- i) *those, applying the labour which they give to husbandry, solely to ground use on their account;*
- ii) *those who were monopolizing land to re-let it to the actual cultivators at an advance rent, or for half the produce; and*
- iii) *those who call in the assistance of hired labour to assist there own.*

This description has influenced historians into reconstructing Bengal’s peasant society as elaborately stratified into a “very powerful tenancy” and “poor peasant” (Sinha, 1968: 131). Rich peasants, defined as those with enough accumulated surpluses to invest in production “through” the purchases of superior means of production and or labour power, and who could “initiate” and maintain a cycle of extended reproduction (Bernstein, 1979) were largely absent. There are another social group whose existence in the eighteen century; these were the sharecroppers (*bargadhars* or the *adhiar*). The sharecropper being viciously exploited by *Zamindars*, merchant and revenue farmers are numerous. Sharecropping in the eighteen century emerged out in the poor peasants; need to ensure the reproduction of the household based economies in the face of scanty resources.

6.3 Class Differentiation in Agrarian Structure

In the past and foremost the ownership and control of land provided the principal material bases of inequality or class differentiation. In that case when the agriculture has becomes capitalized a new basis of class differentiation is

introduced. Class differentiations in the material condition of existence are accompanied by a host of other inequalities. The hierarchical idiom plays an important part in all agrarian societies where considerations between “Lord” and “Peasant” are governed by certain fundamental orientations in which social inequality is accepted as one of the givers of human condition and not infrequently as something valued and desirable. The most important material basis of class inequalities in Bangladesh rural societies are the distribution of land. As Myrdal (1968) has recently written particularly in the South Asian rural settings, inequality is in fact mainly a question of land ownership with which are associated leisure, enjoyment of status, and authority, income differences are considered less significant.

The agrarian societies of Bangladesh, especially in rural village, are generally marked by great inequalities of wealth, power and status. Some scholars have attributed such inequalities of poverty of this notion, whether or not inequalities are greater among the poorer nations, they are certainly more visible, they are particularly in the rural areas, they are high and low born, the rich and the poor, those for whom others work and those who work for others different from each other in almost in every significant way. They live separately, dress and speak differently and divide their time, work and leisure differently. Social inequality in rural Bangladesh is not merely a matter of existential differences in wealth, power and privilege but also question, a values, in other words it has both a material and ideological aspects. These two aspects reinforced each other to a considerable context, although the social value placed on inequality is not determined by its material bases at every point or in every detail.

Pre-colonial agricultural community was classified into two broad groups: *Khudkasta* and *Paikasta*. The *Khudkasta* were resident *raiyyats* of the village, among them some were privileged to hold land at fixed rent. They were known as *Mukarari* and *Mirasi raiyyats*. The *Paikast raiyyats* were those who were never permanently settled in any village. They moved from village to village and worked to land on temporary basis. They paid generally smaller rate of rent than the *Khudkasta raiyyats* (Islam, 1993).

The Rent Act of 1859 (Act X) to restore the *raiyyats* to there former status as far as possible within the framework of the permanent settlement. Instead of classified *raiyyats* in to *khudkasta* and *Paikasta* as of old system rented. For defining the relative rights and obligations of *raiyyats* and landed interests, divided the peasantry into three categories as follows:

- i) *raiyyats holding land at fixed rate of rent from the time of the permanent settlement (Section 3);*

- ii) *raiya*ts having rights of occupancy for continuous twelve years or more (Section 6); and
- iii) *non-occupancy raiya*ts i.e., *raiya*ts lands for less than twelve years (Section 8).

The rise of *proja* property had introduced new elements in the organizational structure in the traditional farming. Because the *proja* could now buy and sell lands, the rural social tended to the unequal as regards land control. Some peasants become landless or marginally landed and some other held more lands than they could operate by family labour. The landless people made a labour to work for the lender either as sharecropper or ordinary wage labourers (Chowdhuri, 1975).

The relations centering on the ownership, control and use of land may create both cohesion and conflict in agrarian differentiated society. To think about a pre-determined vertical unity of the village based on the division of labour may be just as misleading as to think about a predetermined conflict of classes based on the objective contradictions between the techniques of production and the relations of production. Relations are structured in terms of certain basic principals and it is material interest which provides structure to the relation between inequalities and the classes. Thus, at the highest level of abstractions, a study of class is concerned with the study of material interest and the way in which they order the relations among groups and categories. Many other sociological and anthropological study of interest in agrarian classes, inequalities and mode of production in agrarian social structure need very urgently to be determined her agrarian relations. In any agrarian society land is perhaps the most important focus of interest as such the study of the actually existing relations centering around the ownership, control and use of land provides the most useful inequalities in the point of departure for a study of the kind described above.

6.4 Class Relationships of Rural Communities in Bangladesh

Marx and Weber's concepts of class are important because these concepts are very widely and importantly used by the different ideas and different scholars in the understanding and analysis of the class structure, particularly in agrarian society. Different micro-level village studies have showed the analysis of class relations and class formations in rural Bangladesh in recent times. The studies of Bertocci (1970, 1972), Wood (1976), Adnan (1977, 1978), Arens and Beurden (1977), Westergaard (1978), Chowdhury (1978) and Howes (1979) are prominent among them.

Bertocci's Classification

At this point Bertocci's (1970) analysis of class relationships has been taken into consideration which he observed in two villages (Hajipara and Tinpara) of Comilla district. He has depicted on social stratification in his study which narrates about the class and caste relationships in these two villages. Bertocci has classified the cultivators on the basis of landownership, sources of income and what he calls the "economic behavior". The classification of cultivators is shown in the table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Cultivators Classified by Landownership and Economic Behaviour

Class	No. of HH	% of the HH	Grouped %
Landless	10	9.8	
Land Poor	35	34.3	44.10 (Poor)
Debtor Middle	06	5.9	
Non Debtor Middle	30	2.4	47.10 (Middle)
Creditor Middle	12	11.8	
Non Creditor Rich	05	4.9	8.80 (Rich)
Creditor Rich	05	3.9	
Total	102	100.00	100.00

Source: Bertocci, 1970: 16; c.f. Chowdhury (1982: 28).

He has seen that middle peasant group (debtor middle and non-debtor middle) constitute 47.1% and poor peasants (landless and land poor) constitute 44.1%; while the percentage of the rich peasant is 8.80%. Bertocci has mentioned that there are broadly three "classes" in Hajipara and Tinpara, namely rich, middle and poor peasantry in Maoist terminology. He has found differences in the distribution of control over productive resources which is taken as the basis of class differentiation. The middle and rich peasants most often lend money and goods while the poor peasants are invariably only debtors. Bertocci has found that the lending of money is so constant and ubiquitous a feature of social and economic activities in these villages; hence, it is very difficult to say unequivocally that exploitation implied in them is the unique province of any one class. He shows that a large number of "middle peasants" depend on land lending to a substantial portion of their income, while some "rich peasants" do not. The ability to engage in money lending or renting out land is, however, clearly related to the possession of at least the median amount of land. The rich peasants were not involved in lending at the time of Bertocci's research but they did so in the recent past.

Bertocci's data shows that there is mobility between the high and the low status lineages. There are marriages between the high and the low status lineages. There are marriages between the titled and non-titled lineages. According to him, the villages themselves discriminate between "*uchu-bangsho*" (high status lineage) and "*nichu bangsho*" (low status lineage) families. He has again distinguished between "*sardari*" lineages (having traditional high status) and non-'*sardari*' lineages (having no traditional status). The non-'*sardari*' lineages may acquire some economic strength over time and thereby become politically important and in some cases dominant through money-lending activities and other forms of patronage. The lineages after acquiring land and power, also sometimes acquire high status by marrying into '*sardari*' lineages. Bertocci refers to this process as "cyclical kulakism". Hence, he has stated that there is a good deal of openness in social stratification as far as status is concerned in *Hajipur* and *Tinpara*. According to Bertocci, there is a regular rise and fall of the families with the increase and decline of wealth (particularly land) and, therefore, there is a high degree of mobility of individual families between economic classes and status groups in these two villages of *Comilla* district.

Wood's Findings

Wood (1976) who has conducted study in another village (*Bondokgram*) of *Comilla* District has also criticized Bertocci's theory of circular mobility. Wood found that new opportunities were created under the then political (governmental) system for the richer peasant class through which they increased agricultural productivity. The richer peasant invested the surplus in non-agricultural activity like money lending, etc. In this position, wood has suggested that a stable rich peasant class will emerge, which will reduce the vulnerability of families in that class to the weakening process of fragmentation through inheritance as other non-agricultural sources of income become available as a result of initial higher productivity of holdings (Wood, 1976).

Wood has also stated that Bertocci has not taken into consideration of either the possibility for richer peasant to prey on the misfortunes of others by acquiring their land, or the role of new technology in making the rich more stable. The establishment of the sons of the richer peasant in other forms of employment has also enhanced the capacity of them. Bertocci ignores the fact that the subsistence level families cannot compete with the families already well established in money lending activities. Finally, wood has commented that economic interrelation characterized by exploitation between the two classes in the village would prevent such a competition in the first place. Therefore, Wood argues that the possibility of circular mobility would decrease under the situation exists in *Bondokgram*, a village of *Comilla* District.

However, Wood seems to agree that higher status can be acquired through intermarriage with lineages of traditionally high status. He added that “where the process of class differentiation is not stimulated by new opportunities for the accumulation of wealth, rich peasants who come from titled lineages nor from *sadari* lineages can be incorporated into the traditional institutions of local power by acquiring status through intermarriage with lineages of traditionally high status. In this way, the dimensions of class and status will become mutually enforcing” (Wood, 1976: 52). Wood stated that class differentiation took place in *Bondokgram* was dominated by usurious capital. The cumulative impact of money lending and mortgage transactions functions to increase and stabilize the gap between the richer and poor peasants. Besides accumulating land through mortgage transactions, the richer peasant families (2.5 acres category) diversify their economic activities into the sphere of exchange and professional employment. The poor peasants, as a weaker economic class, are deprived of the inputs and credits provided by the government where as rich peasant class monopolizes them. Wood classified his sample of 76 households of *Bondokgram* into four categories on the basis of land ownership, such as, 14 landless households (18.4%), 18 owned less than an acre (each) (2.7%), 25 owned between 1 and 2.49 acres (each) (32.8%) and 19 households owned above 2.5 acres (each) (25.1%). However, Wood has not clearly defined class what explicitly explained to us is his “effective landholding category” on the basis of ownership and non-ownership of land, land leasing in and out, land mortgaging in and out and land cultivation. Chowdhury (1982: 33) has criticized Wood in the following way, “I think Wood has not answered it fully. It is of course true that one needs to make his own definition in explaining realities he is confronted with in the rural society in the best possible way. Wood also perhaps did the same”.

Adnan's View

Adnan (1976) has produced several papers on the village studies in Bangladesh a few decades ago. One of his papers which deals particularly with differentiation and class structure in a *Barisal* village, he has made an analysis of class on the households of village *char shamaj* in terms of a labour exploitation criterion devised by Patnaik (1976) and found the *E* criterion (labour-exploitation criterion) was inadequate in analyzing class structure in that village. He has also found the same pitfalls in a general method of class analysis. Adnan pointed out that Patnaik's notion of class analysis is a partial one because it concerns itself only with the agricultural aspect of the status of a household. This is very helpful in understanding differentiation where agriculture is indeed the chief occupation of the households concerned. But this can be a grossly misleading if apply to stratify households having occupations other than agriculture. Therefore, he thinks that an analytical

framework of class analysis, to be meaningful, must be comprehensive in terms of the multiple occupational and economic aspects of households. He has found that cultivation with all its singular importance in the flourishing peasant economy of deltaic Bengal still accounts for less than 50 % of the total income. Therefore, he holds that an all-sectoral approach would indicate the class-status of a household with far greater accuracy. Thus Adnan suggests the reformation of criterion as because-

- i) *it cannot handle the cases of households which operate as intermediaries in agriculture and other sectors; and*
- ii) *the value of E for a particular household can vary widely depending on purely technical factors such as the failure of crops.*

At the time of Adnan's survey, the village had 267 households, which were firstly classified by him on the basis of more conventional criterion such as holding size and agricultural income and total income size groups. The peasant strata on the basis of the landholding size per household in *char shamraj* had been classified into three types, such as, top (7.551 acres), middle (1.275 acres) and bottom (0.16 acres), which was classified on the basis of *E* criterion devised by Patnaik (1976).

Adnan admits, "this paper has the modest ambition only of attempting better designs for the basic categories of class society with which future researchers may be equipped" (1976: 37). Basing on some empirical evidences of a rural community in southern Bangladesh, his work is very interesting which is arguing mostly with methodological theoretical formulation with respect to class and class society. His emphasis is not on the description of inter-class relationships in the rural community as done by Bertocci, Wood, Arens and Beurden, Chowdhury and others. Rather he is more pre-occupied with definition of class; with the analytical arena for classification. Beside this, it has hardly included the details of the realities of multifarious relations entered into by different classes in the process of production in the rural society.

Arens and Beurden's Findings

Arens and Beurden (1977) have also about the class differentiation in *Jhagrapur*, a village in *Kushtia* District. They have the classified the village population on the basis of ownership and non-ownership of the means of production and labour exploitation. The classes are:

- i) *Landless peasants,*
- ii) *Poor peasants,*
- iii) *Middle peasants, and*
- iv) *Rich peasants.*

The richest are controlling more than the sufficient means of production while the poorest are completely deprived of them. The landlords and the rich peasants constitute the exploiting class and the middle and poor peasants form the exploited class.

According to Arens and Beurden-

- i) *the poor peasants are not in control of very little means of production such as; land, bullocks, handicraft tools etc. They depend heavily on selling their labour and they often suffer from unemployment and underemployment. The moneylenders exploit many of them. The poor peasant class has again been divided into small peasants (controlling very little means of production) and the semi-proletarian (who are totally landless and completely deprived of the means of production);*
- ii) *Middle peasants generally own sufficient means of production to be able to make both ends meet. They rarely sell their labour and some of them hire labour in during the harvest. Many of them are exploited as sharecroppers and through money landing;*
- iii) *Rich peasants own more than the sufficient means of production. They hire in labour and sublet part of their land to sharecroppers. This class is again sub-divided into small surplus peasants and large surplus peasants. The large surplus peasants families in Jhagrapur, with the exception of one family, do not involve themselves with manual labour. The surplus of small peasants is also small to buy the necessary commodities for family use;*
- iv) *The landlords own a huge amount of land, far more than they need for their family. Mostly they do not do the manual labour themselves and live purely from exploiting others. The only landlord in Jhagrapur controls 50 acres of land; (Chowdhury, 1982: 36-37).*

Westergaard (1978) and Howes (1979) have also demonstrated about almost a similar picture of class differentiation in their studies of *Jamalpur village (Bumna, Islampur)* and *Bogra village (Boringram)* respectively. Howes has classified the agrarian population of *Islampur* village into three classes on the basis of the ownership and control of land (the principal means of production) and consumption requirements. The classes are (a) rich peasants, (b) middle peasants (divided into safe and danger categories) and (c) poor peasants (divided into small and landless categories). The rich peasants in *Islampur* depend exclusively or predominantly on the labour of others to cultivate their land. This is done through hiring of wage-labour or through sharecropping

arrangement. The middle peasants are also landowners and organize production mainly through family labour. Middle peasants (safe) produce more than 1.5 times their basic subsistence requirements and middle peasants (danger) fall below this line and, therefore, they are vulnerable in the event of bad harvest. Poor peasants (small) either own very small amount of land or lease in some smallholdings and might or might not engage wage labour directly. Poor peasants (landless) enjoy no access to land at all and sell their labour to others for their livelihood (Howes, 1979).

Westergaard has classified the agrarian households of *Bogra* village on the basis of the size of landholding of the households. She mentions that of the total 122 households, there are (a) 36 landless (30%), (b) 42 marginal peasants (35%), (c) 39 subsistence (32%) and (d) only 5 surplus peasants households (4%) in *Boringram*. She mentions that a layer of rich peasants has stabilized its position through money lending and by diversification of economic activities. She argues that the process of class differentiation continues through a combination of ecological pressure and diversification of economic activity among the rich peasants.

Chowdhury's Statement

There is a close similarity in the findings of Arens and Beurden, Howes and Westergaard about the nature of class differentiation in rural Bangladesh. These studies belong to one type, which emphasizes on the relations of exploitation. The Marxian criteria of access to the means of production and labour exploitation are their main basis of class differentiation in rural Bangladesh. Bertocci's theory of "Cyclical *Kulakism*" and Wood's "effective landholding categories" differ from each other (Chowdhury, 1982).

In the *Comilla* village studied by Bertocci and Wood, class relationship is being dominated by mortgage and money lending transactions, whereas such transactions do not figure prominently in the *Kushtia* village studied by Arens and Beurden. Land concentration seems to be high in the *Kushtia* village whereas agrarian hierarchy is not reported to be very sharp in *Comilla* villages. Again, Adnan's finding about classes in them in a *Barisal* village is similar to that of Chowdhury's in a *Dacca* village (Chowdhury, 1982).

Adnan is very much categorical about the non-existence of classes for themselves in rural Bangladesh with the significant exception of the ruling class (Adnan, 1976). So is the finding of Chowdhury who dealt with class differentiation in *Meherpur* village of *Dacca* District. Both of them emphasized particularly on the fact that the exploited classes are not conscious of their class interests as to wage a class struggle against the exploiting class. While

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Adnan's basis of class differentiation is the modified formula of *E* criterion, Chowdhury's basis is the ownership and non-ownership of the means of production and the role of functions performed by the individuals in the organization of production. This is almost similar to the Marxian interpretation of class-in-itself. Classes in the context of *Meherpur* can also be defined in terms of Weberian concept of "property owner" and "propertyless" in the presence of "market situation" as land has to market in *Meherpur* (Chowdhury, 1978). Chowdhury has mentioned that "here, I have attempted to reveal the nature of class relationships that exists today in rural Bangladesh. I have tried to do so on the basis of the findings of the micro-level field study conducted by different scholars in rural Bangladesh in the course of the last decade or so. This may help one in understanding class differentiation or class relationships in different regions of Bangladesh" (Chowdhury, 1982: 39).

According to these micro-level village studies, the researcher argued that the close similarity in the findings of Arens and Beurden, Howes and Westergaard about the nature of class differentiation in rural Bangladesh (Chowdhury, 1978). All of these studies belong to one type which emphasizes on relations of exploitations. These scholars have main basis of class differentiation in rural Bangladesh according to the Marxian access to the means of production and labour exploitation. Another scholar like Bertocci and Wood's findings are different. Bertocci has emphasized his theory of 'cyclical *kulakism*' and Wood's theory of 'effective land holding categories' depends and understanding of class differentiation.

According to these scholars' studies in *Comilla* village, class relationships are being dominated by mortgaged and money lending transaction. Whereas such transacting do not example prominently in the *Kushtia* village studied by Arens and Beurden. In the village of *Kushtia* district land transaction and land concentration seems to be high where as agrarian hierarchy is not determined to be very sharp in *Comilla* village (Chowdhury, 1978).

6.5 Class Structure in Char Dumla

In the present study it has been explored about what is produced in the village, how it is produces and the implements used for production, who owns the means of production and who do not. It has also been observed about how people associated with production being divided into different classes and thus examined the relationship of different classes of people in the processes of production and the relationship of non-agrarian people with the agrarian classes.

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The different categories of persons associated with agriculture and their interrelationship constitute the agrarian class structure (Beteille, 1974). The agrarian social structure of rural Bangladesh consists of three agrarian classes: landowners, sharecroppers and landless labourers. This classification of the agrarian population is based on the ownership and non-ownership of the means of production, their position in the organization of production. Since the principal means of production in rural Bangladesh is land, these three classes are based upon the ownership and non-ownership of the land.

It has already been pointed out that agriculture is the dominant element in the economy of the study village. As agriculture is the principal mode of livelihood in Char Dumla, the study is here more concerned with agrarian classes. Majority of the people of the study area is directly and indirectly connected with agriculture in a number of ways. The principal means of production in the village is “land”. So the class structure in the context of Char Dumla is precisely the agrarian class structure in it and it is explored in the village on the basis of ownership and non-ownership of land first. The village economy is fully dependent in agricultural products. So dependency on agriculture as the principal means of subsistence is increasing now-a-days. Most of the villagers are related to agriculture following either one or more ways. The village data shows that about 76.1% of household heads are directly involved with agriculture. So, land is still an unparallel means of production. Well off people are purchasing land and investing money on mortgage or sharecropping. The villagers are related to agricultural production tending to be involved directly in relations of production. The production system and the ownership of land create interdependent socio-economic relations as well as challenges between them. Picture regarding the ownership and owned land will be made clear from the following table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Ownership of Land by the Household Head in the Village

Owner Holdings	No. of HH	%	Total Land Occupied by the HH (in Acre)	% Total Land Occupied by the HH (in Acre)
Landless	72	15.89	00.00	00.00
0.01- 0.50	151	35.98	59.31	5.79
0.51- 1.00	83	18.32	76.83	7.50
1.01- 1.50	26	5.74	40.42	3.95
1.51- 2.00	23	5.08	45.88	4.48
2.01- 2.50	12	2.65	161.00	15.73
2.51- 5.00	38	8.39	98.00	9.57
5.01- 7.00	12	2.65	152.78	14.92
7.01-10.00	4	4	109.60	10.71
10.01- 12.50	8	1.77	130.00	12.70
12.51+	12	2.65	150.00	14.65
Total	453	100.00	1023.82	100.00

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

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The above table shows that in terms of ownership a large number of household heads (151) or 35.98% own only 59.31 acres (5.79%) of the land area in the village. On the other hand, a large portion of land (150 acres) or 14.65% belongs to some big land owner household heads (12) or only 2.65% of the villagers.

This indicates that land is the principal form of property in Char Dumla. On the basis of ownership of landed property, therefore, these peasants can be categorized into several groups such as class that own land (land owner) or rich farmers who own sufficient land, and class who own smaller amount of land and still others are sharecroppers and landless labourers. These types of agrarian groups play significant roles in the rural class structure. In another way, the peasant might be classified as different types of patrons and clients i.e. the land owners and sharecroppers, money lenders, debtors, employers and labourers. The landowners give the surplus land, the more remote area to the small peasant on sharecropping basis on condition that each party will receive 50% of the produces.

Usually, land is sharecropped out to relation and certainly to peasants who have a reputation for being able to produce higher yields. The landless tend to be engaged in sharecropping or as agricultural labourer. They are also involved in petty trading or other activities. Even if they are involved in petty trading, they have to depend on their richer neighbors for patronage. The ownership and non-ownership of land divide the agrarian population into class in the study village. Thus the agrarian population of Char Dumla could be categorized into three major classes which are as follows:

- i) **The landowners,**
- ii) **The tenants or sharecroppers, and**
- iii) **The landless labourers or agricultural labourers.**

i) **The Landowners**

The landowners or the locally called '*girstho*' can be further divided into four different categories on the basis of the size of agricultural land holdings. The categories are:

- a) *Marginal farmers (0.1 – 1.0 acre);*
- b) *Small farmers (1.1 acre – 2.0 acres);*
- c) *Middle farmers (2.1 acres – 7.0 acres); and*
- d) *Large or rich farmers (from 7.1 acres and above).*

In this regard the following table 6.3 would show the landholding size by household in Char Dumla.

Table 6.3: Landholding Size by Household in Char Dumla

Size of Land Holding	No. of Household	HH (%)	Owned Area (in Acre)	Owned Area
No Homestead	54	11.92%	00	00
Only Homestead Area	18	3.97%	10.73	0.62%
Landless	72	15.89%	10.73	0.62%
0.1 – 0.50	163	35.98%	48.58	-
0.51 – 1.00	83	18.32%	76.83	-
Marginal	246	54.30%	125.41	12.25%
1.01 – 1.50	26	5.74%	40.42	-
1.51 – 2.00	23	5.08%	45.88	-
Small	49	10.82%	96.30	9.41%
2.01 – 2.50	12	2.65%	120	-
2.51 – 5.00	38	8.39%	155	-
5.01 – 7.00	12	2.65%	86.78	-
Middle	62	13.69%	361.78	35.33%
7.00 and above	24	5.30%	-	-
Large	24	5.30%	429.60	41.96%
Total	453	100%	1023.82	100%

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The above table shows that the landless (15.89%) and marginal (54.03%) people are greater in number in the village. On the other hand, the small (10.82%), middle (13.69%) and large (5.30%) groups are less in number but have more land than the landless and marginal people. Regarding these categories the landowners, who owned by the holder including the members of his family, having a title right to determine the nature and extend of its use and transfer the same. Moreover, this might be the same landowner which the holder or any member of his household has owner like possession. This type of land was included in the area of owners land. The land held by the holders in owner like possession can also be hold by him in the same way as own land although the holder does not possess a little of ownership. The following table 6.4 would show the landholding size of different classes in Char Dumla.

Table 6.4: Landholding size of different Classes in Char Dumla

Social Classes	No of Household	%	Owned Area (in Acre)	% of Owned (in Acre)
Landless	72	15.89%	10.73	0.62%
Marginal	246	54.30%	125.41	12.25%
Small	49	10.82%	96.39	9.41%
Middle	62	13.69%	361.78	35.92%
Large	24	5.30%	429.6	41.96%
Total	453	100%	1023.82	100%

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The landowners owning more than 7.00 acres of land can be grouped under or classified as rich peasants or large farmer. The landowners or households having 2.50 acres to 7.00 acres of land can be grouped under and classified as middle peasants or middle farmers. Landowners having 0.50 acre to 2.50 acres of land each can be grouped under or classified as small farmers. Household heads whose landownership is upto 0.50 acre 0.49 acre can be termed as marginal peasants or marginal farmers. Out of the total 453 households, 72 (15.89%) are landless and remaining 381 (84.11%) are landowners which includes 246 (54.30%) are marginal farmers, 49 (10.82%) are small farmers, 62 (13.69%) are middle farmers and 24 (5.30%) are rich farmers. In this case the table 6.4 would show the landholding size by household in Char Dumla.

a) *Marginal Farmers*

In Char Dumla almost one third of the total households belong to this class (54.30%). They have the holding size from 0.01 acre up to 1 acre of land. Of the total cultivable land the marginal farmer owns around 12.25% of the cultivable land. Their economic condition reflects the same picture like that of the landless class. These classes of farmers are non-subsistence farmers and mainly depend on family labour. Almost all adult households' heads of this category work as day labourers or *kamla*. Rest of the period they pull rickshaws, petty traders or engaging themselves in other works, like construction, development works within the village or intra-village. Due to the worsening economic situation they are very rapidly becoming landless.

b) *Small Farmers*

Small farmer households constitute over 10.82% of the total households in the study area. Farmers having holding size from 1.01 to 2 acres of land has been classified in this group. Considering the total cultivable land small farmers own around 9.41%. Since marginal farmers are in a better position than that of the

landless and marginal farmers, in terms of farm equipments they have better access to sharecropping. Apparently this class has more lands than the marginal class. But real picture of this class unfortunately, this class is vulnerable such many causes like at crop failure, natural disaster and debt. Their land holding size is not economically viable and it is different for small farmers in the study area to maintain their living on their own land. In sharing in land, small farmers share in land from the medium and large farmers. Sometimes the small farmers work as day labourers or small petty traders and business in and out of the village. As a result this class in earning their livelihood from various agriculture and non-agricultural sources.

c) *Middle Farmers*

Middle farmers are those who own lands from 2.1 to 7 acres. Around 13.69% of the total households belong to this class who own nearly 35.33% cultivable lands of the total cultivable lands. Many of the farmers in this class depend mainly on agriculture in the study village. In the study village, this class usually cultivates their own lands by their family members and sometimes they need hired wage labour for education process and purpose. These farmers can normally sustain in times of natural, social or political hazards. They mainly depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Farmers of this class generally share out land. But the picture of this class in the study village shows that 20.79% of them are involved with share in of land. Because comparatively this class is better equipped with draught animals, modern agricultural tool and techniques. There are several important persons like village elites, member of the Union Parishad or Village *matabbers* or *mahajans* usually belong to this class. The middle class farmers enjoy power and prestige in their locality or within the *samaj*. Culturally they do not vary too much with the small farmers but their is social mobility among them.

d) *Large or Rich Farmers*

In Char Dumla a very negligible portion of the household belongs to this class and according to the village census 5.30% households belong to this class. Large farmers own around 41.96% of the total cultivable lands. This class is economically well-off and has farm and non-farm sources of income. Large farmers normally can surplus and sustain several hazards such as crop damage, since they have other sources of income and in fact they control all economic, social and political activities in the area. This class employs labourers in general to cultivate their lands. They share in and out their land to the marginal, small and sometimes even to middle farmers. There are quite a large numbers of absentee landholders in the village. Majority of these absentee landlords belong to this class, who are engaged in different professions outside the village. Every

landowner who belongs among the large or rich farmers are not cultivator, there are some who cultivate by their own manual labour or supervise, and others who never work in the field. They usually share out their land to other marginal or small and sometimes middle farmers, and receive a certain portion of products at the end of production. Usually they share out land to the farmers who are within their kin groups; generally they are reluctant in sharing out land, because of the situation prevailing in crop production. Chowdhury has called this class a renter class, because they live on rents without contributing any labour to the agricultural process (Chowdhury, 1978). This class dominates the rural power structure. These power holder groups as well as called the Bengali term '*bhadarkok*'. They were typically a renter class who enjoyed intermediary tenure-based rights to rent from the land. Agricultural lands inside the study area have been classified into four categories. Among these four categories it has been observed that proportionally the large amount of total cultivated land is owned by the large and middle farmers that another two categories of the peasants. As a consequence peasants belonging to marginal and small classes are lagging behind the crop production than that of the middle and large farmers. In fact in all spare of life, marginal and small farmers including the landless are in the following manure "who have nothing to loose except their liver.

ii) Tenants or Sharecroppers

Concepts of Sharecropping

A few of the social scientists now a days are recognizing the fact, that under utilization of resources, particularly labour, low productivity, slow adoption of improved modern technology and its inefficient utilization is an outcome of the size- tenure structure and tenorial position of cultivator (Alam, 1987). While there is a considerable agreement among professional scholars that from the view point of productivity, growth and employment, it is not the input intensification program, rather tenorial change which stands as the prime determining factor in the overall agrarian and rural development of the country; it is wise on the part of researchers and policy makers to focus radiantly on the twilling zone existing between the puzzling tenorial structure and required change in it. For broad- based development through a dynamic approach to land reform and successful 'Package Program' it is essential.

In different regions of a country, especially developing world, different tenorial arrangement can be found to exist. Among those, crop-sharing tenancy is one of the earliest forms of production organization in agriculture (Srinivasan & Bardhan, 1974). It is still in a considerable importance in peasant agriculture in many countries. Needless to say, the institution of sharecropping shaped by

diverse historical, political and sociological factors peculiar of different regions, but as economists persist in believing that this reflects some of the basic economic “factors of production”. It can not be denied that sharecropping is a suitable form of tenancy and the issues relating to it are going prominence in the controversy of the structural change and tenurial pattern in Bangladesh. This striking system is still a hotbed of empirical research not only because of its burning impact on ‘efficiency of production’ but also due to the long running policy-implication in the development complex in our agrarian sector of Bangladesh. The traditional theoreticians uphold that sharecropping is an inefficient form of tenurial arrangements compared with either owner-farming or fixed rate tenancy because the terms of sharecropping provide distinctiveness to resource rise (Srinivasan & Bardhan, 1974; Marshall, 1987). Some researches, in recent times, have tried to put forward theoretically that like other tenurial arrangements sharecropping and resource allocation and productivity are inversely related with each other. Still, as a counter-attack, the sharp weapons of arguments are quite ample also on the empirical side. In this aspect sharecropping contracts are widely discussed and disputed issues in Bangladesh.

The institution of sharecropping contains the essence that a tenant who receives in return a certain proportion of the produce from the landowners is to abide by the contract in contributing a part of the working capital, in addition to labour. To put in a different fashion: it is the tenant who parts with a proportion of the produce and this is often a very often a very proposition, making this from tenancy a highly profitable and lucrative arrangement for the landowner. Sharecropping provides an institutional mechanism by which large landowners can derive some advantages from the lower labour supervision costs of family as opposed to hired labour (Boyce, 1987). Sharecropping tenants have this in common with servants. They give labour to the farm and they receive a part of the farm’s produce. But tenancy is distinguished from service by the contributor of the main capital. A servant serves and need not and does not give capital; a tenant does.

In the eighteenth century the sharecropping arose from the needs of the poorer peasants to ensure the reproductions of their household based economy is the base of country resources, famines (and other crisis of subsistence) and states revenue demand (Datta, 1986). Datta further argued that the sharecropping is an arrangement for the appropriation of absolute surplus product in a small peasant, petty-commodity producing economy. Martinez Alier’s (1971) study of *Labour Contracts and Labour Arrangements* on the Spanish *Latifundia* showed that sharecropping is not necessarily incompatible ever with capitalist relation of production and appropriation. Sharecropping was one of the tenurial arrangements which involved during the transition

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from feudalism to capitalism in west Europe, and as in Spain, Italy and France) it coexisted with capital farmer and peasant proletariat (Cipalla 1981).

Traditionally the sharecropping is a conception, in which a rich landowner and a poor peasant cultivate him land on a 50-50 share arrangement basic accounts for only a small proportion of the sharecropping relationship (Jansen, 1989). The word '*adhi*' came from Sanskrit meaning 'half'. *Adhi* is an arrangement for the period of one cropping season or for one cropping calendar year during which the sharecropper cultivates the landowners' field for a fifty-fifty share of the produce (Karim, 1990). In that sense, as a relations of production, sharecropping entailed a specific relation between investment, labour, and redistribution. It required the investment of the necessary productive resources by one social groups and the labour power by another. The recent theoretical literature on share cropping has seen the emergence of a new consensus that, not with standing its allocative inefficiency restored to the models once that is untellable Cheungian assumption of complete landlord control over labour inputs is cropped - sharecropping represents a second best solution gives risk, labour, monitoring, and difficulties, scale economic or input market imperfections (Boyce, 1987).

Another finding of Cheung indicates that sharecropping represents not a barrier to efficiency but an instrument that back to improved efficiency in the fact of market imperfection that would leads to even greater inefficiency in the absence of sharecropping. The rehabilitation of sharecropping in economic theory rests, however on the assumption of a given distribution of land ownership within which sharecropping emerges as a mode of cultivation (Boyce, 1987).

The present sharecropping system in Bangladesh should be received and new legislation on sharecropping should be enacted. For example, the '*Tebhaga*' model (one third of the harvest for the landowner, one-third for the tiller and the one-third for the provider for inputs, who may be either the owner or the tiller has long been in practice in country). But it was never being seen to the following in the remote rural area in the strictest sense. Normally in Bangladesh wherever sharecropping exists, the produce is equally divided between the landowner and the tenant, but sometimes the share of the landowner comes down to one third of the gross produce. The proportion in which it is actually divided is chiefly determined by local customs, but it also depends on in certain extent on the quality of the land, the quality and the kind of produce, the landowner toward the expenses and finally, the relation between the demand for and supply of such land. Although Bangladesh is a markedly unequal distribution, including a relative small number of large landowners who cultivate by means of the labour of others, and a relatively

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large number of landless or nearly landless peasants who work as wage labourers or sharecroppers. Ordinarily, the large landowners supplied the seed, bear the expenses of manure, and where he does this, share in the produce is half. In these cases where he does not bear any kind of these expenses, he had naturally to be content with a smaller share. This is however modified by other consideration or mentioned earlier. If the land is very fertile, or if the demand for such laid is very large in relation to the supply, the *borgadar* may agree to surrender a part of the customary share, while under revenue conditions, he may obtain somewhat more than that (Saha, 1997).

Like most of the developing countries the sharecroppers or *bargadars* are generally regarded as hired labourers in the rural society as well as in *char* village of Bangladesh. The owner of the land is supposed to have the right to it whenever he wishes and when is done, the sharecropper or the *bargadar* who is ousted do not show any opposition or resentment against this transfer because of his insecure socio-economic position. Often, however, if the *bargadar* hopeless to be an honest and efficient farmer, he is allowed to cultivate the same land for a long period or a number of years. The apprehension that continued cultivation of a same plot by the same person may lead to the creation of some sort of right is the root of the transfer that generally taken place. In such cases, a good sharecropper is reinstated on the same land after a short interval.

From various study it has been observed that the rent of the sharecropped land seems to be usually high. In Bangladesh, both owing to its insecurity and to the high incidence of rent, sharecropping turns out to be a highly exploitative form of production arrangement. Hence its popularity among landowners is high in Bangladesh agriculture. In many cases, landowners and tenant, sharecropping system is very much rational. When situation is one has more land that can be cultivated by family labour. However, not imply dynamic effects of sharecropping in Bangladesh were observed by Schumpeter. In Bhaduri's model of 'semi-feudalism' the static inefficiencies associated with sharecropping are reinforced by additional dynamic inefficiencies arising from the 'landlords' resistance to the introduction of productivity-increasing technology. Moreover, we briefly raise the question of the economic efficiency of the sharecropping system. Much more of the recent work on the theory of sharecropping, however, points to the prediction; in so far as shorter tenancies reflect greater pressure by landlords to maximize returns, they would be expected to be associated with higher input use. Several data has been showed here, which are based on a much larger example of such households from through-out rural Bangladesh; indicate the fertilizer use in somewhat lower on sharecropped lands. Greater disparities could be expected with respect to Labour use. Insecurity of tenure appears to be associated with higher input use

and both these features may reflect more production-oriented landlords, but slice landlords differ in this respect, this findings does not contradict the overall conclusion that sharecropping as a general rule, is associated with lower input use and lower land productivity (Boyce, 1987).

Sharecropping System in Char Dumla

Sharecropping, locally known as *barga*, is the feature of land distribution in Char Dumla. In this section, the researcher has going to focus on the sharecropping system of char land. The main to be explore to the different types of sharecropping relationship and to discuss the circumstances under which they occur. At the same time, the researcher also wanted to convey an impression of the complexity of their opportunity situation and to underline that credit and mortgage relationship could not be studied in isolation. It can be emphasized that most credit and mortgage relationship were not single standard. There are different types of rights and obligation which were also an integrated as a part of the relationship.

Sharecropping is a widely disputed issue in Bangladesh, particularly in *char* areas. In this reasons the '*tebhaga*' model has not long been in practice in this area in its strictest sense. In this area considering the complex relationship between landowners and the tenant, the terms and the conditions of sharecropping seem to be simple. The sharecropping system in the village depends on many terms and conditions. The conditions for this system are usually verbal; no written records are maintained or renewed every year. The share agreement of the study area is the most frequently observed type. Normally, in this agreement the landowner receive half of the harvest.

The share arrangements are some elaborations of share agreements made for a better understanding of the harvesting system in the study area. As a standard practice, the *bargadar* (tiller) bears all the costs surrenders one-half of the harvest to the landowner receives another half, but it reality the equation is not that simple. The estimated cost for share arrangements are best drawn from the sharecroppers in the village. In the study areas people are very much poor and usually they have to hire all the inputs like ploughs and bullocks, they even by pesticides, fertilizer (if needed) and so on.

Another feature of the sharecropping system in the village is farming that depends on many factors, chiefly the nature of base and the commitment of the parties entering into a sharecropping agreement. The duration of the lease is also an important factor. But the fact remains that the owner of the land can enjoy privileges if he maintains a human or social relationship with his sharecroppers. In case, the landowner without going for sharecropping

cultivates his own land through hired labour and employees agricultural workers on yearly contracts, he would be likely to obtain better harvests than a sharecropping agreement would yield. In an understanding of the impression of complexity of the opportunity situation, both sharecropping and mortgage relationships in the village could not be studied in isolation. In this regard attempts have been taken to focus on the sharecropping of the land in the study village. The main aim will be to explore the different type of sharecropping relationships and to discuss the circumstances under which they occur.

Two issues can be observed in the processes of sharecropping relations: first, the households that rent out land on a sharecropping basis (the landowners) are identified; and second, the households that sharecropper and the land (the tenants or *barga chasi*) are presented and an attempt is made to access the economic importance of sharecropping for the tenants. The comparison of the tenancy status of Bangladesh as a whole and *Noakhali* district has some similar trends on average but there are sharp distinctions as well. In the following table 6.5 the scenario of rural households by types of tenancies in Bangladesh and *Noakhali* is shown.

Table 6.5: Rural Households by Types of Tenancies in Bangladesh and Noakhali, 1996

Status	No. of HH (Bangladesh)	% of Total (Bangladesh)	Land Area (in Acres)	% of Total	Land Area (in Acres) <i>Noakhali</i>	% of Total <i>Noakhali</i>
Owner	11807551	66.23	12093126	59.04	251732	69.14
Owner- cum- Tenant	4206072	23.59	7957785	38.85	82939	22.78
Tenant	1814595	10.18	433699	2.11	29437	8.08
Total	17828218	100.00	20484560	100.00	137508	100.00

Source: BBS, Bangladesh Census of Agriculture (Rural), 1996.

The data in the table indicates that the land is being concentrated to the owner; on the other hand it is decreasing gradually from the owner-cum-tenants and tenants. According to the data, 1,18,07,551 households owns 66.23% of total cultivable land, 42,06,072 of owner-cum-tenant households owns 23.59% of the cultivable land area and the tenants (18,14,595) owns only 10.18% of cultivable land. The same trends are followed in the case of *Noakhali* as well; 2,51,732 households owns 69.14% of total cultivable land, 82,939 of owner-cum-tenant households owns 22.78% of the cultivable land area and the tenants (29,437) owns only 8.08% of cultivable land.

This indicates two important trends: first, most of the landowners prefer to keep most of their land to themselves for cultivation; and second, landlessness is gradually pushing the marginal peasants to labourers. Since sharecropping is being replaced by own cultivation and in this case farming is being done mostly under the own management of the landowners, landless labourers are earning their living more and more as day labourers undertaking any work they can find. The pattern of the distribution of the size of landholding, as it changes over time, is also indicative of an increasing rate of pauperization of peasant families in rural Bangladesh.

The pattern of ownership of productive assets particularly land releases a set of forces that determines the relationship between various groups of farmers centering on land. Data pertaining to the ownership structure of land, which in its turn determines the land-man relation, is rather scanty in *Noakhali* vis-à-vis study area. The collected data from the study area (table 6.6) indicates that the owner household is 275 which constitute a total of 60.71%, owner-cum-tenant is 123 which constitute 27.15% land area, and tenant household is 55 which occupy only 12.14% of the total land area. Owner tenancy occupies most of the land area, owner-cum-tenant occupies nearly half of land occupied by owner and tenants occupy the least land area. The following table 6.6 would show the tenancy status in the village Char Dumla.

Table 6.6: Tenancy Status in the Village Char Dumla

Status	Number of Households	Percentage
Owner	275	60.71
Owner-cum-Tenant	123	27.15
Tenant	55	12.14
Total	453	100.00

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

In Char Dumla land crisis is so high and sharecropping is the main way for poorer households to gain access to land. In the standard form of sharecropping in Char Dumla the cultivators bear all the cost and give one half of the crop to the landowner as rent. The types of sharecropped system in the term 'share in' - to indicate sharecroppers who take others land for cultivation, and 'share out'- those households which give land to others to share-crop. Overall 39.29% households of the village are involved in sharecropping arrangements. It is most significant for the middle classes; 29.58% of poor and 1.99% of rich households 'share-in' some land, and smaller proportion i.e. 4.64% 'share out'. The poorest at least involve 60.71% households neither 'share in' nor 'out'. All of the richest households share out their land and are not involved in share in.

Terms and Conditions of Sharecropping

Main reasons for sharecropping system were stated by the villagers to be as follows:

- i) Achieve inheritance property rights and traditionally been they are not used to cultivating the land;*
- ii) The plots are far away from where the absentee landlord lives;*
- iii) Other non-agricultural jobs in rural or semi-urban areas are more lucrative and suitable for landholders than farming;*
- iv) Live urban or semi-urban area and they cannot therefore cultivate the land because they can not engage cultivation and manage wage-labourers to do it;*
- v) Sometimes they owned little agricultural land that it is not economically to cultivate the land;*
- vi) Lack of each amount;*
- vii) They have not sufficient modern or traditional equipment to cultivate the land;*
- viii) Lack of implementation of modern inputs and fertilizer;*
- ix) No cattle and plough to cultivate the land;*
- x) Traditional power wielders (as U.P. members, samaj jotdars, or matabbars);*
- xi) For better production;*
- xii) Very large landholding;*
- xiii) To help poor (economically weak) kin-members or peasants;*
- xiv) To help poor peasant;*
- xv) Without risky share- production; and*
- xvi) Locally absentee and other source of income.*

However, the following tables (6.7 and 6.8) would give a picture about the pattern of sharecropping in and out in the village Char Dumla.

Table 6.7: Pattern of Sharecropping (in) in Char Dumla

Categories	No. of HH in each Group	No. of HH associated with sharecropping	%	Total Area under sharecropping in (in Acre)	%
Landless	72	55	8.43	47.07	0.86
Marginal	246	37	53.37	86.80	18.07
Small	49	42	12.36	154	32.05
Middle	62	35	20.79	138.28	28.80
Large	24	09	5.06	53.7	11.18
Total	453	178	100.00	480.48	100.00

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The above table illustrates that in the village Char Dumla 8.43% landless 53.37% marginal, 12.36 small, 20.79% middle and 5.06% rich tenants are associated with the pattern of sharecropping in. This further signifies that the greater number of tenants belongs to the marginal social group in the village.

Table 6.8: Pattern of sharecropping (out) in Char Dumla

Categories	No. of HH in each Group	No. of HH associated with sharecropping	%	Area associated with sharecropping out (in Acre)	%
Landless	72	00	00	00.00	00
Marginal	246	05	23.80	2.92	2.38
Small	49	03	14.29	3.40	2.78
Middle	62	06	28.57	22.20	18.06
Large	24	07	33.33	94.40	76.80
Total	453	21	100.00	122.92	100.00

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The above table indicates the status of the social groups of the village in terms of sharecropping out of their land. Thus among the total 21 (4.63%) households of the village, who use to share out their land, no one belongs to the landless social group, 23.80% belong to marginal (sharecropping out 2.92 acres of land), 14.29% to small (3.40 acres of land), 28.57% to medium (22.20 acres of land) and 33.33% to the larger group (94.40 acres of land) of people. This reveals the fact that most of the households, who are attached to sharecropping out their land belong to the large social class (33.33%) in the village. Again, the table 6.9 below shows the status of households associated with sharecropping in and out in the village in terms of size of land.

Table 6.9: Households Associated with Sharecropping in and out in the Village (in Acre)

Size of the Land	No. of HH Sharecropping (in)	%	No. of HH Sharecropping (out)	%
0.50- 1.00	31	17.42	7	33.33
1.01- 2.00	55	30.90	1	4.76
2.01- 4.00	23	12.92	2	9.52
4.01- 7.00	30	16.85	3	14.29
7.01- 9.00	17	3.75	1	4.76
9.01- 11.00	09	5.06	7	33.33
11.0 +	13	7.30	0	00.00
Total	178	100.00	21	100.00

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The terms and conditions of the sharecropping system which already discussed are fully applicable in Char Dumla. Some times the reasons behind apparently similar behavior are very different for different peasant classes. In the study village some richest farmers' households sometimes share out land to cut cash outlays, bestow patronize and to minimize investment of household labour, particularly their young sons are less interested in working on the land, preferring businessman and traders or salaried jobs. On the other hand, 7% households mostly share-out land only when it is too far away for them to cultivate directly 12% of poor class households also share-out their land, either because of distance or shortage of household labour.

While for some sharing out land in thus an expression of strength, for other it is a statement of weakness. The market for sharecropping is not an open one for these poor households and often they share out kinsmen, balancing the social resource of his protection against the material resources that a more efficient cultivator might provide. Again the terms of entry to the sharecropping market are thus clearly stratified by class and gender.

In Char Dumla there are 6 households that sharecropping out land. The main reason for renting the land out on a sharecropping basis was that they were absentee landowners living in urban areas. Of these 6 households, two belonged to the marginal, one to the middle and 3 to the rich classes. 21 (4.63%) households are sharecropping out of owned little land but had available man power to cultivate this land, but they did not cultivate this land, because they have traditionally claimed to belong to non-cultivating 'aristocratic' lineage. 4 households mentioned that they sharecropped out land because it was so far away. These households sharecrop only for one season

and will take the land back and cultivate it later. The other households, owning little land, sharecropped out of the land because they did not have a plough, cattle or any other support for cultivation. In the study village some rich absentee landlords who leased out their land on a yearly basis. For each acre of land they demanded 25 to 30 thousands take per year, depending on the location and quality of the land. The money was demanded sometimes advanced or not. Although the return to the landowner for his land was less than he would obtain through sharecropping this system required negligible involvement on his part in the village.

The sharecropper in the agrarian structure is a constant shift from plot to plot and season by season. Sharecropping is one kind of land tenancy all over the areas in every regions of Bangladesh. It is a contract out of farming of land for a certain percentage of yields (usually 50:50 shares). But the terms and conditions of sharecropping vary from region to region, sometimes from village to village and specially char village. If the land owners are unable to cultivate land for either he is an absentee landlord or he is forced by circumstances to sell his draught animals and implements, he rents out the land under certain terms. The sharecroppers are eliminated out of the rented land at sweet will of the landlord. If they sharecrop on 50:50 bases supplying all the inputs, it may mean less attention and care by them for the cultivation of rented land. The sharecroppers after all run the great risk when it comes to cultivating land. In the event of a harvest failing or partially failing, they can hardly recover their inputs. The large farmers stay out of the range in the event of a harvest completely fails. At least they will not fetch any share of the crops but they do not lose their capital, if the sharecroppers pay for all the inputs. By retaining or eliminating the sharecroppers at their sweet will, landowners retain elements of their traditional power. But, in the process it has severely weakened the interdependence and stability or relations among people at different strata of the *char* village hierarchy. In this terms and conditions of *barga* (sharecropping) system is usually can be seen sharper in to the village Char Dumla. There are variations in the economic background of the households that obtained land on a sharecropping basis in the village.

In the study village there are 178 (39.29%) households of tenants or *barga chashi* (sharecropper) who are related with sharecropping owning a very small agricultural holding or no farm holdings. Rich farmers took in less land for farming than they shared out. The highest portion of households taking in land appeared to be the poor (landless, marginal and small peasants) in the study village. They would like to sharecrop more land if additional lands were available. If therefore, indicates that the poor peasants and some portion of middle peasants of Char Dumla are more dependent on the families offering sharecropping. The *barga-chashi* (sharecropper) spends a lot of labour and time

and invests on the land they take on lease. They spend of money and supply any kinds of inputs like labour, seed, fertilizer and techniques etc, are responsible for production. In the study village from the survey that a household with 2-3 able fit bodied male members can cultivate about minimum more than 2 acres of land in one season. Generally, the conditions for *barga chashis* are usually verbal. As per the contract, the produce divided into two equal shares (50:50). The land is given on lease for one year on the basis of verbal and no written records. In some cases, however, the *bargadar* (landowners) extend a period of lease. Many *bargadhar* (landowners) charge their *barga chashi* every year, but there are some household (*barga chasi*) who continue to get lease for years together from some landholding families. In the study area, very few people are in a position to offer (only 21 households) land for cultivation because of which large number of people competes for the *barga* contract. A large number of villagers cultivate share-in land. Out of 453 household, 178 (39.29%) are cultivating share- in land, while 21 households share out their land. A large number of sharecropper (12.14%) belongs to the landless class, a total of 123 (27.15%) households are cultivating share-in land inspite of their want of means of production, marginal farmer also have share-in land, and they stand for 37 households, some of them also share-out land, but they are very few in number- only 7 (33.33%) households. Small farmers also have share-in lands they stand for 42 (12.36%) households while none of them shared- out their land.

In this village sharecropping helps some of the real peasants to mobilize them upward or downward, sometimes surplus production makes them able to purchase more land or vulnerable to normal crop failure. Usually land is give for certain year for sharing, and after that period, tenants are changes or their agreement is renewed, on consensus, however, tenancy may be given for long period. In the study village most of the tenants work hardly and sometimes hired labour if necessary for the cultivation.

iii) Landless Labourers

Those having a small plot of land not in the position to share in more land and those having no land at all, are forced to sell their labour as daily wage earners are the landless labourers. Among them there is competition as their number is high and at time there is little paid work available. This labour force can be divided in the following three groups-

- i) *those who work as permanent labour for one family. They are sure about work twelve months a year against a very low pay, some food and clothing,*

- ii) *those who are not permanently working on one farms, but called for at that farm when work is available; and*
- iii) *those who have no permanent relation with any employers; these united labours have a very rescuers life, as they are never sure whether there will be work.*

Usually at sunset, arrangements are made for the next day. Especially the older labourers are in a difficult position as young able bodied persons are preferred as labourers. It is very difficult time for their families as a long time they do not get any cash. The labourers do not even bring back a good amount of money, as the competition of large number of migrating labourers again pulls down the daily wages. Usually there meals are given as payment and only a small amount in cash or kind (paddy). In the meantime, the rest of the family has to depend on the labour of children as cow boys, maidservants, or the little profit that can be made by selling chickens or eggs or by husking paddy with the *dbeki* (wooden pounding device). Meals are not taken regularly. If loans have to be taken to line through this period, the earned small amount brought back by the labourers, might not even be enough to repay that loan. Family ties very seldom favor poor members of their family. Only in the beginning when a member starts to become poor, better of members of his *bangsha* might employ these people on their needy days for small jobs, out of shame for outsiders. But in a later stage they will not even regard them as member of that same *bangsha*. For many of the problems that marginal and landless farmers face, they have to depend on the richer and often more powerful rural elite. Very frequently, however, they are cheated by them in various ways, deprived of their rights, only because they can not read, and thus often do not know what they sign with their thumb impression. Land is even sometimes snatched away from them, through falsification of papers. In *char* land government *kebas* land that was to be registered in the name of land poor farmers often ends up in the hands to the better off or newly growth of land.

There are huge numbers of landless people in Bangladesh. At that sense there are 72 (15.89%) households or landless labourers or '*kamla*' households belongs in the study village. These households have no cultivable or agricultural land, it can also mean a virtual lack of all possession, even a small piece of land on which to build a house. Feeding of insecurity and fear dominate the lives of most members of the landless labourers. But they do mostly agricultural and non- agricultural work. Their employment is not permanent and secure. They work wherever they get opportunity to work. Through many of them try to get land on lease of small holdings. Landowners (*bargadar*) are very much doubtful about labourers capacity for investment. If the labour has given some land as security for debt to one of the more prosperous farmers in the study area, the labour will fear that he might not be

able to get in back. The money he received a loan against this land might have been used for home consumption. If the land that is left with him, it is not sufficient to feed his family and even when he sells his extra labour he does not raise enough income. So in that case, they prefer to enjoy them as daily labourers locally known as “*badla* or *gabor*” of the landowners and sharecroppers for work so straight to the field after their morning meal. Here the researcher mentioned that the landless villagers, all male members and include their children of twelve and above work as day labourers.

There is a tendency in the village to give preference the agricultural labourers from both in and outside the village. The agricultural labourers of the study area are known as ‘*badla*’, but the villagers distinguish the outside labourers by calling them as *kamla* or *majur*. Majority of the *char* villagers are dependent on agricultural activities. Here is the employment position of the landless and small farmers who are to depend upon the middle or the rich peasants and others who are economically superior to them. Although there is general shortage of labour in the village the position of the landless and agricultural labourers in respect of employment were weakened by the entry of outsiders in the local labour market. There are a considerable number of people from other parts of the districts there is a good deal of temporary emigration. Chiefly of day labourers to the neighboring district or village for a short of time during the slack season. They only remain away a few labour for cultivation is required again in the village. Char Dumla’s picture is no exception in this situation.

The migrant agricultural labourers generally come from the other *thanas* of *Noakhali* district. Recently there is a drastic change in the pattern of migratory labourers of the labour market in the study area. Now a day the migrant labourers mostly come from (North Bengal) *Rangpur*, *Dinajpur* and *Kurigram*. In these areas there are many labourers whose crops have either been damaged or whose transplantation and harvesting work occur at different times, or they come from an area where the cropping pattern is less intensified than this area and their yield are not satisfactory. But more often than that, those who are employed as *badla* in the study are victims of river erosion. These labourers come to the village in batches from southern part of *Noakhali* named “*Hatiya*” and *Nijhum Dip* (Island) by boat or sea truck. They could be found in the local “*atcupalia bazaar*” and “*khalifar haat*” market during season of high labour demand. The employer peasants (middle and rich farmers who associated as production) of the village, those they need *badla* or *gabor* (*kamla*) to go to the local market and collect the required number of labourers after bargaining. On the ‘open’ market for contracts on a daily basis the wages vary through out the year, and the both the size of the wage and the “mode of payment” are an expression of supply and demand and the strength of the relative bargaining position of employers and employees. The rate differs according the demand

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and supply of labourers. However, normal wage rate for single *badla* or *gabur* in peak season for Tk. 80-120 including 3 meals per day. Without meals this rate can be remain same but there is installed a condition for working hour that is 8 am to 2 pm at present labour arrangement in the study area. In lean season this rate reduced up to Tk.60-80 including 3 meals. According to this view of the labourers the wage should be the same on the “open market” for old as well as for hardworking young *badla*.

In fact, at present the demand for migrant labourers increased in the study area because of the introduction of HYV seed, T-*Aman*, *rabi* crops, modern techniques in agricultural production, fertilizer and pesticides which allowed farmers to grow more than one crops in a seasonal calendar. In lean seasons many of the physically weaker and not so hard working men would not be hired unless they had special relationship with their employers. In the study village, payment in cash only, or a combination of cash and in kind, is the most normal modes of payments. Labour plays an important role in agricultural production in normal situation and crop production in the char area had increased alarmingly, importance flavor has also produced to a great extent in the study village. There are following three types of labour prevailing in the study area- daily, seasonal (2-3 months), and annual contract.

The economic status of the households of village Char Dumla can be formulated on the basis of estimated income from all sources including agricultural and non agricultural activities. So far the categories of village people associated with agriculture and their interrelationship have been discussed in the study. The village also inhabits people of different occupational groups who are not directly associated with agricultural activities. In this regard the differences between the agricultural and nonagricultural occupational groups are analyzed focusing on the earning capabilities and class status.

Among the non-agricultural occupational group of the village drivers, rickshaw pullers, fishermen, petty traders, petty contractors and construction workers and other service holders comprise the largest group consisting of 73 (16.11%) households. Within these households only 37 (8.17%) have very small agricultural holdings and 21 (4.63%) have only homestead areas. It is mentionable that due to their engagement in non agricultural activities these 37 (8.17%) households do not cultivate their land by themselves and as such invest the hired labourers in the land. In the agrarian hierarchy of the village, other non agricultural population e.g. carpenters; rickshaw pullers and *chowkidars* are closer to the categories of marginal peasants and landless labourers.

The landless labourers do not have anything except his sickle. So in the case of a rickshaw puller or a carpenter do not have anything but his legs to peddle the rickshaw and the carpenter had nothing but his hammer and digger. None of them have own any cultivable land. Both the working for daily bread and living hand to mouth. But only their nature of works is different. A landless labourers works on others field when as a rickshaw pullers pulls others rickshaw and the driver drives other vehicles and the carpenters works on the other shops. When a rickshaw puller has to chosen an alternative work, he chooses the work of a landless labourer. When a landless labourer has no agricultural work to do he does for rickshaw pulling or any other work non agricultural work. Among the non agricultural population there are 14 households whose heads are engaged in salaried jobs and 31 households having shops in village and in local market. But almost all these households have agricultural holdings some of them lease out their land some of them get their land cultivated by hired labourers. So, they are also associated with agricultural production. No doubt a portion of their income comes from their shops and salaried jobs but agriculture is the main source for many of them. Some of their total income is almost equal to that of rich farmers. 19 petty traders are the landowners, owning more than 6 acres of land. Though it has been grouped the job holders, shop keepers and petty traders with non agricultural production but they can also be grouped with and considered as agricultural population as land is a major source of their land and livelihood. It has already been stated that the standard of living of some of the non agricultural population is no better than that of landless labourers. The housing pattern, food habits, and other amenities of life of the non agricultural groups excepting salaried job holders and traders are similar to those of landless labourers. Apart from jobholders, traders, some foreign employees, other non agricultural groups as well as landless labourers live at the subsistence level. Only the nature of the work is different. The standard of living of the traders and jobholders is similar to that of landowners. The land owning class stands on the top of the class hierarchy. Sharecroppers stand in the middle of the class hierarchy. Some petty traders, subcontractors and village doctors could be compared with the sharecroppers as far as their standard of living is concerned. The standard of living of the rest of the occupational groups is similar to that of landless labourers. The later stand at the bottom of the class hierarchy in Char Dumla.

6.6 Cropping Arrangement in Char Dumla

The economy of the village Char Dumla under the District of *Noakhali* is mainly agricultural and no structural change occurred in it ones the last decades. Agriculture still remains the main source of earning and employment for and overwhelming majority of the people in *char* area. The soil in a rich alluvial deposit and requires generally little preparation for cultivation of the

char land, as in any other parts of Bangladesh almost same, it is usually done by hired labour through sharecropping arrangements or against harvest or cash contracts, depending on the size of the land under cultivation. Recently, there has been large extension of cultivation according to that system. Therefore, the system under which the cultivations of crops are carried out can be broadly divided into three different categories following Baqee (1998)-

- i) *Kamla or Badla- Harvesting of crops by hiring daily wage labours;*
- ii) *Barga-Sharing of yields between the tenant and the landowner. They got the land cultivated by hired labours instead of introducing bargaits; and*
- iii) *Chukti- A sort of contract, which can be divided in to two subsystems:*
 - a) *Thika- Tenant has to cede a fixed quantity of harvest against the size that he allowed to cultivate; and*
 - b) *Lagani- where landowner receives money in advance from tenants for a given plot and the contracts as made for a certain or stipulated period.*

Causal workers, known as in major as well as called the hired labour system in *char*-lands is known as *kamla* system. In this system, *kamla* or a *bodla* are employed on a daily basis, depending on the need for the job. The landowner hires labour for the market and they are paid wages on a daily basis the prevailing market-rate. They assign them different farming activities. The shorten work hour are usually for physically heavy work such as land preparation and transplanting. For long hour, the labourers are usually provided with each kind or two squares meals and snacks. The *kamla* system is generally used by landowning farmers with lands adjacent to or who have sufficient knowledge of farm management and farm preparation with enough time to spare for hard supervision. Contract workers or *chukti* or *thika* are hired to complete a specific operation for a piece rated wage, depending on the size of the parcel of land on which the work has to be done. In local words, the landowner goes for a contract with the tenants. In *char* area this system may be however be divided in to two sub-systems.

The *thika* agreement provides for the tenants to cede a fixed amount of product crops to the landowner after the harvest. The amount, however, varies from place to place and even from person to person in *char* area. But the certain area this amount is fixed. In the study area the presence of a standard system as the amount of crop sharing. The total cost of the production usually

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has to be paid by the tenant's liability. If there is a crop failure, both the landowner and the tenants have to reach some sort of understanding. In many cases the tenant's especially poor tenants are obliged to repay his debts the following season.

Lagani is the much known system in char area that system refers to an arrangement where peasant offer some money in advanced against a plot for certain cropping products periods. Its system suddenly worst of all the deals for the peasants because any uncertain events like early storm, drought may destroy the crops, etc. In this situation the peasant loses not only the crops but also the money given in advance to the owner. In that case it has been observed that a common and much full attitude to the owner for the tenants side.

In Char Dumla the *chukti* system is very much popular among the maximum absentee owners who pursue some sort of different professions or work for a side-by-side salary, elsewhere. However the tenants have to work very hard to please the landowner and to save the crop and harvest.

6.7 Mortgage System in Char Dumla

Mortgage system in Bangladesh agriculture may be formal or informal. If one is to take loan in lieu of property from the bank he is to mortgage his land. This system is officially recognized. Informal mortgage or when peasants take loans from the moneylender or big land owners is more prevalent in the area. Because it is easy for a peasant to get money in time in lieu of his property. In the formal one though safer, official procedure restricts a person to go for it. In case of natural disaster, crop failure, or for an emergency occasion, like marriage, treatment, other social occasion etc. peasants go for mortgage. Usually small and marginal farmers and sometimes medium farmers also mortgage their lands for money. The amount of money that is paid also varies in accordance to land level and crop production.

In informal mortgage, peasants take loan from the large farmers or moneylenders keeping his land mortgaged to the farmer. In this system peasant who is giving mortgage is to sign on a non-judicial stamps in front of minimum two witnesses. Another terms for this system is that lessee must enjoy at least one crop of the mortgaged land. As such if a person wants to return his land back within a week as so after giving the mortgage, he can not claim to get it back since the lessee is to enjoy it least one crop usually in this system no time is fixed for the repayment of money. Interesting is that, big landowners or moneylenders are more interested to take mortgage lands from the marginal class because they know that peasants in this class in course of

time will be bound to sell out their land to them because, they will not be able to return the money.

Another type of mortgage system, related to crop and known as '*dadon*', is popularly practiced in *char* based agriculture. Under this system, loans are advanced against standing crops, with an obligation to sell to the creditor. The prices fixed are much lower than the prevailing market prices. In this system, after plantation, *mohajans* (big traders) or big landowners advances money to the planters or peasants on condition that after harvesting, peasant or planters are to return their advanced money not in cash but in kind at the rate that was fixed earlier. Crop recorded some, 'plain tabs' of the *dadon* system which involved a chain of interest groups. The victim is a poor peasant who sells his future standing crops for meeting either production or consumption needs. For instance, thousand taka is advanced in return for pledging eight mounds of paddy. Under this system, a poor peasant produces takes cash loan some weeks or months prior to the harvest. When the harvest is over, the lender takes his crop and sells it in local markets for 210 to 255 taka per mound. Crow estimates that the implicit rate of interest is between 200% and 800% (Crow, 1988).

It has been observed that the mortgaging system is a common phenomenon in the study area. This type of land transactions and associated money lending resolves the issues of control over land. The features associated with land transaction of this type and sale of land tell us, is that in the study area the closest relatives; brother, neighbours, and *gushti* members are the most important sources of credit. There is a certain ignoring involved when a *gushti* member, because of poverty, sell his land to outsiders. It can reveal that the material resources in the *gushti* are small or that there is little unity and solidarity among the households in the *gushti*.

It is generally accepted that land is sold at a lower price between the relatives. A sale of land well below the existing market rate confesses the advantages such as a general economic, social and political support for the peasant by his close kin and *gushti* members. With these conditions favoring transfer of land within the *gushti* how can it than be explained that a fairly large amount of sale and mortgage of land takes place outside the *gushti*. Some main reasons for this have already mentioned above. All the other members of the *gushti* could be so poor that they could not afford to finance the deficit of one of their relatives. It could also happen that some of them are able to supply regular credit to any of the others. It could also be that the brothers of *gushti* members do not deal with each other. It is not unusual for there to be a very poor relationship between some brothers, due for example, to disagreements about the division of the inheritance property. When the relationship between a more well to do

brother and a proper one is bad, it is very easy for an unrelated rich peasant to exploit this situation and offer the poor brother better credit term than the brother will. Here the table 6.10 below shows the pattern of land mortgage in system in the village.

Table 6.10: Land Mortgage 'in' Pattern in the Village

Category	No. of HH	%	Size of the land Mortgaged in	%
Landless	00	00	00	00
Marginal	36	50.00	27.76	22.80
Small	16	22.22	23.88	19.62
Middle	20	27.78	70.16	57.63
Large	00	00.00	00	00
Total	72	100.00	121.74	100.00

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

From the table it is observed that in case of mortgaging in the land of the village out of 72 households involved in mortgaging in of the land marginal people are large in number (50.00%) getting 22.80% of land whereas small and middle classes people are less in number. But in terms of the size of mortgaging in land the middle class people have the largest size of land (57.63%). However, both the landless and large households are not at all involved in this mode of land relations. Thus it is significant in the village which determines the group status of the belonging people where the rich groups maintain their position by not involving in this pattern of relations in the land. Again the following table 6.11 would show the pattern land mortgage out system in the village.

Table 6.11: Land Mortgage 'out' Pattern in the Village

Category	No. of HH	%	Size of the land Mortgaged out	%
Landless	00	00	00	00
Marginal	20	60.61	15.95	27.38
Small	06	18.18	12.40	21.29
Middle	06	18.18	19.90	34.17
Large	01	0.30	10.00	17.17
Total	33	100.00	58.25	100.00

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The above table shows that among 33 households involved in mortgaging out of the land most of the households (60.61%) belong to the marginal group with 27.38% of the land in grab and both small (18.18%) and middle (18.18%)

class people are also involved in this relation. Here the middle class also plays a big part in the village where there is no or little participation of the landless and large classes of people.

In Char Dumla, noted that the remarkable rise in land prices (up to 1.30 lakh taka per acre) had been to not only demographic pressure, but also purchase of land by new types of absentee owner. This happened particularly after the boom with remittances from the people who are working in Middle East as well as other countries of the world. The net result of this phenomenal rise in the market value of land is to effectively price the land out of the reach of the poorest sections of peasantry, particularly the landless class. Correlatively, conflicts for possessions of highly valued land become endemic contributing to the rising trend of landlessness in rural Bangladesh and this is almost same for the study village.

Apart from partitioning at inheritance, the major social mechanism bringing about shifts in the distribution of landed property has been the market. Market transactions in land (apart from lease or hiring contracts) involved either direct sales or the usufructuary mortgage.

In fact, land has long been the key resources in rural Bangladesh and a central factor in households, social status and economic strategies. Land is much more than just another commodity. It represents security and is held in an almost mystical regard. In this regard, in Char Dumla, the villagers have been classified on the basis of their landed property which they own or don't. Like many other rural societies and the different scholar classification are also three different social classes depending on the ownership of landed property.

They are landowners, sharecroppers and landless labourers. They lead their life styles in different socio-economic conditions. If we apply Marx's theory of class identification in Char Dumla, only the landowning group and the landless group can be treated as class on the basis of landownership. Sharecropper or the small holding peasants are not a class in true sense. Marx; in Capitalist societies, the major agents are social classes primarily the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Middle and the peasant classes do not share the life conditions which enable them to act as collective agents, and they tend to follow a strong leader (Craib, 1997).

If the above mentioned classes of Char Dumla are to be considered as classes in terms of 'class consciousness' it would not be appropriate to address them as social classes in its true sense. Because in Marx's view for a class formation the notion of the development of a class-for-itself is compulsory. But the present study reveals that these classes do not possess the notion of class-for-

itself. Social classes are always changing their position and status. Every society and every social class is trying their utmost to change their economic and social position. In course of time some classes are losing their position due to their personal and unexpected circumstances. In Char Dumla it has been observed that the villagers are mobilizing them either vertically or horizontally. Some are losing their lineage status of high land ownership and becoming landless labourers, while some from the landless labourers are now the richest persons in the village. Some are expanding their land-scale, and invest capital on it. Small size of households are changing their economic position with the help of micro credit provided by some non-government organization like GB, NRDS, CODEC and many others. In Char Dumla, land is the prime means of production, and land ownership is the major social determinant, which controls person's power and position. Land is a scarce commodity, the land tenure pattern indicates a sharp differentiation among the owners, so the changes of land ownership are reflected through changes in their socio-economic activities in the village. Bertocci (1970) found a strong correlation between high status lineage and land holding concentration in his study village of Comilla district. While studying the changing pattern of agrarian structure in Bangladesh between 1977 and 1978 Arefeen observed no correspondence between high status lineage and land concentration. This is also true for Char Dumla. There is no high status lineage in the village, which still holds supremacy in land holding; rather newly emerged farmers, who consider land as profitable and marketable commodity, are cultivating their land by wage labourers.

Now a days the linements of high status or *khandans* families are widely no more in existence because Char people and their fragmentation into small and nuclear households with the distribution of the land by lineage. Besides, the expansion of population and fragmentation of land has gradually reduced the size of individual and family holding. Thus the traditional land owner fragmented in the village. But still *char* land people can be categorized on the basis of their land ownership pattern, as observed in the present study, and these are rich, middle, small and marginal farmers and landless labourers. So land is the main basis of class differentiation in Char Dumla. Because land has been a marketable commodity, anyone who has money to purchase land, captures its ownership. In this case, those villagers who were earlier marginal or small farmers have emerged as big landowners today; on the other hand, descendents of some middle or rich farmers have now turned to marginal or small farmers. Therefore, it can be said that this has become a common class mobility in Char Dumla.

Recently modern technology introduced in agriculture has enhanced surplus income of the peasant. But this technology costs a large investment, which is

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possible for only wealthy peasants. But, the rich peasants do not interest to impose and imply this process. On the other hand poor peasants do not possess the ability to invest which rich peasant. At this circumstances, some land owners who has been treated agricultural farming as profitable and remunerative occupation. Though there are a small size of households which could increase their ownership size since the establishment of their households and the amount they have inherited. Some middle or large owners who are not absentee cultivators, they supervise the cultivation intensively and work by themselves with the hired labours can produce a surplus production. They always tend to mortgage in and purchase new fertile land on a minimal amount, taking the advantage of the poor helpless peasants. Peasants of this class try their utmost not to sell out, mortgage out and shared out their land, rather try to increase the amount. But this portion of this class is very little in the study area.

From the above discussions it can be said that the changes in land ownership pattern, relations of production also are changing. Earlier there was a patron-client relationship between landowners and sharecroppers in the village. But depending on a mode of inheritance among the descendents, in later times, land holdings are getting scattered and unequally distributed. Today, most of the big landowners in Char Dumla are not engaged directly in agricultural production. A few families employ themselves directly to cultivation of their own land with the help of hired labourers. Landless working class or the marginal farmers are more interested to share in and mortgage in land to change their miseries and survives. They are changing their economic condition, too. Mortgaging and sharecropping in land is open to all, and this situation in the village can be identified as a "market situation" as mentioned by Weber. So, land purchase is most important and significant in the study village and, in this sense, market situation determines the class situation of the village people. In other words, the present study village shows that the village people are accordingly categorized into different classes where the factor of landownership used to determine the belongingness of these people to different classes, i.e. the class structure of the village as a whole.

Chapter-7

Power Structure of Char Dumla

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- 7.3 Power Relations in Bangladesh
- 7.4 Political Structure of Bangladesh
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7.1 Concept of Power

Every social act is an exercise of power, every social relationship is power equations and every social group or system is an organization of power (Hawley, 1963). At the time of Hawley in 1963 some sociologists were giving serious attention to social power at the central dynamics within the process of social organizations (Lukes, 1977; Wrong, 1979; Giddens, 1984; Mann 1986). In his recent work on the history of social power Mann (1986: 11) asserted “societies are constituted of multiple overlapping and interacting sociological networks of power”. In the literature of social sciences it has been argued as the power of men over other men. Dennisha adopted a modified and expected definition of Brussels. Thus according to Brussels’s definition power is the capacity of some persons to produce and foreseen effects on others (Olsen, 1970). Power relation is a distinct kind of social relation. “Power” may be relatively concentrated or diffused and the share of power made by different individuals, strata, classes, professional groups, ethnic, racial or religious groups of greater or smaller. At the most general level the term power in modern social science refers to subsets of relations among social units in such a way that the behaviours of one or more units depend in some circumstances on the behaviours of the other units. Power is always relational and relative and it becomes more realistic as well. Although power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the bases on which this probability rests. Sociologically the concept of power is amorphous. All conceivable qualities of a person and all conceivable combination of circumstances may put in a position to impose his will in given situation (Weber, 1947).

In this regard an attempt has been made to understand the power structure of the *char* areas in southeastern Bangladesh, in particular, described as an interlocking pattern of powerlessness. Most of the social scientists have tried to identify the bases and sources of power. “Power, as perceived by many social scientists, mean command over resources of the state and control over men; it points to the ability of an individuals or groups to force the latter into obedience to and compliance with the former in a given society” (Bailey, 1960: 10). Thus power is defined as the ability of individuals and groups to realize their will in human affairs, even if it involves overcoming the resistance of others. Power brings about changes in people, in attitude, behaviour, motivation or direction - that would not have occurred in its absence. Again power affects the ability of people to make the world work on their behalf.

Most definitions of power stress influence over decisions affecting others (Goldhammer and Shills, 1939; Dahl, 1957; Cohen, 1970). According to Dahl (1957: 50) power is defined as “the relationship among social units such that

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the behaviour of one or more units depends in some circumstances on the behaviour of other units". To Cohen "power is the ability to influence the behaviour of other and or gain influence over the control of valued action" (Cohen, 1970: 488). Mair remarked "if power is the ability to control the actions of others, it could be attained in ways other than by holding formal positions" (Mair, 1964: 4). In the context of Bangladesh, Jahangir attempted to conceptualize power in terms of violence and consent (Jahangir, 1982). Without making any distinction between enforced consent and passive acceptance, he identified consent as the most important component of power. However, the ultimate analysis is that "power is the capacity to modify the conduct of individuals through the real or threatened use of punishment and rewards" (Dye, 1975: 4).

Differences and pattern or structure of power may be attributed primarily, mainly or partly to the way in which 'resources' or 'values' are distributed among the individual's strata, classes, and groups in different communities, countries, societies and historical periods. Harold Lassewell has constructed a comprehensive scheme of eight base values which, although not necessarily exhaustive, are certainly inclusive and these include power, respect, rectitude or moral standing, affection, well being, wealth, skill and enlightenment (Lassewell, 1952). In another case Dahl (1968) has referred to several categories to classify how researchers have dealt with power in their respective areas and these are as follows:

- i) *Cash and Credit;*
- ii) *Wealth;*
- iii) *Social Standing;*
- iv) *Control over the jobs;*
- v) *Control over sources of information;*
- vi) *Control over the information of others;*
- vii) *Popularity, esteem and charisma;*
- viii) *Ethnic solidarity; and*
- ix) *The right of vote.*

Marx argued that the social power originates primarily in economic production that it permeates all aspects of society (Olsen, 1970). "Power may be exercised over individuals or groups by offering them some things they value or by threatening to take away from them some things they cherish" (Khan, 1995: 2). According to Dye (1975) apart from the physical safety, health and jobs they also include the means of livelihood, knowledge, skills, social recognition, status and prestige, love and self respect (Baqee, 1998).

The concept of power has many dimensions. Etzioni has expressed the concern of human beings regarding power in the words that under most

circumstances, societal goals and decisions not supported by at least some degree of some kind of power will not be implemented (Etzioni, 1968). In that sense power is an unavoidable aspect of man's social existence. In order to understand the concept of power more critically, the theories of power of some important scholars, such as Marx, Weber, Dahrendorf and others have been elaborately discussed in the present study. Their ideas of social classes and social stratification have also been analyzed with a view to comprehend their concepts, theories and the sources of power.

7.2 Power Structure

Aristotle said that human being is the political species by nature. No man is beyond the political ideology. Man, by nature, includes the political affairs in his thinking. He, himself, thinks about his country, society and family. In his thinking, there may be a major difference between the state politics and the village politics. Village politics largely contrasts with the contemporary national politics or political system. The political leaders, who are in power, unilaterally, perform their activities through the help of the *thana* level leaders. The political leaders underestimate the people of their locality or village through their activities. The political leaders help only those people, who are the supporters of their own party and this type of practice deprives the mass people to a great extent.

If the political leaders work for the rural people beyond their political interest or ideology, the people will not be divided into different political parties. The people, who are living from hand to mouth, do not understand any politics or political actions and they are not the activists of any political party. They only want work for their subsistence. But, in fact, the political leaders always try to divide the rural people into different groups in terms of their followers and they give benefits only to the followers of their own political party at every level, such as, center, district, *thana*, union etc. The mass people are totally dissatisfied with this type of actions of the political leaders.

As an agrarian society the vast majority of people in Bangladesh depend on agriculture for survival. In an agro-based economy and society, the distribution of rights in land is of enormous importance to the economic system within which production, distribution, exchange and consumption take place. The distribution of rights in land helps to determine and reflect the structure of power in such a society. The contemporary distribution of rights in land in Bangladesh is the result of the historical evolution of a distinctive land tenure system affecting Bangladesh (Jannuzi & Peach, 1980).

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Bangladesh achieved its independent political identity of sovereign nationhood in 1971, while her people have a history of near about 2300 years. The main trend of analyzing its society is towards finding poverty, inequality, unemployment and conflict. The vast majority of population in Bangladesh faced endemic poverty and that the land was compared and ruled by foreign power for centuries one after another. The essential wealth and unit of production in Bangladesh is land. The traditional concept of Bengal village as 'self sufficient', 'republic' or a 'socio-economic autarchic unit' does no longer hold well. But the colonial foreign rulers and traders not only captured land, but also ruined the whole economy. While the colonial rulers were economically developed, this land was pushed backward, destroying local and indigenous trades, industries and institutions. Hartmann and Boyce (1988) in their study of *Kant*, a village in *Rangpur* District, observed the legacy of colonial history in Bangladesh. They remarked ironically that the profit from the lucrative trade in Bengali textiles helped to finance Britain's industrial revolution. Various and innumerable were the methods of oppressing the poor forever such as by fines, imprisonment, floggings and forcing bonds from them among others. Thus the country actually remained undeveloped.

Prior to the British rule, other European rulers and traders such as the Dutch and the Portuguese occupied parts of this land. Similarly before the European rulers the *Pathan* and *Mughal* prior to the Buddhist and the Hindu rulers also exploited the land of Bengal for more than five centuries. The major socio-structural element of the British colonial rule introduced in Bengal society was the system of private land ownership. This private ownership of land did not exist in the Western sense of the term in the sub-continent as a whole before the advent of British rule. The permanent land settlement act of 1793 vested land ownership upon the *Zamindars* in Bengal and as such lands become a commodity, which could be sold and bought. As a result, various social categories of absentee landlords and intermediaries' different denominations arose between *Zamindar* and the real tillers of the soil. Bertocci (1970) also referred to a form of stratification in the rural society of Bangladesh, which had its roots in the colonial rule. Their policies led to the creation of different hierarchies of landed interests and thus differentiated rural people. As the British made their original tax assessment so high that many estates were soon sold to pay arrears, land rapidly changed hands from the old Muslim aristocracy to a rising class of Hindu merchants. But with the creation of Pakistan in 1947 many Hindu *Zamindars* migrated to India. In 1950 the *Zamindari* system came to an end and government became the biggest *Zamindar*, instead of numerous Private Estate holders (Coasta, 2005).

The abolition of the *Zamindari* system in 1950 led to a change of land ownership of East Bengal when new rural landed elite, predominantly Muslim,

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arose. Islam (1974) observed that the permanent settlement of 1793 had really created economic bases for the emergence of traditional leadership in rural Bengal. The findings of several field studies suggested the fact that even after the abolition of the *Zamindari* system in 1950, inequality among social classes in the rural areas has further increased one time and the concentration of land in the hands of a few households has become a rule. The high growth and pressure of population on land means an increase in the extent of landlessness. As a result land in a rural society like Bangladesh is the major source and wealth of population, income, livelihood, power and status. Thus the very existence of the village as homogenous and cohesive units is considered as elusive sense. Behind the location of lands and *baris* other features seem to lend itself to any kind of social solidarity (Bertocci, 1970). On the other hand, the production process in the village has been found in to be highly stratified (Chowdhury, 1978) and certain classes of people were found to have been exploiting the other classes and the villagers have been found to be experiencing a total process of pauperization (Westergaard, 1983). Although certain changes have been brought about Local Government and Administrative Act, viz *Panchayats* of 1870, village self-government of 1919, Basic Democracy in Pakistan in 1959, *Gram Sarkar* of 1982, *Upazila* System of 1986, etc. All these acts led to some and several changes in agrarian structure of Bangladesh including its rural power relations and the pattern of power structure.

Sen (1986) identified the power elite as those who are presently 'in power' and who are 'out of office'. According to him, they have emerged from the same homogenous middle and upper families, but subsequently they are divided in political views. Sen strictly observed any basic differences between the various sections of political elite in Bangladesh as far as their educational and occupational background is concerned. Rahman (1981), in his major findings of the national elite, tends to use the 'grassroots leaders' in order to mobilize the rural masses in Bangladesh. In another anthropological study of the village *Badorpur*' Islam (1974) observed that the introduction of local government, the Union Parishad by the Central Government of Pakistan under the title "Basic Democracy", had helped develop a group of formal local leaders. These formal leaders were elected in the local bodies mostly required from the informal power structure. They were themselves *matbbars* or close relatives of them. Islam identified them as emerging leaders. Chowdhury (1978) in his study of *Meberpur* village confirmed this fact. In his view, those families who have both status and wealth enjoyed power. Chowdhury called them *khandan* families. These families had control over both human and marital resources through which they had emerged as rural political power wielders. Arens and Beurden (1977) in their study of a village in *Jhagrapur* observed that the educated and politically conscious youths were the potential power holders of the village.

They were trying to assert themselves in the leadership roles. Karim (1990), in his study of the village *Dhonojobpara* and *Gopalhati* of *Rahshahi* District has observed certain changes in leadership pattern. He referred to the fact that the real political power of the *samaj* is usually demonstrated in settling village disputes. This traditional function of the *samaj* has been taken over by the village court, established with the *union parishad*, the chairman of which acts as its judge. It has begun to serially undermine the power and privileged position of the *samaj*. Karim also observed that the educated youths, emerging from influential lineages are coming forward to occupy formal leadership position. It is higher education, which has provided a new scope to the young members of the traditional lineage in getting an access to the modern institution of the rural areas in Bangladesh. He argued that no basic change has taken place in the rural power structure. Wood (1978), in his study of the rural power structure and relation in village *Bondokgram* in *Comilla* District, observed that a new generation of power holders is emerging in the rural areas by virtue of their access to trade, irrigation, construction and other state sponsored activities. The latest findings of Rahman's (1984) study showed that the rural power structure normally centers on the patterns of transition of power from informal to formal structures.

Based on these analyses it can be said that the rural power structure in Bangladesh has been changed. While it may be true that the rural societies in Bangladesh have undergone considerable changes with various old elements lost and new elements introduced and that the dynamics of rural society can not be revealed without the analysis of its economic structure (Mukherjee, 1957). The rural scientists, particularly the sociologists, possibly owe any obligation to empirically observe the other socio-cultural phenomena or will. The rural masses of Bangladesh are primarily classified on the basis of land ownership; this is at the same time a fundamental source of their '*dhanabal*' and '*janabal*' diversification of income and occupation, collusion of urban and rural elites, patron-client relation, economic and political access of their livelihood and power. The households belonging to the class structure from the grass root leadership with whom the national elites (leaders) established a close connection for their political gain. The social status of rural population normally depends on one's control over material and human resources. The previous study has also been testified to the fact that there is a gradual transformation in the rural power structure i.e. from informal to formal structure.

7.3 Power Relations in Bangladesh

After discussing the features of present agrarian structure it is now possible to analysis power relations in the countrywide, especially in the present study *char*

village. Following Harriss (1982) it can be argued that power relations and power structure in our rural society including *char* village involved two components: structural and conjunctural. Structural power relates to the production relations. Marxists defined the concept of 'structural' and 'conjunctural' power in the following way:

- i) *A control over the means of production, the processes and the products of labor;*
- ii) *The guarantee of their control through the fundamental laws of the state; and*
- iii) *The legitimization of their control by the dominant ideological system;* (Wesolowski, 1979: 58).

“Conjunctural power is configured by ideology, policy and action of the state. But these two components are not isolated; in a peasant economy they are enmeshed in direction, which is conducive to the interests of dominant classes in society. Power is also perceived from a different perspective, that there is no power where power is equal. Power holders must have control over things of value so that they can either offer them or threaten to deprive other of things in order to enforce them. Power, thus, appears to indicate the concept of a dominant class, which occupies a privileged position in society” (Baqee, 1998: 38-40). Among the power elites of rural Bangladesh it may be identified as the key process with formal and informal positions of village. At this point many researchers argued that the very nature of production relation, that they elaborated earlier, gives rise to a specific nature of power relations what they call a patron- client system. It is defined as “a special case of dyadic (two persons) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which as individual of higher socio-economic status (patron uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services to the patron” (Scott, 1977: 92).

Control over the means of production and other resources by a class of rich peasant create a fertile ground for nurturing and reproducing such a clientlist structure. A social relationship based on patron-client age thus gives rise to the factional mode of politics, which represents horizontal cleavages across class lives instead of vertical class conflict. Wood observed on the rural areas of Bangladesh that faction leaders are thus typically landlords or rich peasant, or more rarely just manipulating political entrepreneurs (brokers in effect), who organize political groups out of followers who are either economically dependent (laborers, share-croppers or through debt) or who are obliged as a

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result of past favors in forms of public goods and services arrangements by brokers (Wood, 1976).

A patron-client system serves to organize the political and economic order in the village. Extremely, it acts as channel through which the village is integrated politically and economically into broader society (McGregor, 1989). It has been explained here as to how patron-clientage works in the study area. It should be mentioned that it functions with or without institutional bases although the latter provide more lucrative options of the *char* village elites. There are two types of institutions, which shape the power structure, and these constantly interact with economic and non-economic relations. At the general level, in the study area, the *samaj* (little community) is the main structure of power. In the *char* village the *samaj* regulates the personal conduct in its members. The *samaj* is controlled by the *matabbars* (*jotdar*, headman) who are typically rich peasants. They combine dominance of property relations (economic) in social life and the dominant role of authority (political) (Jahangir, 1982).

The *samaj* apparently projects village solidarity, which is simply a mystification of relations in *char* village in Bangladesh. It is an effacing device of social control, which also legitimates social inequalities (Siddiqui, 1982). There are numerous studies, which portray the ruthless face of rural elite and their *samaj* (Arens and Beurden, 1977; Hartmann and Boyce, 1988; White, 1988). The rural elite controls almost all the formal and informal institutions at the local level and extend co-operations to each other for mutual benefits as and when required. Land is, apart from being the most important economic resource, the symbol of power and influence. In the rural context, the rich peasant usually invest more in land to acquire power and prestige and they depend on the state to provide modernizing inputs to enable them to intermediate the flow of these inputs into smaller farmers so that surplus can be extracted from their class. This class has been called as the elite class- a member of the elite is one who has command over resources, labour, works, programmes and so on.

The pre-capitalist mode of production relations in the agrarian structure crates the conditions that promote client list policies, which are equally pervasive, both in local and central level politics. The production and power relations have given rise to the dominance of the rural elite who have been accepted as intermediary by the state power holders to exert societal and political control, create legitimacy. The rural elites, in turn, create the benefits of state-led rural development programs. Of the economic dependence, the poor, landless and marginal peasants cannot organize and mobilize themselves politically or enforce their own rights.

7.4 Political Structure of Bangladesh

On the basis of having a light on the current political features of Bangladesh it can be said that the intellectuals of the developing countries are very weak and there has been started a trend of political interest among them. Bangladesh is no exception of it. The strength organized trade union, peasants' organization and other non-government interest groups are almost absent here. The government initiatives or steps can only ensure the large-scale participation of grass root population for national interest. It is necessary to build-up a relationship between the grass-root people and government patrons for their participation in national politics. There is a lack of organized intellectuals at the local level. These villages are situated in a very scattered manner. The villages of Bangladesh are the administrative units and divided into '*paras*'. So, the local people are not united (CUM, 2005). The above-mentioned scenario about the villages of Bangladesh indicates that there is a necessity of the organized programs for the social welfare of rural Bangladesh. The interaction of the NGOs with the bureaucratic and political situation is very weak due to the locally existing active and complex reasons. In this regard, the union council is almost unincorporated. The combination of mass-organization created the NGOs and the government representative organizations is prevalent at a small extent. The villages seem to be the working institutions while the union council is the lowest administrative unit of the government. The active economic power, controlled and related political power are existing beyond the control of local institutions. In practice, there is an absence of administrative actions in the villages of Bangladesh.

The Local Level Institutions: The local level institutions are those, through which, property, land, development programs taken or initiated by the state economy and religious taxes are controlled. The embedded forces of these institutions are maintaining the everyday livelihood of local people. These institutions are classified into two categories, such as, formal and informal.

On the basis of democracy and representation, the union council, municipality, government offices of *Thana* and District, and member or membership of the parliament are the formal institutions. On the other hand, lineage, '*jamat*' and '*samaj*' are the informal institutions. These institutions are the traditional social organizations, which are functioning on the basis of mutual cooperation and assistance. The lineage refers to the kins of a common ancestor living in a particular territory in which the male are dominating persons. The *jamat* has also the same meaning or connotation. The people, who gather in a particular mosque, are treated as the members of the *jamat*. On the other hand *samaj* refers to a social organization, which is functioning on the basis of the spirit of

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the religion Islam at the local level. But, *samaj* has no relationship with the autonomous and higher level religious (political) organizations.

Both the formal and informal institutions, through the application of different types of social control and forces, usually ignore the actions of legal and social institutions. It is seen that the formal and informal institutions are not in an antagonistic situation rather they are controlling over the local resources on the basis of their mutual understanding. In fact, the formal institutions are performing the functions of the informal institutions. The formal leaders try to keep fame through showing sympathy towards others, redistributing wealth and settling disputes. But, it is they who are maintaining the patron-client relationship and keeping the rural people dependent on them. The rural society is now under the hands of a few numbers of interest groups of rural people, who are very efficiently, controlling the rural power. But, there are also competitions, contradiction and instability among these power-wielders. The workers as well as the organizations of the poor should work through the understanding of the weakness of the power-wielders. The existence of both the formal and informal institutions should not be equated. But, both of them are not contradictory rather than supplementary and complementary of each other. The mutual relationship between these two types of institutions states that the informal institutions are now accepting as well as agreeing with the democratic administrative system. However, the notion of the local power-wielders can be understood through the assessment of the relationship between the formal and informal institutions.

7.5 Power Structure of Char Dumla

In terms of power relations two categories of *char* land people seen in the study area and these are:

- i) *Power-holders or wielders (elite); and*
- ii) *Powerless (non-elite).*

The power-wielders have wealth or land, modern knowledge and technology of crop production as well as information on different issues or matters, contact with (political) leaders, contact with different directorates or offices of *thana*, contact with bank and other sources of money, money and education, cooperation and help from others, if they are in problem or trouble, (good) understanding about the accounts and documents of land, idea of conspiracy or techniques of depriving others, personal forces (*lathiyal bahini*) (Baqee, 1998). The powerless have or embrace crisis of food or work, 'family' or individual and social conflict, dissatisfaction and misconceptions about different aspects of their everyday life, lack of both the government and non-government

facilities. The power-wielders of the *char* land areas can control any activity or opportunity of both the government and non-government, control as well as influence the legal law and judgments.

In rural areas, particularly in the *char*-lands, many of the development schemes cannot be carried out if these are seen by the local power structure as contrary to its interests (Khan, 1988). In rural Bangladesh power is rooted in and exercised through two kinds of relationships (Arn, 1984) and these are:

- i) Gushti-based (Kinship) relationships; and*
- ii) Property-based relationships.*

In the traditional Bengali society *gushti* is of paramount importance (Islam, 1974). *Gushti*-based society still has a strong footing and perhaps it will take some decades before society is classified according to economic indicators. On the other hand land ownership is the pre-condition for a high social position within the Bangali peasant society. Regarding the economic relationships of the study area the people are divided into the following groups:

- i) Landowner-sharecropper;*
- ii) Landowner-day laborers;*
- iii) Patron- client; and*
- iv) Buyer-seller.*

Chowdhury (1978) has divided the sources of rural power structure into two i.e., internal and external. The internal sources are those that are available in the study area themselves, both material and non-material, the land, money, machines, groups and lineage of people. The external sources of power refers to factors that help one to acquire power and control over community affairs from outside the villages, viz. honorable jobs, linkage with powerful persons, local government organizations or different social and political organizations. Most of these internal and external sources of power are found to be prevailing and effective in the study area. However, in the present study it has been observed that the ownership of land, physical might, lineage, family heritage, connection with the local level administration and linkage with political parties are the major sources of power in the study area. In addition, physical domination, the socio-economic organizations formed by the initiatives of governmental and voluntary agencies also working a new source of power which influences community actions and rebellious parties in agrarian societies.

The power structure in the study area is dominated in the by the medium and large farmers through they are far out numbered by the landless, marginal and small farmers. The medium and large farmers dominate both the formal and

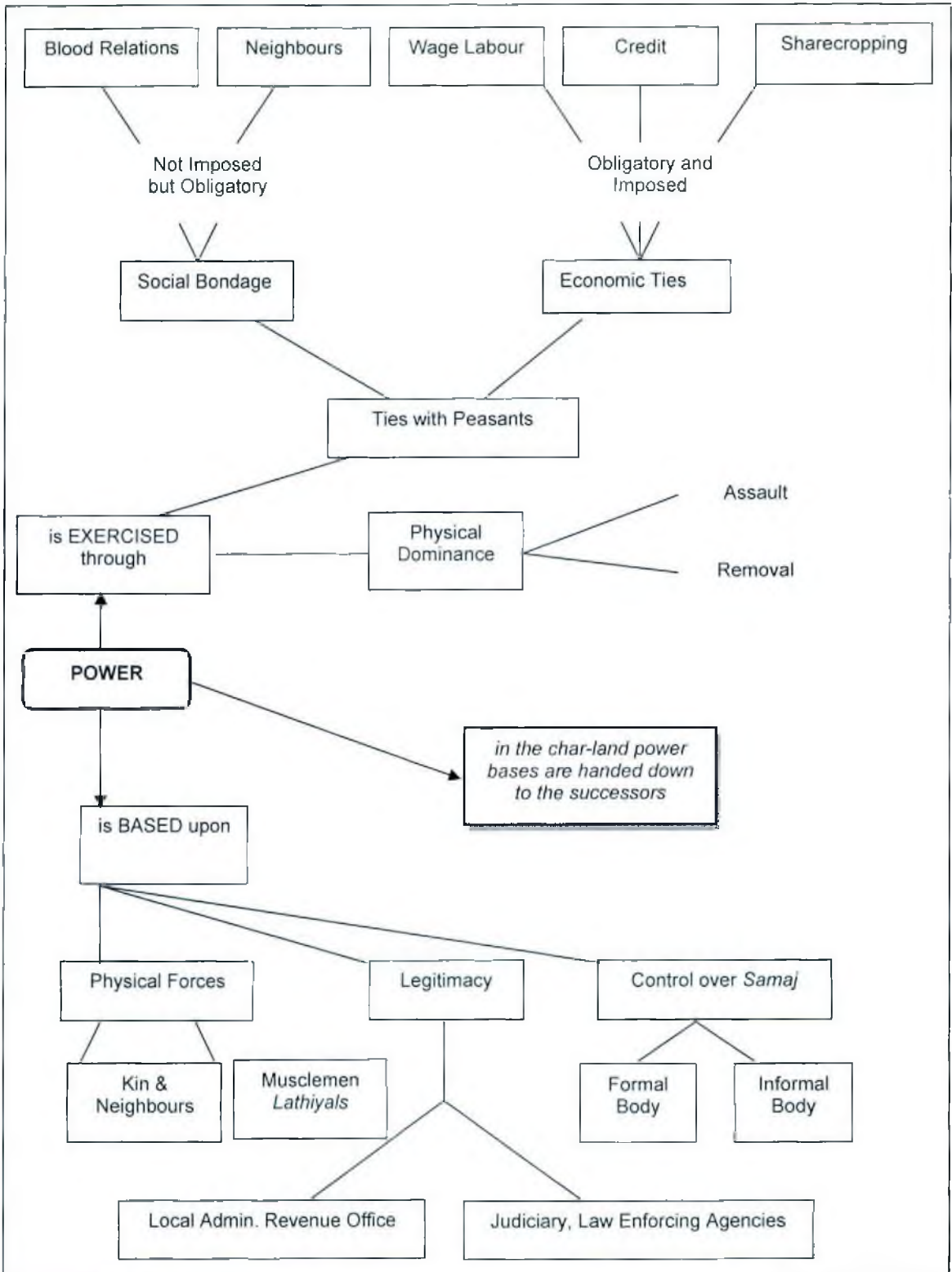
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informal institutions with exercise far reaching influence over the lines of the people of the study area. Contract with the local bureaucracy and the administration in other key elements that the power holders' elites maintain very consciously.

The landless people, who got the *khas* land, have their government documents. But they did not enjoy their *khas* land. The documents of allocated *khas* land are, now, preparing and this would be distributed among the landless people. But they have a doubt that whether they would be able to enjoy or utilize the *khas* land or not. At present, a few powerful persons named Suruz Mia, Gadu Mia, Shamir Bapari, and Mirza Khan for example, coming from the high land owning families, have gained control over the *khas* land. They are not affiliated with any political party. These people are continuing their control over the *khas* land by influencing the Assistant Commissioner of Land and utilizing the political power (in some cases).

According to Baqee (1998), the execution of power follows the path of different rights and obligation (see chart 13) is fully appropriate in the study area. In the study area that the *matbbars* provides the peasant with land for homestead and agriculture. Sometimes he makes provisions for peasants' employment. In the *char* lands acquisition and maintenance of power depends on direct or indirect of cultivable lands. Maintaining strong and organized *lathiyal babini* to put down the peasants and any emerging power and links with the local administration. The elite class in the study area depends on the local government agencies and, therefore, they take care to maintain direct and effective contracts with the peasants. Land is found as the most basic sources of power in rural Bangladesh. The present study has also found the same. It has been observed that the study area that leaders used to have more linkage with the political parties and government administrative official and keep more information about parties and government activities. Such linkage and information provides their sources of power. Normally, party supports seem to display more power in the *char* land than the ordinary village dwellers. "Char life is tough and uncertain and therefore it is considered as belonging to an inferior category of rural life having what is locally called a '*choura*' sub-culture" (Baqee, 1998: 46-48). The following chart 15 would give an idea about the power bases and execution routes in the *char* lands.

Chart 15: Power Bases and Execution Routes in *Char*-Lands



Source: Baqee, 1998: 46.

It has been noted in the figure above that in the *char* land power bases are handed down to the successors. Predominantly power is based upon physical

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forces, legitimacy and control over *samaj*. In the physical forces, the main determinants are kin and neighbours, and musclemen or *lathiyals*. Local administration and revenue office, judiciary and the law-enforcing agency authorize power based on legitimacy. The most important local mechanism on which power is based upon is the control over *samaj*, which is operated by both formal and informal body of the *char* power structure. Power is exercised through two ways, in way it is transferred through the ties with peasants and in the other way, which is physical dominance in the form of assault and removal. Power exercise through ties with peasants' falls into two categories, first it is through social bondage and secondly it is through economic ties. Power through social bondage is not imposed but obligatory, it is operated among blood relations and neighbours. On the other hand, power exercise through economic ties is crucially both obligatory and imposed which is operated through wage labor, credit relations and sharecropping. The power bases and execution routes in the *char* lands are multidimensional and interlocking.

The formal aspects of the rural power structure, particularly in the study area, are the organizations such as the *Union Parishad* (Council), village co-operation and so on. There is evidence that individual member of the rich class dominate these organizations (Blair, 1984; Rahman, 1986, 1988; Mohammad, 1987). Adnan (1986) persuasively argues that the board-based control over the means of production, the means of subsistence and the means of administration enable the rural dominant classes to make available, or deny, crucial resources to other peasant classes in general and the numerous landless and semi-proletarian in particular.

The study reveals that leadership of the local institution is given by the rural elites who own a large amount of wealth in land and others assets. The relations between the power elites and the local villagers are like relatives between patrons and clients. New elite leaderships has however, grown since liberation of Bangladesh, but the traditional leadership of decadent feudal families is also a force to be counted on in the decision making process. Socially they are still held in high esteem though economically they have been downgraded.

Recently in rural Bangladesh a few changes are seen in the economic organization of peasants. As it is seen the manner in which peasants organize their production units depends not only on the resources at their disposal and available technology, but also on the influence and conflict free institutional framework, which prescribes the rules for transactions and groups and establishes opportunities and access to information about physical and social environment. Today, these institutional frameworks are controlled and manipulated by the rural elites to make their personal and political gain. Also

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the peasant's lives are profoundly influenced by economic and political events that take place outside their local communities, but an effect on the village community.

Peasants with little or no permanent access to land are not only at the mercy of their super ordinates far income earning opportunities but also are effectively denied the political and social rights association with the ownership of a viable economic unit. These later rights are the right to judge the power to enact; closely related to land tenure institutions are those working rules by which rural mass organize to provide collectively the infrastructural needs which can not be supplied individually. These working rules are made by politically powerful rural elites in the villages' community as well as in *char* land.

Unless an entirely new development approaches is implemented to provide remunerative income earning opportunities and higher levels of living for the rural masses, the resulting conflict situation are likely to evoke violent means of change. The formal rural institutions of government were kept to a minimum and badly administrated and they always remained under the influence of the rural elites. The rural formal institution seems to have been very much weakened by the frequent conflicts of rural elites. Thus the social and political organizations of agrarian society of Bangladesh become "segmented diffuse and in flux". *Sardars* or *matbbars* and wealthy influential elites constitute rural political units; act as a court of first resort in the resolution of local conflicts and little less social control. The effect of this system is twofold local matters remain personalized but institutional under the organs of authority and wealth. And political authority tends to be dispersed. Political and social dictatorship between the villages of Bangladesh centers on the socially and economically dominated groups of people. This dominant elite groups tend to organize what exists in the way of collective activities be these religious or secular. The evidence tends to suggest that power had been in the hands of the rural elite before the community development programs were introduced. It can be said that any type of rural activities taken up so far in Bangladesh have apparently done little to affect the position of the elites in our agrarian society. The rural elites dominate both the formal and informal power structure. It is also true for the present study area. The *samaj*, an informal rural and *char* area institution, is controlled by the elites in which the poor are simply the passive actors. By dint of their sheer economic and political strength, the elites also dominate rural local government offices, rural cooperatives, etc.

On the basis of above discussion the power structure in Char Dumla can be analyzed by the following criterions:

- i) Institutional;
- ii) Elected Member or Representative;
- iii) Government Directorate or Office (Officials);
- iv) Political; and
- v) Social.

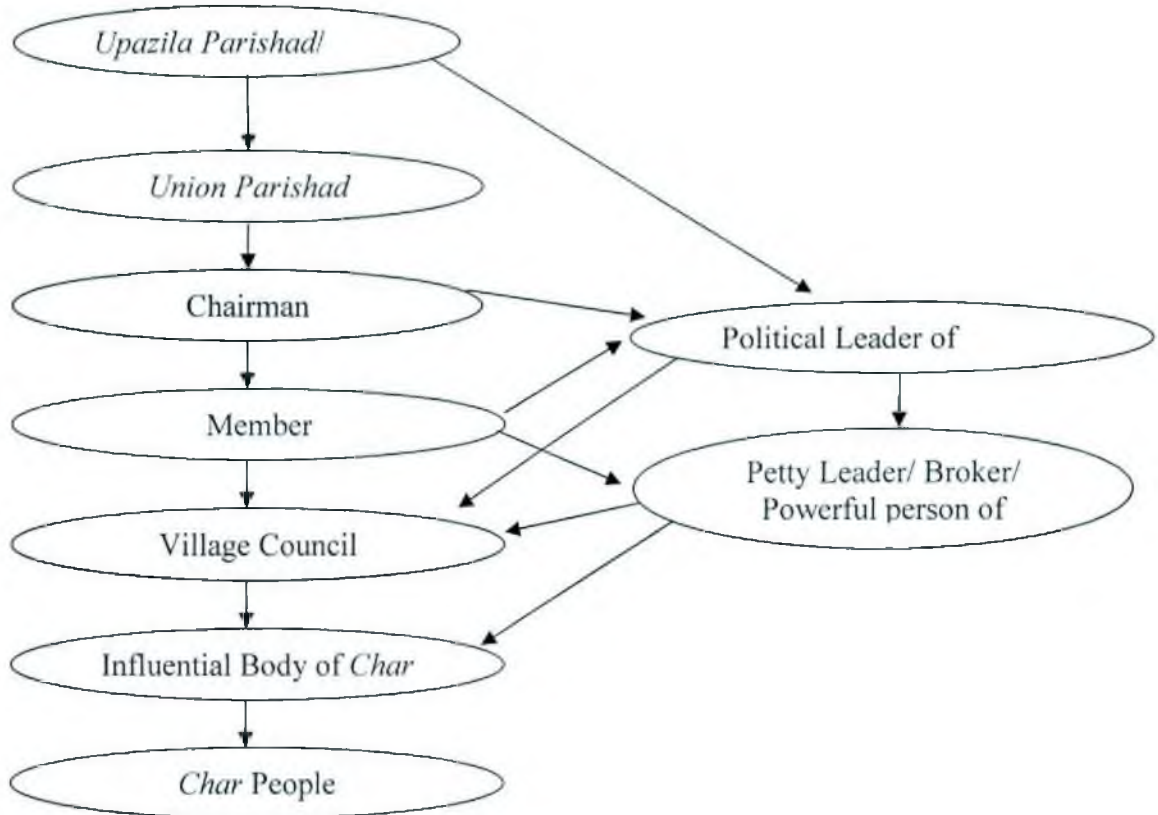
i) **Institutional:**

Levels or Stages of Social Power: The people of Char Dumla have no defined or recognized social boundary but the social structure or boundary is also controlled by the *upazila* (and it is also under the jurisdiction of *upazila*). The institutional power in area belongs to or comprises of the bodies discussed below.

ii) **Elected Member or Representative:** The *Upazila Parishad* or M.P. is the highest tier in the elected representative body of the *char* power structure (See Chart 16). The *Union Parishad* is the second tier of the elected representative of the *char* power structure. The forth tier is the village council, and then the influential body of the *char* and the last tier is the *char* people. Each *Union Parishad* has a chairman and a set of member elected in its constituency. The *Upazila Parishad* is formed by the political leaders of the *upazila*, which is directly connected with the local M.P. The M.P. maintains power relationship with the political leader of *upazila*, and then it is canalized to the petty leaders and local power brokers who maintain connections with village council and influential body of *char*. The influential body of the *char* informally administers the *char* people. But the hierarchical form of the power structure build alliances based on local interests of the *char*.

Mr. Mujibur Rahman Sajol, a member of *Subarna Char* union council, has stated that he has been in power or as a UP member for the last five years but the total budget of the government for this *char* people is very limited. The union council has to collect taxes from the people. Out of the total amount of collected tax, the union council takes 1% for its office management. The council collects taxes from each of the households. The people can get bank loan on the basis of their payment of holding taxes. The council has nine *gram police*. Each of them is paid at 350or- for each month, which is given by the government. The *gram police* have no extra income and so they to depend on their monthly payment. This is very difficult to collect the taxes from the people, as they do not usually want to pay the taxes. So, the benefit of tax collection is almost absent in the *char* areas. The honorarium of chairman, office expenditure and payment of *gram police* and *choikidars* are paid from the collected taxes (about 50% of the collected tax are spent for this purpose), nevertheless, the office expenditure is barely managed.

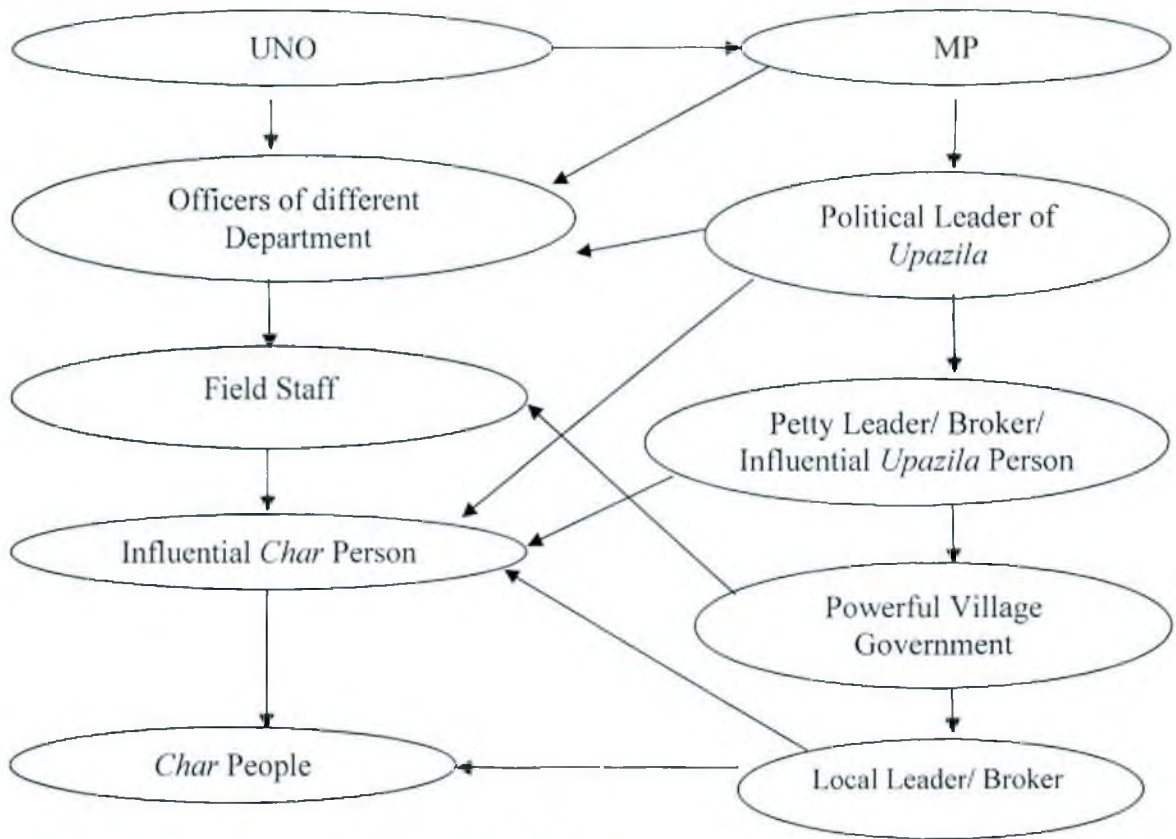
Chart 16: Elected Member or Representative in the Locality



Source: Char Unnayan Manual, 2005: 26

iii) **Government Directorate or Office (Officials):** The UNO or *Upazila* Executive Office is the highest administrative tier in an *Upazila* which runs various departments (See Chart 17). Officers of different departments look after the field staffs. Field staffs maintain connections with influential *char* people and that is how the *char* people are administered. On the other hand, there are MP, political leaders of *Upazila*, petty leaders and broker, powerful village government and village leader who have strong connection with the mentioned government office. The UNO, officers of different department and political leader of the *Upazila* is tied with the MP. Influential *char* persons form village government maintain strong liaison with the government institutions and *upazila* political leaders.

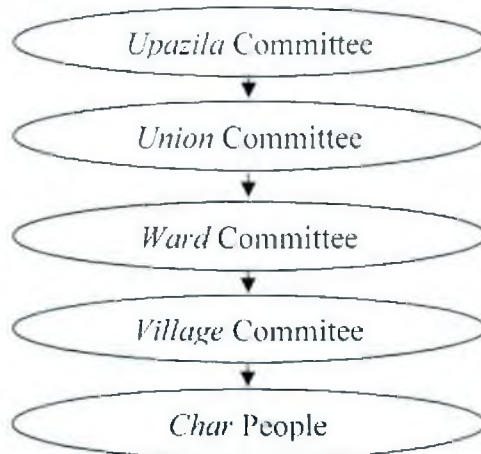
Chart 17: Government Directorate or Office in the Locality



Source: Char Unnayan Manual, 2005: 26

iv) **Political:** The political structure is segmented into five hierarchical elements which are notably *Upazila* Committee, *Union* Committee, *Ward* Committee, village Committee and last but not the least, the *char* people. These are the basic forms of political structure through which power is analyzed and operated (See Chart 18).

Chart 18: Political Structure in the Locality



Source: Char Unnayan Manual, 2005: 27

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Apart from this general description, the following discussion of the area will bring out the particular aspect of the local power structure. Within the villages Nur Islam Bepari is biggest landowner. He is now a secretary of “*bepari*” *samaj* and very powerful member of the local *Masjid* Committee. In this village and in the neighborhood he is the most powerful person in the sense that in all “*shalish*” he will be invited and without his concurrence no action is likely to be taken against any body in his village. Abdul Khalek Bepari, Rafique Ullah, MD Ullah, Khurshed Alam and Abul Kalam are other larger farmers in this village. They are also members of different “*samaj*” within their own neighbourhood. These large farmers have sometimes conflicting interests among them but still them always working relations. Almost of all of these persons have urban connections and some of them specially the Chairman, former Chairman and members of the *Union Parishad* and some the *Gram Panchayet* are locally known as “*Samaj*”, have their linkages up to the national level through political partier. The *Union*, *Thana* and district level officers visit them whenever they come to this area, and these large farmers also are careful in preserving their links with them. It is, therefore, expected that the management of the modern inputs like tractor, power tiller, etc. system in the area will be dominated by them and they will by to extract the maximum possible benefits from their techniques.

In Char Dumla the power structure has been traditionally dominated by the village *mattabars*, and even now the poor have failed to make a dent on their power. In the traditional institutional such as *samaj* or village *panchayet*, the village *mattabars* hold the supreme authority and they are ultimate decision maker about all types of disputes and factions. The root of heir influence lies in the patron-client relationships which have grown over the centuries in this society because of the uncertainly in agriculture. So, the study prevails that leadership of this local institution is given by the rural power holders or power elites who own a large amount of wealth in land and other assets. The relationship between the leader or *matabbars* and challengers is like relations between “patrons and clients”. Recently this families are also forced to be counted on in the decision making process within the village. Socially, they are still held in high esteem and they have been up warded in their economic positions. Of late this relationship has grown stronger because the national power elite have chosen to operate through formal institutions which are manned by the exclusive public officials. The officials generally function in the league with village *mattabars* and for that reason these rural *mattbars* (oligarchs) can exploit the poor so mercilessly.

The power structure in the study area is dominated by the middle and large farmers though they are for out numbered by the landless, marginal and small farmers. The medium and large farmers dominate the formal and informal institutions which exercise far reaching influence over the lines of the people

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over the locality. The medium and large farmer households are also related in sharecropping. 35 medium and a large household associated sharecropping in the study village. The informal power structure has been in operation in *char* village within the framework of traditional village or *gram panchayet* or *samaj*. These formal and informal institutions perform a variety of functions such as planning development works in the area, providing assistance to government functionaries in the performance of their duties, serving as arbitration or conciliation courts, helping the local people to solve their problems both social, economic and religion and in times of emergency, providing relief to the poor and so on. Most of these institutions are however dominated by the powerful landowner, locally called '*samaj*' emanating from the influential social class and their decisions are treated as final. They handle indifferent works of the village or the locality ranging from divorce cases to settlement of land disputes between the creditors and debtors. Surprisingly enough, particularly the same set of persons of almost similar background, dominates both the formal and informal institutions.

In the *char* village based modern institutions such as co-operative societies or *Union Parishads*, where the principle of equal participation is accepted as a rule, the village *mattabars* are in fact more advantaged than others. They enjoy certain advantages than others, they yield more power and influence, though they are not educated, they are more articulate. More over, they have urban connections. In Char Dumla, as a peasant stratified *char* village, the power holders enjoy high status and status helps them to acquire wealth through exploitation of the bottom of the layer. The poor, on the other hand, are fully dependent on them because of the uncertainty in agricultural production they depend further. And this picture shows the feudal exploitations are still passionately prevailing in the study area.

The above discussion shows that the present power structure, the vast majority of the *char* village people are politically dominated by a few power-wielders. These power yielding leaders or '*mattabars*' have the opportunity to become more prosperous by achieving more lands into their hands. They accumulate lands through the exploitation of the poorer and weaker and non-subsistence classes who normally do not possess any political power and influence. In the study village so far the political dominance thus leads to economic dominance. At the same time the power-wielders in most cases have monopolized different credits depriving the small, marginal and poor peasants.

In Char Dumla local level politics is linked with the wider society or country level politics. As a result by engaging one with the political party must become a member of a political party. This membership acquires both power and influence within the locality. In *char* land '*salish*' is one of another informal

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political institution at the local level - the members of these are known as *matabbars*. This informal institution has traditionally been playing an important role in settling disputes and minimized different small type of conflicts. It is very much popular institution in Char Dumla. But recently several of its functions are performed in the formal institution, *Union Parishad*. The *Union Parishad* leaders work as members of a *salish*. In the village *matabbars* hold their membership of a *salish* but they are not the leaders of *Union Parishad*. The landowners are still powerful, although they are sometimes alleviated or non-alleviated from land. They own a huge amount of land, far more than they need for their families. Mostly they do not do any manual labour themselves and live purely on exploiting others either by hiring labourers or by leasing their lands to sharecroppers. These features show that the *Union Parishad* leaders play a dichotomous role of leadership in formal and informal institution at the locality. They are the real power wielder or power elite who wield actual power and exercise of politico-cultural and religious activities control and influence over their locality. Within the village the class domination is corresponding to political domination. This evidence shows that the land owning classes are also power wielders and this class exercises political dominance over the non subsistence and economically weaker classes. So the landowning classes are the actual exploiting class in Char Dumla who are closely related with state exploiting classes. In this case due to their interrelations with the national political leaders they have changed their exploiting process in recent times. The above discussion, in turn, portrays the real pictures of power structure in Char Dumla.

Chapter-8

Mode of Production in Char Dumla

- 8.1 The Concept of Mode of Production
- 8.2 Pattern of the Mode of Production
- 8.3 Mode of Production in Bangladesh
- 8.4 Organization of Production in Char Dumla
- 8.5 Mortgage and Credit System
- 8.6 Mode of Production in Char Dumla

8.1 The Concept of Mode of Production

The general concept of mode of production specifies the general condition, which must be satisfied by a concept if it is to be the concept of a determinate mode of production. The concept mode of production constitutes the major point of departure among the social scientists in their approaches towards the problem of development and underdevelopment. "In all society there is one specific kind of production which predominates over the rest, whose relations their assign rank and influence to the others. It is general illuminations, which bathes all the other errors and modifies their particularity. It is a particular other which determines the specific gravity of every being, which has materialized within it" (Marx, 1964: 106-7).

The various epochs in the history of mankind are determined by the mode of production, which is a Marxism concept. Marx however does not provide any particular definition of the concept. As such, this concept has been used with different levels of meaning. Therefore to define a mode of production in any precise term is difficult because of the disagreement among economists on the definition of the concept. Generally speaks, a mode of production is an articulated combination of relation and forces of production structured by the dominance of the relation of production (Hindess & Hirst, 1975). The relation of production define a specific mode of appropriation of surplus-Labour and the specific form of social distribution of the means of production corresponding to that mode of appropriation of surplus Labour (Ibid). In defining mode of production, different author have taken different position. Some writers have used the concept of mode of production and social formation quite interchangeable. Other writers put a question mark of the adequacy of the concept. They rely far their analysis, on the concept of social formation. For example, how far is it acceptable to formulate an abstract notion of a social totality in terms of mode of production?; is the concept of mode of production adequate by itself to the task of understanding the totality of a society and its moment? (Saldanha, 1989).

H. Alavi (1974) critically evaluating the definition of the mode of production by Laclau (1971) and stated that the concept of the mode of production is a concept of structure, which defines the structure of social relations of production. The concept is an analytical one. Harriss defines the concept as "a complex structure which is organized by specific combinations of social relations and forces of production which are internally articulated and this structure are not rectifiable simply to the forms of direct exploitation" (Harris, 1982: 259).

In order to produce a commodity, certain elements have to combine without which production is not possible. These elements are the worker, his means of production such as land, tools etc, and the object on which the workers work. According to Marxists, there is also a non-productive worker (i.e. capitalist) who appropriate works surplus labour in the form of either time of commodities. These elements need to unite if production is to take place. Marx (1964) argued that they unite through two different types of relations and the manner in which they combine distinguishes different mode of production.

Firstly, in any type of production these factors of production unite together by means of which, a commodity having value in use is produced. Those elements, which are contained within the labour process, may unite in different ways. For example, capitalist mode of production define a mode of production of surplus-labour which works by means of commodity exchange capitalist by means of production and item of personal consumption from each other. In a capitalist mode of production there may be labour or capital-intensive technique of producing a commodity. In the same way in a feudal mode, there can be different forms of organization of production based on, for example, wage labour, sharecropping or tenant cultivation, and so on. While several forms of labour processes or organizations may coexist in a particular form of production, the relations of production structure them.

Secondly, the labour in the processes produces a surplus product that is subject to various forms of extraction. These different forms of are the result of definite relation of production that set up a system of access to the means of production for the different elements in the production. Thus a dominant form of extraction of surplus labour for a particular mode of production exists. It can be said, therefore that a particular mode of production exists due to a contribution of different elements farming a particular combination of relation of production. Thus from the nature of social relation within the productive forces, it is possible to consider the relation of production in a particular case for an analysis of a mode of production in a given historical time. Thus the concept of the mode of production in its broad form refers to the totality of relations, which include social relations of production, distribution and exchange. The concept of the mode of production has been much debated in Marxist literature on the economic of agriculture. This led to a great deal of confusion. Scholars such as Rudra (1978) suggested avoiding using the concept the farmer emphasizes and discusses class relations and the better places emphasis on economic structure rather than the mode of production. However there are others like Byres (1977) who see no good reason to abandon the concept of the mode of production.

Now the concept of mode of production as an articulated combination of relation and forces of production precludes the construction of the concept of a particular mode of production by means of the simple juxta position of a set of forces and relations. The relations between the concept of mode of production and of social formation may be understood in term of the constitution of existence of particular modes of production. The concept relations and the forces of production are economic concepts whose articulated combination defines a particular types of structure of economic social relations, The concept of each particular mode of production define certain economic ideological or political condition that are necessary to the existence of that structure of economic social relations (Hindess & Hirst, 1975).

Thus Cutler (ed.) (1977:222) argued “a mode of production and social formation should not be conceived as a definite form of social totality, determination in the last instance by the economy and structural causality or whatever. It should be conceived as consisting of a definite set of relations of production in combination with the political and cultural ideological forms in which their conditions of investment are secured or satisfied”.

It can be logically deduced from the above interpretation of the concept that every mode of production is formed on the structure of society in terms of the composite relationships of the relations and the forces of production vis-à-vis its corresponding superstructure. Thus the term mode of production, combining its basic and superstructure, forms a socio-economic formation such as Asiatic, Feudal and Bourgeoisie society. Mode of production, in this sense, represents the structure of society having some properties combined and constituted as a complex unity. The structural properties of the mode of production of *char* village in Bangladesh are briefly delineated here, which grew a variant of pre-capitalistic or semi-feudalistic or capitalistic form of mode of production. Analyzing this it is to be noted that the problem of mode of production has not been properly treated yet as the combination of isolated properties rather as a structural whole.

8.2 Pattern of the Mode of Production

Literature on the mode of production suggests that two major different kinds of mode of production may be identified:

- i) Capitalist Mode of Production; and
- ii) Pre- capitalist Mode of Production.

i) **Capitalist Mode of Production:** The Capitalist Mode of Production is an economic and social organization system of production and distribution in which most of the means of production such as land in the case of agriculture, is privately owned and operates for profit under a competitive system which operates through a market mechanism. The Capitalist Mode of Production is generally characterized by attendance towards concentration of wealth, power and influence in the hands of a few. Capitalism is a form of production and organization in which capitalists, a class of non-producers, owns and controls the means of production such as tools, machinery, land etc and buys labour power with wages as a commodity in order to get commodities product for him (i.e. the capitalist) for sale on the market to earn a profit.

Capitalist production presupposes the existence of two classes: first, a class of wage labourers divorced from their means of production and there by forced to sell their labour power; and second, a class of private entrepreneurs who own the means of production and thus are able to employ wage labour. According to Marx, the accumulation of profit under capitalist production is predicated on their separation of wage labour from the means of production and occurs through the appropriation of surplus value. "Surplus value" is a term, Marx especially reserve for profits derived from wage labour; indeed, it is a value that can only be calculated in relation to commoditized labour. Simple commodity producers maintain ownership of the commodities they produce and family labour constitutes the majority, if not all, of the labour on the farm. Consequently unlike capitalist production, simple commodity production is not predicated on class exploitation as one of its intrinsic internal features (Marx, 1964).

Marx noted several different types of simple commodity production that reflected different degrees of producer's alienation from private property. These types ranged from independent simple commodity production, where producers own all of their means of production, to tenant farming and share cropping, where the unity of land and Labour has been severed because land and sometimes other capitalist assets are not owned but rented. While sharecroppers and tenant farmers still maintain ownership of the commodities they produce, they exist in a subordinate relation to another class- a class of landowners. In this instance, class exploitations or the appropriation of surplus Labour takes the particular form of ground rent (Ibid).

Sharecropping usually entails more landlord control and supervision than tenant farming. In addition with sharecropping, rent is variable because it is tied to the production of a finished commodity (rent in kind), rather than to a fixed monetary agreement. For these reasons, sharecropping is generally

considered being a more exploitative and less developed form of production than tenant farming.

The capitalist mode of production is explained in terms of a formation where in the direct producer is separated from the owner of the means of production and the means of production are owned by the non-productive workers (i.e. capitalists) who extract surplus in the form of surplus value and reproduce the value of capital used in this process of production, is distributed among the owners of the factors of the production. Thus labourers receive the value (i.e. wage) of their power and the surplus value is distributed to the owners of the means of production and to those who have a legal claim to a portion of this surplus value, such as claimants of interest, rent and taxation. Thus the capitalist mode of production exists and product when, workers accumulate capital and is produced when, according to Tylor and Taylor (1943), the non-productive worker accumulates capital and re-invests that accumulated capital in order to further enhance his or her wealth, as well as ensuring that he or she has control over the use of the means of production so that they may work as wage labourers for the capitalist. To express it in a different way, wage labour is a necessary condition for the capitalist mode of production. Here various authors have taken different positions. Some are of the view that wage labour is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the capitalist mode of production to exist. An important condition for the capitalist mode of production is not only of wage labour but also of free labour. Freedom of labour is explained in terms of being free from feudal obligation to work or serve extra for the landlord. According to Patnaik (1972), accumulation and reinvestments are also necessary elements of the capitalist mode of production. These are also questions that have also emerged in the literature on transition to capitalist mode of production to exist. Some authors have considered commercialization of agriculture and dependence on market, rather than labour processes as a condition for a capitalist mode of production. It can, therefore, be said that there are various combinations of conditions, no any specifically, that seem necessary for a mode of production to be considered capitalist. However, capitalism cannot come into being without wage labour and according to Hindess and Hirst (1975: 185) the capitalist mode of production presupposes the following conditions:

- a) *the separation of the direct producer from the means of production; in this case the separation of the peasants, serf etc, from the land, his conversion into a wage labourer;*
- b) *a class of capitalist farmers who do not own the land, who own the means of production (other than land), hire wage-labourers (who do not own the means of the production) and produce commodities;*

- c) *the displacement of the bulk of the rural population from the land, the development of the forces of production in agriculture, and the increase in the productivity of agricultural labour;*
- d) *a social labour into distinct branches of production, agriculture being one branch among others, and commodity exchanges as the mode of distribution of the products between branches; and*
- e) *capitalist investment in agriculture is equivalent to investment in any other branch of capitalist production agricultural capital receives the same rate of return on capital on profit as all other capital.*

In the category of the capitalist mode of production the Colonial Mode of Production may be included to which Alavi (1975) refers is a concept, not dissimilar from the capitalist mode of production. It is in essence a capitalist mode of production which is a structurally differentiated part of world capitalism, meaning that the structure of the colonial social formation while bending towards capitalism was different in certain conditions which are specific to the colonial structure- structural specificity of capitalism, as it is called in the literature.

In Alavi's (1979: 64) own words, "the colonial regime as we have seen, instituted changes that dissolved feudal structure; at least, in respect of the first three conditions of the feudal mode of production what we have in colonized India therefore is a capitalist mode of production that has a specifically colonial structure. One thing is clear, the feudal mode of production was dissolved and there is no basis on which we can justify designation of relations of production in agriculture that resulted from the colonial transformation any more, as feudal". The colonial rule in India introduced changes, but these changes were specific or of a special nature (i.e. colonial capitalism), which were different from that of metropolitan (English) capitalism. In other words, colonial rule in India introduced capitalism that was not the same capitalism that was dominant in England. Therefore, according to Alavi, the Indian soil structure and formation during British times can be understood in times of the colonial mode of production which is a structure within a structure.

ii) Pre-Capitalist Mode of Production: Pre-capitalist mode of production (with the exception of slave production) supposes the non-separation of the labour from the means of production. The non separation of the labourers from the means of production under pre capitalist condition results from the limited development of forms of wage-labour and the retention by the labour of a portion of the product, a low level of the division of social Labour into different branches of production, the unity of handicrafts and agriculture in the

local community, and the reproduction of the economic conditions of production of the economic conditions of production within the unit of production. The direct producers have effective possessions of the means reproduction of their own labour power. The basic form of pre-capitalist rent is feudal rent, which includes following two conditions:

- a) *a special type of landed property which was directly linked with the exercise of lordship over basic producers of society, the peasants; though, of course, with considerable variation in the degree which that lordship might be exercised; and*
- b) *a special type of class of basic producers with a special connection with the land- which remained, however, the property of the ruling class of feudal lords;* (Kosminsky, 1956: vi).

Pre-capitalist modes of productions are generally categorized into three types and these are described in the following sections.

a) **The Feudal Mode of Production:** In the feudal mode of production the direct producers is not separated from the means of production but he is excluded from the legal rights of ownership in land which enables the landlord to appropriate surplus labour in the form of rent. The form of rent is such that the producer is only allowed to reproduce the means of production leaving the surplus for the landlord and thus it simultaneously reproduces the exploitative production relations (Hindess & Hirst, 1975).

The concept of feudal mode of production is to establish on articulated combination of relations and forces of production, a combination structured by the dominance of relations over the forces of production. This combination relation or forces are the feudal economic instance. The non economic conditions of existence of this instance enable us to determine the specific content of political or ideological relations in the feudal mode of production. The minimum condition of these combination relation or forces of the domination of the productive forces by the production relations is that the relations of the labourers to the labour process are structured by the relations of production. That is the structure of the process of production is not independent of the conditions of appropriation of the surplus- product (Ibid).

Although the concept of feudalism has been investigated and debated considerably, in well developed scholarly literature in the Marxist tradition of writing, its meaning and content remain, as yet far from settled. There are different brands of feudalism discussed in the literature such as European feudalism, Indian feudalism etc. Perhaps the most popular and equally controversial definition of the feudal mode of production which hitherto is

available in the literature, is that of Dobb (1963: 35) who defines feudalism as “virtually identical with what we usually mean by serfdom: an obligation laid on the producer by force and independently of his own volition to fulfill certain economic demands of an overlord, whether these demands take the form of services to be performed or of dues to be paid in money or in kind”. These are certain primary characteristics in the feudal mode of production:

- i) *simple and low cost tools used in the cultivation of land;*
- ii) *production for self-consumption;*
- iii) *compulsory labour service with the cultivation of land;*
- iv) *political and decentralization of power;*
- v) *availability of land for cultivation subject to some kind of service tenure; and*
- vi) *lords enjoy some judicial and quasi-judicial functions.*

Then there are Hindess and Hirst (1975) who explain feudal relations in economic terms to the exclusion of legal terms. Their definition ignores two important features of the feudal mode of production:

- i) *status of the peasants or workers in terms of their being free or unfree; and*
- ii) *the definition does not take into consideration the fact that minus land, other means of production are owned and possessed by the peasants. Marx (1964) has spelled out the essentials of a feudal mode of production in Capital (vol. III) and has shown that there are different forms of feudalism – from serfdom with forced labour to a mere tributary relation.*

“In all forms in which the direct Labourer remains the possessor of the means of production and Labour conditions necessary for the production of his own means of subsistence, the property relationship must simultaneously appear as a direct relation of lordship and servitude, so that the direct producer is not free; a lack of freedom which may be reduced from serfdom with enforced labour to a mere tributary relationship. The direct producer, according to our assumption, is to be found here in possession of his own means of production, the necessary material labour conditions required for the realization of his labour and the production of his means of subsistence. He conducts his agricultural activity and the rural home industrial activities connected with it independently. This independence is not undermined by the circumstances that

the small peasants may form among themselves a more a question of independence from the nominal lord of the manor. Under such conditions the surplus labour for the nominal owner of the land can only be extorted from them by other than economic pressure, whatever the form assumed may be” (Marx, 1964: 771). Within a Marxist framework, Alavi (1979) identifies the following five structural properties of the feudal mode of production.

i) Extra Economic Measures in the Extraction of Surplus: In the feudal mode, the tenant who has rented land from a landowner may possess the means of production (i.e. land). The direct producer in this case is a labourer, employed by the tenant. The labourer obtains the value of his labour power, which is sold to the tenant as a commodity. The value of his labour power is equal to the value of the minimum means necessary to reproduce his labour power extended in the process of production. His labour produces a value greater in volume than the value of his labour power. The surplus, thus obtained, belongs to the tenant, who gives away a portion of the surplus to the landowner as rent. However the ownership of the land by the landlord, on its own, does not guarantee appropriation or extraction of the surplus of the surplus from the tenant or peasant who possesses the land and who to some extent also exercise control over the land. In such a case, there is use of force either directly or through the mediation of customary laws. In this sense, feudal relations are neither pure economic nor politico-legal and customary. They are, in fact, a combination of these elements- economic, political, legal, and customary.

ii) Un-free Labour: Freedom and non-freedom are used here in a dual sense. In the capitalist mode of production, labour is free from the possession of the means of production (e.g. land). The labour, in the capitalist mode, is also free from feudal obligations to serve a landlord. He is free to sell his Labour power as a commodity in order to earn his living. In the feudal mode, however, a direct producer is un-free from the possession of his means of production (i.e. land). He is also un-free from feudal obligations. This lack of freedom or obligation to serve the landowner may take a variety of forms, such as personal services to be performed in the house of the landlord. The direct producer is un-free because, for the reproduction of his labour power, he is dependent on the landlord for land.

iii) A Fusion of Economic and Political Power at The Point of Production and A Localized Structure of Power: In the capitalist mode, the economic and political powers of the capitalists are exercised over workers separately, through the rule of law of the state, not directly. This means that in order to evict a tenant from the land, a capitalist will have to approach the appropriate authority of the law; whereas in the feudal mode, the use of

economic and political powers is direct and arbitrary. However, customs and traditions of feudal relations may also mediate between the worker or tenant and the landlord in cases of dispute. A localized structure of power means a feudal lord also exercise, among other powers, judicial power over his labourers in the sense that he, *inter alia*, decides various kinds of disputes and quarrels amongst his peasant or labourers. But, again, in adjudicating such disputes, he is generally guided by traditions and customs. So customs not only mediate between the tenant and his landlord, but also by such traditions and customs, the landlord derives judicial powers to act as judge. As such a localized structure of power derived purely through customs and traditions of the rural societies emerges in the feudal mode of production. It may be stated that in the feudal mode, customs and traditions play an important role.

iv) Self- sufficient Nature of Production: Direct producers produce for their own consumption, after which the surplus (what is left after consumption) may enter into the market to be circulated as commodities. In the capitalist mode of production, however, production is basically undertaken with an intention to sell in the market for profit and accumulation. Accumulated wealth is then reinvested into agriculture in order to further enhance wealth.

v) Simple Reproduction of Commodities: Surplus commodities produced under the feudal mode of production are generally consumed and not accumulated. The economy simply reproduces itself. The reverse is true for the capitalist mode of production where there is expanded reproduction. The surplus is accumulated and only a portion of the produce is utilized for consumption. Accumulated surplus is then deployed toward further accumulation of capital. It is a profit-oriented production through the expansion of forces of production, whereas, in the feudal mode production is mainly for self-consumption.

The principal distinguishing feature between the capitalist and the feudal mode of production is the presence of free wage labour in the capitalist mode and its absence in the latter. The focus in literature has been on the question of free and un-free Labour. That is to say, if labour is (was) free, then in what sense it is (was) free. Marx observed that lack of freedom appears in many forms. In Western and Central Europe, after the fall of Roman Empire, a particular form of agrarian relations of production developed. Producers were dependent on the landlords for land. The landlord gave a plot of land to the producer, and the producer in return had to perform labour gratis, with his implements, on the landlord's land. The producer was called a serf. He was to remain bound to the land, which was given to him by the landlord, and hence his lack of freedom.

In the Indian subcontinent, producers were also dependent and lacked freedom. Direct producers were members of the village community. The land was held in common but it was cultivated separately. The ruler or his appointed agent used to receive a share of the commodities produced by the village community as tribute. Marx called this “tributary form of feudalism”. In this case, the direct producer did not work under the supervision of the landlord but still had to pay tribute, the rate of which was determined by custom and tradition. The producer in this form of feudal relations was not free, because by custom, religion, and law, he had no option about the form or amount of surplus he had to pay. The village community used to collect tributes and pay them to the feudal lords. In India, forced Labour was not generally prevalent in all parts. In some areas (for example, Sindh in western India), however, it was customary.

In European feudalism, on the other hand, forced labour from serfs was general feature. The rise of feudalism in Western Europe was conditioned by slavery – the previous mode of production. Slavery grew in Western Europe from within the womb of a primitive gentile order, the main features of which were:

- a) *community ties on the basis of blood relations;*
- b) *common ownership of land by the community and collective production; and*
- c) *a classless society.*

Then the growth of private property, accumulation of wealth, and a rising aristocracy in Western Europe undermined the basis of slavery. The period during which feudal relations were formed is known as the Middle Ages. In Europe, this period began in approximately the 5th century AD and lasted until the 11th century AD. In Asia, it began during the 3rd century in China, the 4th and 5th centuries in India, and the 7th century in Arabia; and lasted until the end of the 8th century in China and the 11th and 12th centuries in most other countries. The second period in the history of the middle ages is synonymous with the epoch of feudal development. In Europe, this period was between the 11th and 15th centuries; in Asia and North Africa, between the 9th and 11th centuries and during the 15th century. The third and last is called the late middle ages. During his period, feudal relations deteriorated and capitalist relations appeared. In Europe, this period lasted from the 13th century to the middle of the 17th century.

Economic historians have identified the 14th century as the period of feudal crisis during which agriculture underwent major changes. However the sustained crisis was preceded by a prolonged expansion of the feudal mode of

production. It contained no self-correcting mechanism for resolving internal contradictions due to the surplus extractive relation, which was the main feature of capitalism. Landlords did not have the option of increasing incomes through capital investment, which would raise the productivity of the direct producers' labour and enable them to produce more output during their surplus labour time. Peasants possessed their own means of production. Their economic reproduction was, in a sense, independent of the surplus extractive demands of the feudal lords. Thus, between 1240 and 1440, European feudalism experiences nothing but stagnation and decline, and forms more than a century it underwent a major contraction. Under such a situation, there was no alternative available to the feudal lords to increase their income, since the feudal mode lacked a developmental dynamism of this type, which characterizes the capitalist mode of production. Thus these crises led to class struggles. As the outcome of these struggles, there emerged a direction of socio-economic development in England and France. However, in England, there emerged an agrarian capitalism or a capitalist mode of production.

In Rome, Athens, and Germany, the old gentile order collapsed owing to internal contradictions. In Rome, slavery was replaced by feudalism because of the internal conflicts of the system and then by external attack and the destruction of the Roman Empire. Such a situation did not arise in most parts of India, as slavery did not become the mode of large scale production. Instead, the growth of kingdoms and empires brought in its wake a system of bureaucracy. Thus rights in land were divided among several chieftains' village communities, and private industrial producers. However, the state (i.e. the king) remained the ultimate owner of all lands in the kingdom.

b) Semi-Feudal Mode of Production: Amit Bhaduri (1973) developed the concept of semi-feudal mode of production. By using data from the state of West Bengal in India, he examined the interaction between forces and relations of production. The quantitative model that he built and tested with empirical data produced significant results, indicating the main features of the nature of agrarian relations in the study area. Bhaduri called them semi-feudal relations of production, the main features of which were:

- i) *sharecropping without any written agreement;*
- ii) *perpetual indebtedness of small tenant-cultivators;*
- iii) *multiple roles of the landlord, such as moneylender, trader, as well as provider of rental land to the same cultivators, hence exploitation of the highest order; and*
- iv) *lack of access by the small farmers and tenants to the market.*

Sharecropping is major form of production and exploitation in the agrarian relation in developing countries. The nature of the contract between the landowners and tenants varies across cases. Depending upon the contribution of each party in the process of production. Generally sharecropping contracts are verbal and therefore lack any legal validity. Landlords play a dual role. As owner of the land, he gives out land on a sharecropping basis to peasants and landless cultivators who, being financially poor, need loans in order to undertake cultivation of the land. The landlord provides loans in cash and also in kind to cultivators. These borrowers have to settle their account with the landlords soon after the harvest and at the time of *batai* (sharing of crops). It is here that the exploration of the highest order takes place. First, the tenant or sharecropper has to share the output raised from the land, which is generally divide on 50:50 basis. Then tenants or sharecroppers have to repay the loan obtained from the landlord prior to cultivation of the land.

Thus a substantial portion of the producer's share is refunded as a loan with interest. A portion of the loan may also be repaid in cash depending upon the nature of the contract. After repaying the loan and sharing the harvest with the landowner, the balance crop, which is generally available for the sharecroppers, is just enough to survive from the landlord season to another. This situation is generally overcome by borrowing again from the landlord for self consumption (i.e. family consumption). These loans (i.e. consumption and production) keep the poor cultivator under constant indebtedness to the landlord. There is, moreover, no other source available to the sharecroppers for a loan except the landlord. Often these sharecroppers are unable to refund the entire loan during one season. As such, it is carried forward for recovery during the next season.

The perpetual indebtedness of the borrower is generally passed on from one generation to the next (i.e. a son has to repay the loans obtained by his father). Usually a very high rate of interest is charged on loans provided by the landlords. There is neither consensus of opinion on the rate of interest on user's capital provided as a loan to the sharecroppers nor on the methods of calculation of a rate of interest charged by moneylenders.

These production and consumption loans of the landless peasants or labourers tie them with a particular landowner they are unable to part with until, and unless, they settle their debt account; although in a legal sense, peasants are free to move from one landowner to another. Indebtedness and dependence of sharecroppers on their landlords not only rob them of what is their due but deprive them also of their exchange entitlement-meaning, for indebted sharecroppers, there is no open commodity market. Informal money or capital market (i.e. loans obtained from landlords constitute an informal money or

capital market) interlock with the commodity market in the sense that they are bound to sell their output to the landlord who is also a trader in farm commodities, and who has provided a loan to sharecroppers on condition that they will sell their produce to the lender (i.e. trader merchant) who, at the same time, is the landowner. In this way access to open market by borrowers is greatly restricted. The price that they generally receive for their products from the landowner-cum-moneylender is less than the prevailing market price. Thus these relations of production, exchange, and resulting exploitation are the features of semi-feudal agriculture. The concept of semi-feudal mode of production stands for a backward agriculture, a picture of which has been portrayed above. Although the concept of “semi-feudalism” has been subject to criticism, it seems to have been the generally accepted model of the existing agrarian relations in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan.

c) Asiatic Mode of Production: The essence of the concept of Asiatic mode of production was the primitive communities in which the ownership rights of lands were vested with the community, and the cultivation was organized on the basis of kinship relations. The whole system was based on the absence of private property in land. Primitive tools and a low level of technological development was the feature of this mode of production, which demanded that all members of the commune participate in the production of material values. People working together and for each other represented relations of production. All members' communes produced material values and gave to society, each according to his ability. The land and its riches were the basis means of production and were used jointly, it belong to the community as a whole. The common ownership of land was determined by a primitive level of productive and forces and demanded that all productive forces be directed toward producing the basic needs of life. This does not imply that state ownership was all together absent. It was limited by or combined with the common ownership of the commune. A surplus was appropriated by the state (represented by the king) from the produce raised by commune without negating the rights of village community. The king's share of the surplus varied at different periods of time. In terms of exponent of the Asiatic Mode of Production, the unity of agriculture and manufacturing in the self-sufficient village economy was the main factor in the survival of communal property in this mode. Several scholars stated that the Asiatic mode of production was organized by family labour for self consumption. Every family, having exchanged goods with another family or commune, received a value, which was the gross production of the family. The annual expenditure was deducted from this, and the family was left with the value it has produced for self consumption. The remaining portion of the produce was the basis upon which the family used to calculate the production for the coming year. The family income, however, had its own determinants, such as the size of the family,

productivity of the family, and the extent of self exploitation. The object of production for the family was to produce the conditions which were necessary for family consumption. As such the tendency to increase output through accumulation and exploitation of new land was limited. The labour process was organized in such a way that during the off-season, most of the farmers used to work off the farm to produce commodities which were of use-value and which were then exchanged.

However, the concept of the Asiatic mode of production is a controversial one. The debate seems of centre on the presence or absence of social classes under this mode. Despite the common ownership of the means of production there is no conclusive evidence that the society under the Asiatic mode of production was a class less society. In fact, Marx himself never categorically rejected such a possibility, nor did he argue unequivocally in favor of the existence of classes under the Asiatic mode of production.

8.3 Mode of Production in Bangladesh

Determination of mode of production is one of the central issues in any analysis of class structure and class relations in Marxian framework whenever it is applied to understand a given society- its stage of historical development. Although Marx has used the term 'mode of production' very often, it is not used in any single and consistent sense. Hence, there is controversy among Marxist scholars centering on definition of mode of production. Here the purpose is not to enter into that controversy. It is mentionable here that by mode of production it means 'an articulated combination of forces and relations of production. Recently there was a major academic debate entering around the question of the mode of production in Indian agriculture. Drawn from different disciplinary orientations such as economics, history, anthropology and sociology more than a dozen of Marxist scholars from India and abroad have contributed to this important debate. They have expressed divergent views about the importance of different determinants of mode of production in general and Marxist mode of production in Indian agriculture in particular.

Apart from that there is a divergent view about the importance of determination of 'mode of production' in an agrarian society. Rudra (1978), for example, has opined that the concepts of mode of production should be avoided because given the same body of facts, different scholars have tended to describe different modes as 'dominant' and there is no means of disproving anybody as there are no agreed criteria for determining dominance among modes". On the one hand Anthony Brewer has also argued that much of the

debate over modes of production has been confined to semantics and no more. As such it is on little interests (Blair, 1978).

But on the other hand, in the context of rural Bangladesh, Arens and Beurden have admitted the importance of describing the mode of production although it is more of a theoretical and abstract issue. In their village study conducted in Bangladesh they found that although villagers did not use the phraseology and conceptual categories such as 'mode of production' or relations of production' in their discussion or every day conversation they very such thought on those lines ever since the impact of modernization and mechanization of agriculture on the land lord sharecropper relationship, or on employment pattern, or on Labour utilization has become visible in rural Bangladesh. In other words to understand the principal contradictions in a given set of organization and relations of production and to determine the real adversary of the poor peasants in rural areas it is absolutely necessary to determine the mode of production (Arens & Beurden, 1977).

Rahman, a Marxist economist, was the first to claim that capitalism is the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture (Rahman, 1974). He has presented his thesis when the debate on the dominant mode of production in Indian agriculture was at its peak. Using impressive micro-level data he claimed that the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture today was capitalism. However, publication of this paper by Rahman has not attracted attention of other scholars very much. One important thing should be mentioned that although in the Indian debate scholars tried to present ample fresh data to substantiate one's own argument and to disprove counter-arguments, in the Bangladesh debate as a whole has been somewhat less stimulating lacking intellectual creative involvement of scholars. Rahman's main arguments in favor of the dominant mode of production as capitalists are given below.

First, ownership of land predominantly by the cultivating peasants is the main feature of the present land system in rural Bangladesh. And still, there is market differentiation among the peasantry. On the basis of land holding the whole peasantry can be divided into three classes viz., small, middle and rich peasants. According to Rahman, majority of the rural population i.e. 42.5% belong to the small peasant class those who own only 23% of the total cultivable land. The middle peasants are 24.9% to total rural population, those who own as much as 47% of the total cultivable land which is quite disproportionate to the size of the class. The rich peasants are 5.2%, who own 30% of the cultivable land. Thus, the middle and rich peasants together are owners of 41% of total holding but they own 77% of the total cultivable land

area. 27.4% are the landless in the total rural population. The average sizes of the farms of small, middle and rich are 4, 13 and 40 *bighas* respectively.

Obviously then, considering the size of landholding and average size of farm, the middle and rich peasants are dominant in rural Bangladesh. To Rahman rich peasants are rural bourgeoisie and middle peasants are rural petty bourgeoisie. Among all of them, the middle peasants or petty bourgeoisie are the dominant section. Landless (27.4%) and small peasants (42.5%) altogether are nearly 70% of total rural population. They are the rural proletariat or semi-proletariat whose interests are antagonistic to the interests of the majority of the middle and almost all of the rich peasants; Landless peasants, small peasants and even a part of middle peasants are exploited by the rich peasants. Consolidation of land holdings has been increasing in rural Bangladesh. Present forms of differentiation, division of labour and contradictions are helpful to the development of capitalism and these are also the symbol of rural or agrarian capitalism. Although sharecropping is a negligible size, it is an existing form of the social arrangement in Bangladesh agriculture. The landless are leasing in over 3% of the total cultivable land under sharecropping contracts. The exact size of sharecropping land by owner sharecroppers is not known but it is expected that it would not be more than 19.5% (Rahman, 1964) of total cultivable land. So, sharecropping is not the dominant form of arrangement in the production in agriculture. Cumulative differentiation among the peasantry developed wage Labour in land. Owners of almost every size of farm use some wage labour. In respect of labour day the use of wage labour is more than 33 %. In a surplus labour economy it is a very significant proportion of the population (as calculated by Rahman).

Use of modern machinery in Bangladesh agriculture is increasing day by day although it is not yet seen on a large scale. Manures, high quality seeds, irrigation, use of pesticides and institutionalized agricultural credit, all these are obvious symptoms of growth of capitalism in Bangladesh agriculture. Even there is a change in sowing and harvesting also as is evident in the use of IRRI rice. Although there is use less farm machines in actual cultivation, by and large the mechanization of agriculture has increased significantly in contrast to the traditional agricultural methods during the British period. Crop intensity has been increased. Small peasant, fragmentation of land and division and subdivision of land are, however, the strong barriers to extensive mechanization of agriculture. Under the above circumstances the present increased use of farm machineries, intensity of crops, higher income, expenditure and investment patterns, existence and extension of agricultural co-operatives, and the like are characteristics of capitalism.

The present form of agricultural production is also sharpening the division of Labour, further reinforcing the commercialization of agriculture and also leading to expansion of the internal market. Development of cottage industries in agriculture has also led to the extension of the division of labour and has accentuated the commodity production; nearly 17% are the wage labour of the total wage labour employed in cottage industries. Thus, commodity production is fast becoming the general characteristics of agricultural production in Bangladesh today. 70% of total commercial crops are produced and sold in market as commodity (Rahman, 1964). A big size of milk, *ghee*, egg, chicken are produced for selling in the market. 70% of agricultural productions are rice out of which 38% are sold in the market. These are the main empirical proofs advanced by Rahman to substantiate his claim that capitalism is the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture today. However, he has neither defined the mode of production nor has he developed any systematic theoretical argument about the nature of development of capitalism in agriculture and the resultant social dynamics in rural Bangladesh.

Second, another major contribution to the dominant mode of production debate in Bangladesh is provided by Arens and Beurden. They have highlighted the issue on the basis of a comparison of their village *Jhagrapur* and *Ghangoni* Thana of *Kustia* district with village *Bondokgram* and *Kotwali Thana* of *Comilla* district. The villages and *thanas* are not only from two districts but they are also from two regions the former from north Bengal and the latter from the eastern part of Bangladesh. To determine the dominant mode of production in agriculture, Arens and Beurden have examined three points:

- i) *the nature of relationship between two classes viz., those who are actually cultivating land and those are appropriating the surplus;*
- ii) *rate of mechanization and division of Labour; and*
- iii) *impact of national and international economy on the local production system visible in the rapid extension of commercialization of agriculture and in the extent of cultivation of cash crops.*

Arens and Beurden have claimed that the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture is far from being the 'peasant mode' because there are very few households in the villages who neither sold their labour nor hired any labour, neither they took loans nor they gave any. Hardly one or two households of above type might be there in the *Comilla* village. The authors claim that although there are symptoms of client-patron relationship persisting sharecropping and some other power exercising opportunities for the landlords. These are only the remnants of feudalism in *Jhagrapur*. At the same time, some capitalist characteristics are also surfacing. Particularly they have mentioned that since the abolition of the *Zamindari* the feudal characteristics

have been disappearing. Prior to that some symptoms of capitalist development were visible during the British period also. They have also objected calling it 'semi feudal' because then the contradiction in Bangladesh villages could not have been primarily between surplus peasants and land Labour as it is fast developing today. Can it be called pre-capitalist? They do not want to describe it as pre-capitalist either, because then the term does not specify anything about the nature of class contradictions in the village like *Jhagrapur* (or *Teligram* for that matter).

Nonetheless, the authors do not want to call it capitalist agriculture, not even in *Comilla* district. They have described the present Bangladesh agriculture as neither feudal nor capitalist. They have also rejected the notion of colonial mode as used by Alavi (1975) because it has failed to solve the above problem as it would not account for or explain the nature of class contradictions in rural Bangladesh, particularly after the advent of the Pakistani regime. Finally, they have pleaded to describe the mode of production prevailing in rural Bangladesh in such a manner that all of the above characteristics can be coped up with. All that they stress is that something can be said about the emergence of capitalist agriculture in *Comilla* district but the same was not true in other districts of Bangladesh to the same extent.

Third, the work of Westergaard (1978) is also important who has attempted to determine the mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture. Relating her discussion with the Indian debate she has tried to identify the main characteristics of capitalism in Bangladesh agriculture. Westergaard conducted her study in a village called *Borigram* (in *Bogra* district). The village was basically a subsistence village similar to our *Teligram* in *Comilla* district. Westergaard has tried to determine dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture in an attempt to see whether it could at all be called 'capitalist'. She found that it cannot possibly be described as 'capitalist mode of production.' She mentions of the tendency to describe the dominant mode of production as 'semi-feudal' on the belief that tenancy and sharecropping are incompatible with capitalism. Similarly, wage labour is also considered as the chief determinant factor of capitalist production.

Following Patnaik (1972) Westergaard too claims that the use of wage labour in agriculture would not necessarily indicate the development of capitalism in agriculture. In *Kushbia* and the *Bogra* villages sharecroppers were gradually being pushed below the agrarian social ladder and worked as farm labourers. But this is, she claims, not due to development of capitalism as such in agriculture but due primarily to increased population pressure on land. Moreover, she says that accumulation and reinvestment should also be considered as the main defining criteria of capitalism. Hence, according to the investment criteria

neither *Comilla* nor *Bogra* villages could claim to have the developed capitalist agriculture. These are the major arguments developed by Westergaard while determining the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture.

Fourth, Jahangir (1978) has admitted that capitalism is the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture. To him, the major characteristics of Bangladesh agriculture today are:

- i) though in differential degrees, all classes- Rich, Middle and Poor peasants have been engaged in commodity production;*
- ii) the difference between poor peasants and landless are of degree (or scale) but they too an integral part of the capitalist production relations;*
- iii) rich peasants are investing in land are also leasing in land to enlarge their scale of agricultural production;*
- iv) at the same time rich peasant, middle peasants, and some times even poor peasants are also leasing out land.*

All these characteristics are sometimes considered as symptomatic of articulation of different modes of production. But, according to Jahangir these diversities in characteristics of production relations in agriculture are due partly to the presence of colonialism (in fact neo-colonialism) in Bangladesh economy, and partly to private ownership in land and cumulative commodity production. These two systems have given the opportunity of using the wage labour by the rich peasant through wage market and mortgage market whenever necessary and still keeping the option of sharecropping arrangements whenever they suit them. Hence the landless and poor peasants are to be found frequently engaging themselves either as wage labour, or as *raiyyats* or sharecroppers. By and large then Jahangir argues that the agricultural production is for marketing, and that investment is taking place in the rural areas. He has also cited some examples of rural entrepreneurship emerging in rural Bangladesh. However, Jahangir has not clearly defined the characteristics of capitalist mode of production in agriculture. Outlining them in his own ways, Jahangir has tried to construct a general profile of the development of capitalism in rural areas as he views it and perhaps that might be the reason why he has not sharply and directly reacted to the general theoretical debate on the development of capitalism in Bangladesh agriculture.

Fifth, the major contribution to the debate has been made by Chowdhury (1982). He has joined the debate by reopening the question in the Bangladesh context and has described Bangladesh agriculture as semi- feudal and semi-

colonial mode. Hence a brief outline of Chowdhury's position would be pertinent. Taking into account some micro and macro-level data Chowdhury has opined that Bangladesh agriculture can not be described either as the 'peasant mode' or capitalist mode' or even 'feudal mode'; rather it should be described as semi- feudal and semi- colonial mode of production .He argues that 'the subsistence peasants who operated their farms or workshops mainly with family labour, who are self-sufficient producers and consumers, who normally do neither employ labourers nor sell their labour to others, who are neither in debt nor lend money to others, and who are not involved in any kind of sharecropping arrangements, are not the dominant component in the agrarian structure of Bangladesh. He also thinks that the present mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture cannot at all be treated as capitalistic because to him the increase in the wage labour category or the decrease in the owner-cum-tenant category does not necessarily mean the development of capitalism has taken place in Bangladesh agriculture. Increase in wage labour in the agricultural households might be due to increasing demographic pressure on land. Modernization in agriculture has taken place in some areas only. Moreover, there is as yet no convincing evidence from available empirical studies to show that the surplus generated from agriculture by the rich peasants in invested for expansion on the farms (operational holdings) and boosting up the agricultural production in order to earn a still higher rate of profit. Hence, he questions the claim of those who herald the growth of capitalism in rural Bangladesh somewhat enthusiastically (Chowdhury, 1982).

However, Chowdhury also argues that dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture cannot possibly be described in terms of the 'feudal mode'. There is no agrarian class of absentees, which is living purely on rent. The surplus labour is not appropriated by the class of land- owning cultivators in the form of rent, or through exactions and extra- economic coercion. After the *Zamindari* abolition, there is a change in the nature or exploitation and class- structure. Hence, he argues that a new class has emerged where *jotdars*, landed gentry and renter section of the landowning class and moneylenders are exploiting the poor cultivators through the nexus of tenancy, wage labour and credit. Finally, Chowdhury (1984) has suggested that the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture can be best described as semi- feudal or semi- colonial for the following reasons:

- a) *Remnants of feudal exploitation are very much present. Dominance of sharecropping as the most preferred form of tenancy arrangement in rural Bangladesh in just one illustration of the remnant of persistence of semi-feudalism;*
- b) *In the 1977 Land Occupancy Survey it was reported that owner-cum-tenant and pure tenants were 39% of total agri-households. Moreover,*

tenants were making all investment for production while owners were paying only negligible amount as annual revenue to the government. Even owner tenant relations often resembled to patron-client relations and sometimes to patron-tied (bonded) labour type arrangements also;

- c) Marginal farmers have been in perpetual indebtedness due to frequent crop failure, floods and droughts. Generally, these small farmers repaid their loans in kind or services rather than in cash;*
- d) Big landowners are operating as landlords, moneylenders, and government dealers and marketing intermediates at the same time; and*
- e) Government institutional credits are monopolized by the high landowners where the marginal- small peasants and sharecroppers have little or no access.*

For these reasons Chowdhury prefers to describe the present production relations in rural Bangladesh as 'semi-feudal' but at the same time 'semi-colonial' also, because he thinks that Bangladesh agriculture has been closely linked with international market through exports of Jute, tea etc. However, he wants to interpret the exploitation of land Labour by the rich peasants or landowners as a secondary contradiction is the capitalist (Chowdhury, 1982).

Here an attempt has been made to discuss about some of the major contributions made by different social scientists to the understanding of the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture in general. It is clear that the controversy has centered mostly on one issue, as to whether production relation in rural Bangladesh could be described in terms of the capitalist mode of production or not. Of the five contributors, whose views have been discussed above, two have claimed the existence of capitalism in agriculture, two have not accepted this claim since there was no significant development of capitalism; one of them has described it as a 'semi-feudal' mode of production. Given this mixed evidence, our problem of ascertaining the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture become even more challenging and equally complicated.

The study of Alam in *Comilla* village (*Shohagpur*) shows that 185 households owning 198.9 acres of cultivable land out of which just 12.07 acres (i.e. 6.06% of total cultivable land) is under sharecropping. On the other hand the sharecroppers own altogether 15.65 acres of land, which is more than what they had leased in from others. However, in village *Teligram* (from the subsistence setting) total 160 households are under sharecropping. This means that 19.11% of total cultivable land is under the sharecropping type of social arrangements. In that village sharecropper households own just 25.17 acres

which means that sharecroppers had leased in more land than what they owned. While comparing the two settings it should be kept in mind that the average size of land holding in two settings is different too. About the use of wage labour also, it might be mentioned that 16.19% of households in *Shobagpur* are exclusively dependent on wage labour and 14.63% of households in *Teligram* village are dependent on wage labour. What are the criteria used for determining the prevalence of capitalism in agriculture? In the Indian context it has been abundantly shown that the existence of widespread tenancy or sharecropping does not necessarily indicate the presence of feudal relations of production, nor does the concentration of landholding together with cultivation of small units by large members of peasants. By the same token, the use of wage labour cannot by itself be taken as the sign of development of capitalism relations.

Yet according to Thorner (1983), in the Indian context 'the shift from the exploitation through tenants to large scale or intensive farming by means of hired labour is significant. The development of capitalist farming in India has been described on the basis of two key elements viz., relations of production and forms of exploitation. Servile, debt-bounded traditionally tied labour, paid (if meagerly) for the most part in cash. Extensive investment in modern agriculture and machineries for increasing production are also important. Finally, tenancy or sharecropping has been accepted as the new economic and technical requirements and in fact the labour typing process has been reported to be intensified with growth of capitalism in the countryside. Still there are remnants of feudal or semi-feudal relations of production. However, protagonists of 'semi-feudal mode of production' have withdrawn themselves from the debate since the middle of the 1970's or so. Hence, capitalist mode of production has now come to be accepted as the dominant mode of production in Indian agriculture. Similarly, it can be said that the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture is also capitalist which is stated by Alam.

In the agrarian structure of Bangladesh, several modes of production are prevalent. According to Abdullah (1976), there are three types of modes of production in the agrarian structure of Bangladesh such as (i) feudal (ii) peasant and (iii) capitalistic. Among these, peasant mode of production is mostly prevalent. In contrast with Abdullah, Alamgir has simply stated that the predominant mode of production in the agrarian structure of Bangladesh is semi-feudalism. After the abolition of *Zamindari* system in 1950, semi-feudalism has been developed as the pre-dominant mode of production (Alamgir, 1978: 75). The prominent sociologist as well as anthropologist has seen two types of mode of production in rural Bangladesh, these are semi-feudalism and semi-colonialism (Chowdhury, 1982). On the other hand, Rahman and Jahangir have noted that capitalistic mode of production has been developing in the

agriculture of Bangladesh (Jahangir, 1979, Rahman, 1974). Westergard has stated that the rural society of Bangladesh is not changing towards capitalism but it becomes non-profitable (Westergard, 1983). Wood has seen class differentiation among peasants of *Comilla Sadar Thana* but this has not been developed from capitalistic mode of production rather than from many lending system (Wood, 1981). Economist, Hossain has treated the mode of production of rural Bangladesh as semi-feudalism as it is seen by Alamgir (Hossain, 1978b).

In the rural politics, Arens and Buerden have seen the nature of acute competition among the villagers about the political power. Factionalism or factional politics, conspiracy and even war are committed among the landlords regarding the ownership of land. Arens and Beurden, by comparing the socioeconomic structures of two regions of Bangladesh, have stated that: In the description of mode of production of Bangladesh, it is relevant to identify the real indicator as the only element of agriculture, which is able to determine the features of mode of production. There are remarkable differences between the regional and even at local levels of Bangladesh. Beside this, mode of production in different regions is in the process of change. It is in transaction from the so-called feudalism to capitalism. There is also difference in this stage of development in different regions (Arens & Buerden, 1977).

Bertocci, on the basis of analysis of data results about rural social stratification, has that: the data of Abdullah (1976) shows that among the peasants, 12% and 6% have taken small business as their principal and secondary source of income, 8% of them work as household servant for their subsistence. Again many of them are involved with food production in non-agricultural region (such as, 12% are fishermen). This information proves the different types of bridges of individuals with the institutional framework of rural economy. This can assume the plethora of social ties and dependencies, which can create atomization of individual economic interest and which consequently creates obstacles to unite the landless as an economic class. It is also evident that different types of relationships, such as landowners-tenants, patron-client etc. existing within and across the lines of peasant classes, are prevalent in the rural society. This incident creates structural fragmentation in the rural social structure, politics and economy. So, the stratification pattern of social classes of Bangladesh can not be analyzed through a single or particular perspective, if this so, it would represent an unrealistic situation (Bertocci, 1975: 51).

In this regard, Rahman (1986) agrees with the statement of Jahangir. Chowdhury (1978) has discussed about the social stratification pattern of *Meherpur* village of Dhaka district. He has showed the social or class

stratification pattern of *Meherpur* Village on the basis of ownership and non-ownership of means of production followed by Marxist perspective.

In a recent research of rural poverty, Siddiqui has stated a complex scenario of class and production relations though he has not stated about the typology of mode of production. To him the rich peasants of *Magura* are anti-productive, dependent on others (peasants-poor) and free from the risk and burden of production; though they are not in lack of modern means of production, the production of them is less than that of the marginal peasants; they get much more return through their anti-productive notion (rack renting, money lending, storage business, etc.) as they have the absolute control over the means of production. They are able to increase their amount of income even through the accumulation of inputs provided by the state. Beside these, they can also change their profession easily (Siddiqui, 1980). Therefore, different scholars have analyzed and identified the existing mode of production in Bangladesh in different ways. However, in the following chart 20 a brief look is given to the general thoughts and opinions of different scholars, as discussed above, on the mode of production of Bangladesh.

Chart 20: General Classification of the Mode of Production in Bangladesh

Name of the Mode of Production	Name of the Producer	Theoretical Legacy		Important Variable Concepts
		Formally	Informally	
a. Small peasant mode of production or petty commodity production based mode of production	Abu Abdullah, Kamal Mahmud, Mahfuz Bhuiya Hassan, Nathan	Marx, Lenin, Mao	Partially Universal Marxism, Neo-Marxism, Chayanov, Shanin	Evolution of land ownership and management, Evolution of labour and profession, Surplus value and its use
b. Pre-capitalist Mode of Production	Adnan Van Schandle Abu Abdullah	Marx, Samir Amin Marx		Evolution of labour and profession, Surplus value and its use
c. Semi-Feudalism, Semi-Capitalism, (or Semi-Asiatic, Semi-Feudalism-Semi-Colonialism-Semi-Capitalism)	Anupon Sen, Anwarullah Chowdhury, Kristen Westergard	Marx, Angles, Mao, Samir, Amin, Hamza Alavi	Marx (regarding India), Angles (Upto 1857), Banerjee, Kardoso, (To some extent A.K. Sen)	Colony, <i>Zamindari</i> System, Expansion of International Capitalist Labour and Social Science concepts
d. Semi-Feudalism Semi-Capitalism	Mahbub Hossian Mohiuddin Alamgir Ajoy Roy Abdul Haq Arien and Beurden	Marx Angles Lenin Mao	Partially Marxism, Samir Amin, Immanuel, Bhaduri	Zamindari System, sharecropping, Leasing, Land and money owner, goods, wage Labour
e. Capitalist mode of production (with attributes)	Akhlakur Rahman, Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir, Atiur Rahman, Omar, Khurshid Alam, Westergaard,	Marx Lenin	Partially Marxism, (predominantly Lenin) Samir Amin	Main concepts of feudalism and capitalism, industrial capitalism, and expansion of merchandised capitalism

However, from the analyses and observations made by different researchers and scholars, the scenario about the agricultural production system of Bangladesh can be mentioned in the following way:

- i) Land ownership in rural Bangladesh is randomly or abnormally concentrated. 25% of rural households own the 89 % of total agricultural land;*

- xv) *The pre-capitalist production relations are strongly prevalent in the agriculture of Bangladesh.*

8. 4 Organization of Production in Char Dumla

In present study a discussion is made about some of the major contribution made by different social scientists to the understanding of the dominant mode of production in Bangladesh agriculture. From this view point the attempt has been made by the researcher to understand the nature of mode of production of Char Dumla. However, on the basis of this the scenario of the existing mode of production of Char Dumla is analyzed in the following discussions. Data collected from the Char Dumla under the district Noakhali show that 453 households own 1023 acres of cultivable land (approx) together. Out of which 608.72 acres of land is sharecropping. 480.48 acres of land are sharecropped in and 123.92 acres of land are sharecropped out.

In Char Dumla out of 453 households 432 (95.36%) are directly and indirectly associated with agricultural production among which 178 households (39.29%) are associated with sharecropping (in) system and 21 households (4.73%) are associated with sharecropping (out). It is seen that among the total number of households 43.93% are associated with the sharecropping system. So, obviously, sharecropping constitutes a great part in the organization of production. It is a very common practice in Char Dumla. Majority of the sharecroppers came from the landless, marginal and poor farmers' categories, but all sharecroppers are poor. The landless, marginal and poor farmer usually sharecropped the land comparatively middle and rich land owners. The *char* area of the Southern coastal belt of Bangladesh has been still involved with sharecropping production process. Char Dumla is such an area where sharecropping system plays a very vital role in the organization of production.

In addition, 24 (5.30%) rich farmer households in the village use at least a portion of their cultivable land in sharecropping. Rich farmer households of Char Dumla cultivate their land through sharecropping for various social and economic causes instead of cultivating themselves. In this context, they cultivate their lands through sharecropping farmers instead of directly cultivating themselves due to their social position in society. In the village, land is cultivated on the basis of oral agreement between the land owner and sharecropper. The sharing distribution of crops is based on 50:50 ratios and in the case of Rabi crops the owner of land receives one-third portion of total produced crops and sharecroppers get two-third of total produced crops. However, in many cases, the landowners supply all the inputs and means of production to the sharecroppers for crop production in the land. The sharecropper only produces the crops and uses his labour for production.

- ii) *The number of larger firms is decreasing gradually. The average range of jots is also narrowing;*
- iii) *All jots are numerically divided;*
- iv) *The rich peasants do not invest capital for modern agricultural technology rather than they accumulate the incentives provided by the state. This is possible for them because of their absolute control over means of production and power structure;*
- v) *The marginal peasants utilize the modern agricultural technology and elements, and they produce much more than the rich peasants;*
- vi) *Interest and mortgaging systems exist in everywhere of rural Bangladesh;*
- vii) *The productive forces have not yet been changed as it was in the medieval period. Agriculture mainly depends on traditional technology;*
- viii) *The industrial production in agriculture has not been flourished except in the adjacent localities of urban areas;*
- ix) *Merchants and usurious capital exist both in the national and rural economy;*
- x) *The rich peasants are exploiting the poor and landless peasants through the process of usurious interest, mortgaging, sharecropping, rack rating, subsistence wage, etc.;*
- xi) *Though wage labour is widely used in agriculture, it does not denote the existence of capitalistic mode of production rather than it represents the availability of labour created by the gradually increased pressure of peasants on the limited land;*
- xii) *The nature of existence or wideness of existing raiyati system in agriculture is the indicators of pre-capitalistic production relations;*
- xiii) *Landless and vulnerability are creating not only for economic crisis but also for population pressure and property transfer from rural areas to urban areas and urban biasness in development planning;*
- xiv) *The poor peasants are structurally divided and they have no class solidarity due to the diversification of profession and income sources for their minimum subsistence; and*

- xv) *The pre-capitalist production relations are strongly prevalent in the agriculture of Bangladesh.*

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These features shows that the total investment in land taken for sharecropping goes to the shoulder of the land owner. Though according to the agreement of the sharecropping, half of the produced crops are to be given to the owner of the land. Data indicates that generally owner of the land exchanges his land with the sharecropper for producing crops on a year basis. In some respects, the land owner increases the sharecropping tenure of land.

In the study area, 60% land owners increase the sharecropping tenure of their land. It is mentionable that 18% land owners change their sharecropper every year. On the other hand, 22% of the sharecroppers in the study area continue cultivating the same land for many years. In the study area, most of the large landowner households are absentee land owner who produce crops of their land through sharecropping. The absentee landowners are the owner of more than half of the cultivable land in the village. These land owners let their land for sharecropping to the same sharecroppers for year after year. They are not contributing in any ways for the surplus production of their land. They are satisfied by receiving half of their production. On the other hand, they spend the money comes from the surplus of their sharing crops for non-agricultural activities. For example, building houses in the urban areas, purchasing of cultivable land, educational expenditure of their offspring, other social and educational activities etc. Such expenditure in the unproductive sectors causes obstacle to the reproduction of agriculture in the study village. In Char Dumla, the rich farmers do not maintain any direct contact with the sharecroppers, in its consequences the natural production depends on the economic and social capacity of the sharecroppers, at that time the sharecroppers used low level technological input in agriculture and as such overwhelming intervention of the middlemen. As a result, eventually the production is slowing down. Under the sharecropping system in the village the sharecroppers fully invests their household labour for production; however, in case seasonal shortage of labour, they inevitably hire wage labourers for harvesting and post-harvesting period. While every households are involved into agricultural activities in this period to meet the additional requirement of labour in agriculture. In addition, wage labourers are essential to employ for bringing crops home early due to natural calamities such as flood.

In addition, small and middle farmers can obtain loan from various institutional and non-institutional sources. It is found in the research area that the landlords in this areas use to sharecrop their land more preferably to their kin members within the lineage having relatively low economic resources. However, there has been a gradual change in practices of letting land for sharecropping to the kin members. Rather most of the landlord let their land for sharecropping to more efficient, experienced and capable farmers instead of their kin members. For example, Azad Company of *Bepari Para* is a rich

landlord. But overlooking the interest and claim of his land for sharecropping of his close kin Hashu Majhi, Azad has given land to Batenna Majumder, a member of another lineage, considering his efficiency and experience in sharecropping. Never the less, Batenna has good reputation in the village for his commitment to the agreement and work. In this respect, Azad Company has prioritized on the efficiency and reliability for ensuring production of his land for sharecropping, having known that letting for sharecropping to his poor relative may change his economic status. In this way, the study found that there has been a shift in the preference of the land owners in terms of letting land for sharecropping. However, in some cases small and middle farmers let their land for sharecropping to their kin members within their lineage. Though the relationship of production in the village is predominantly dependent on agriculture, but it is found that the present relationship between landowners and sharecroppers is more exploitative than early period. Expansion of market economy has an important constraint on the shift of landowner's land using practices in Char Dumla. On the other hand, it is a common feature that income of the surplus crop production has not been invested for surplus agricultural production but invested in non-agricultural sectors.

The organization of production in the study along with sharecropping, mortgaged agreement is another important feature. This system plays an important and significant role, which affect the control over land and so to the organization of production. Sharecropping arrangements depend a great deal on the mortgage agreement. Because of the creditor on the mortgaged always in favor of the mortgaged who is the actual owner of the land and give him the preference to cultivate his own land. So that in a mortgage and sharecropping agreement, most of the time the sharecroppers are owner-cum-tenant in the village. But recently the rate of mortgaging land is gradually decreasing in the village. Data available from the village census showed in the present time 23.13% households are engaged in mortgaged agreement. It was found that the 179.98 acres of land engaged in mortgaging system. Land of Char Dumla usually mortgaged to collect money for the son, brother or relatives in order to send them non agricultural sources like foreign countries.

The importance and significance about the type of mortgages cannot be overlooked in the type of mini-fundist context, since they are likely to be a much more important part of the class structure in the study area than elsewhere. The cumulative impact of these mortgage transaction functions to increase and stabilize the gap between the richer and the poorer peasants. Thus affecting the cyclical mobility patterns often associated with mini-fundist situation. The *char* village *kebas* land, land acquisition can occur through sells and per cashes in more polarized situations. In that case, the mortgaged transactions becomes the principal means, whereby land ultimately changes

hands and it is this relation between rich and poor classes and differentiate between them, rather than 'kamlā' or day labour and comparatively inferior tenancies.

It is difficult to present a typical scenario for these transactions since in detail there are many variations. However, a critical part of the process is the conversion of inflated interest rate on loans which have accumulated over a year or two into an equivalent land value based on the going market price. Usually the money given to the mortgage is one third of the current market price or something less than that. Since the interest rates on credit are inflated beyond all reasonable hope for repayment, this amounts to an acquisition of land by the lender below the market price. If he is prepared to wait for the interest to accumulate and run the minimum risk (to this prospect for acquisition, not to his loaned-out capital) of repayment and foreclosure. In many cases it is not even a question of waiting where the lender has used the land until either the debt is redeemed or he formally acquires it. The process reflects a situation in which the demand for credit is in excess of the demand for land at the respective rates of supply.

The mortgagee also cultivates some mortgaged lands. Some lands are sharecropped out to other than the owner also. So the land mortgaged and cultivator of mortgage land in Char Dumla is very important to the organization of production. In the village 105 (23.18%) households are associated with the mortgage process. Among them 72 (15.89%) households together own 28 acres of land. In the marginal category, 24 (5.30%) have mortgaged-in about 27.76 acres of land. The size of their personal holdings together is about only 13 acres of land. This means that the mortgagee temporarily own more land and their permanent land holdings. In this category only 6 (1.32%) have mortgaged-out land—they have done so in order to accumulate the required money to send their child abroad. However, the amount of land they mortgaged out is only 3 acres. In the small peasant category only 16 (3.53%) households have been involved with the mortgage process; they have mortgaged-in a total of 23.88 acres of land. 33 (7.28%) middle peasant households have mortgaged-out a total of 58.24 acres of land. In the village only 1 (0.22%) rich household currently involved to mortgage arrangement—together these households have mortgaged-out 10 acres of land.

Generally mortgage is a kind of obligatory credit. This obligation can be in the case of both immovable and moveable property. But in Char Dumla, people understand 'mortgage' by taking loan for binding obligation of landed property. Generally people take loan by mortgaging their land to a credit provider. In this process, basically a contract is signed on a revenue stamp paper in the presence of the member of village "*panchayat*" committee.

According to the contract, generally a credit receiver takes Taka 25,000 to Taka 30,000 from the credit provider for an acre of land on the basis of a specific calendar and in exchange credit provider take the agricultural production of the given land for that specific period.

In the research area, the mortgager is also a sharecropper. For that reason, mortgager sometimes takes his land back for cultivation as a sharecropper while the contract of mortgage of that particular land is contracted. In this pattern, mortgage system of land is practiced in the village. However, till the date the mortgager fails to pay back the amount of mortgaged money after the contracted date, the credit provider takes the crop production of that land. For this reason, marginal and small farmers become landless by failing to pay back the amount of the money of the mortgaged land.

In Char Dumla, the major reasons for which marginal and small farmers mortgage their lands are: crop loss, food demand, and failure of credit payment including household and social reasons (for example marriage of offspring, sending offspring in foreign countries). There is another kind of mortgage system practiced in Char Dumla which is known as "*saf kabala*". In this system, if the mortgager fails to pay back the money to the credit provider, then he automatically becomes the owner of that land. In this particular case, the mortgager receives money from the credit provider which is equivalent to the market price of that land and according to the contract the credit provided enjoys all the crop production of that land in the contract period. As there is high risk of losing the land, for this reason only a few numbers of farmers gives this mortgage when they are in a serious crisis.

In the village there are both institutional and non-institutional sources of granting credit beyond the mortgage system. Among the institutional sources, Sonali Bank, Bangladesh Agricultural Bank and Grameen Bank provide credit to the farmers. However, these institutional credit sources have various terms and conditions and for providing credit to the farmers which involve risk for credit receivers. In addition, there is corruption and nepotism of the middlemen for receiving credit. For this reason, other than 20% of middle farmers and 30% of rich farmers, rests of the farmers are unable and uninterested to receive credit from institutional sources. Here, the surplus producing farmers can avail this opportunity. On the other hand, data shows that marginal and small farmer are predominant in agriculture of Char Dumla. The upper limit of granting credit from the institutional sources is Taka 5000 only. The complications of obtaining credit create difficulties for the poor farmers. For that reason, majority of the farmers in Char Dumla are interested to receive credit from the non institutional sources. NGOs and other agencies now provide agricultural and other credit assistances in *char* areas. NGOs

mainly provide credit on weekly basis. The highest limit of credit is Taka 5000 which is distributed as credit assistance among the landless, marginal and small farmers including middle and rich farmers on 40 installments for refunding. In this village, NGOs collect savings return as 20 Taka per week for which any interest is not given. When it is refunded as equal amount of the total credit received, this savings is balanced. In the following table 8.1 people's access to the credit from different sources in the study area are shown.

Table 8.1: Access to Credit from different Sources in Char Dumla

Source of Credit	Household Borrowing from the Source (%)	Average Ratio of Interest (%)
Banks	27	13
NGOs: CODEC, BRAC, UPMA, Daridra Bimochon, B.K.B., Sonali Bank, ASA, PRISM, NRDS, Nijera Kori	29	14
Money Lenders (<i>Mahajans</i>) or Traders	40	180
Land Owner	2	154
Friends and Relatives or Kin Members	2	59
Total	100%	

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The table shows that 27% households receive credit from banks, 29% households are connected with NGOs for credit relations, 40% households uses moneylenders (local *mahajans*) or traders as the source of their credit, 2% goes to the large land owner for loan and 2% households found which access only kin members for their credit. The data indicates that local money lenders or *mahajans* are used as the source of credit on a very high prevalence, on the other hand formal credit institutions like NGOs and Banks go to the second and the third in terms of their preference and access to loan. It has also been found that households simultaneously use several credit sources at a time. Formal institution loans, according to the data sources, can not meet necessity and crisis due to its difficult access and tight regulations. On the other hand, local money lenders are easy accessible for the households.

Among the formal institutions, households in the study areas take loan from Bangladesh *Krishi* Bank and *Sonali Bank* is 13%, interest from ASA, PRISM, NRDS, *Nijera Kori*, CODEC, BRAC, UPMA and *Daridra Bimochon* is 14%, interest from money lenders, *mahajans* or traders is 180% and from landowners 154% and from others 59%. In the case of the micro credit institutions available in the *char* like NGOs, the credit relationship is exploitative according to the data sources. NGOs provide micro credit to the poor and marginal households on weekly refund basis where households are suppose to refund an amount each week. But the NGOs count the interest on the total amount until the total amount of the credit is given back. So, the local NGOs are taking an

additional amount of interest on the refunded credit of the households. On the other hand, NGOs generally does not allow two credits simultaneously, and these types of credit can not help the *char* households during their crisis. It has been found that the intervention of the NGO's credit programme is predominant landless to middle households in the village. In the following table 8.2 the villager's access to credit from different sources by land ownership group are shown.

Table 8.2: Access to Credit from Different Sources by Land Ownership Group: Household Borrowing Credit

Land Ownership Group	Banks (%)	NGOs (%)	Informal Sources (%)
Landless	2.3	40	18
Marginal	3.0	40	20
Small	5.0	45	35
Middle	20.0	20	19
Large	30.0	1	2

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The table shows that credit sources of the landless households is mostly from NGOs which is 40%, then from local informal sources which 18% and least used source is bank which is 2.3%. The credit sources of the marginal households is also predominantly from NGOs which is 40%, and is followed by informal sources which 20% and the third accessible source is bank which is 3%. The small households uses NGO credit source than any other household group which constitutes 45%, it also go to the informal sources for credit than other groups which is 35% and from banks they receives 5% of their total credit as the source. The middle peasant households use all the credit sources almost equally, they use banks and NGOs as parallel, both sources are occupied 20%. Middle households also use informal credit sources which is 19%. In the case of large household, the main credit source is bank which occupies 30% of their total credit. Large households also use informal sources which 22% of total credit. But large households hardly use micro credit from NGOs. Only 1% of the large land ownership group use NGO credit.

In Char Dumla non-institutional options are the main sources of credit for small farmers. In the village, 40% farmers are still to the *mahajans* and surplus farmers for receiving credit though the rate of credit interest is 180% almost. Farmers of this village are trapped with burden of *mahajani* credit system. In the village, non-subsistence class occupies near about 65.14% households, those who can not depend fully for subsistence from the share of their crop. They do not have the ability to live on by purchasing food. In addition, they suffer for food deficiency for adjusting their credit every year. Most of the landless, marginal and small farmers suffer from lack of resources and credit

burden year after year. In addition, when they are obliged with duties and burdens like marriage, illness, crop damage, and other social events, those farmers can come out from the credit cycle in their lifetime and that credit is transferred from generation after generation. This crisis of farmers is taken and abused by the *mahajan* class for establishing the social and political control upon those weak farmers. Sometimes these credit burdened families sell their produced products to the market without depositing the credits for meeting their daily household necessities, for example, salt, addible oil, fuel oil, clothing, etc. In this regard, farmers are suppressed from the original price because when the farmers bring produced crops to their house or to market in the season, it is already relatively low price in the market. On the other hand, they sell these crops at a lower price to the market or to the hoarders for meeting their subsistence and other demands. These hoarders are mostly related with the middle and surplus farmers on business relationship. Asar Ali, Madan Bepari and Kagaila Bepari those who are mainly farmer but lend money to the hoarder on interest. So, here it is clearly indicated that in Char Dumla some middle and rich farmers are at a time landlord and on the other hand play the role of money lender, *mahajani* business and market controller.

The above mentioned categories of farmers in the village are in no way involved in the investment of their surplus income in agriculture. In lieu of this investment, they run credit business, *mahajani* business, hoarding, joint business, purchasing of land in the locality, purchase of land and houses in urban areas and overall they expend this money for establishing or strengthening their social position in the locality through allocating social investment for society based on the local mosque which are predominantly unproductive expenditure. In addition, now a day the middle and rich farmers of this village overwhelming occupy the modern techniques of agriculture within the agricultural policy and utilizing the political connection, for example the favors include tractor, power tiller, modern seeds and fertilizer. Upon the state power, the rich farmers use these agricultural technologies for exploiting the small and marginal farmers. Surprisingly, they are not interested to use modern agricultural technologies either to their own cultivable land or the sharecroppers. The major reason for not investing the surplus income in agriculture is uncertainty of return from agriculture. Rather they are more interested to invest their money to the non-agricultural sectors which has high returns.

Now village farmers believe that there have been major changes in the land ownership pattern in the village. In the consequences of inheritance law, land have been split up into small pieces, chronic disaster, poverty, credit burden and household necessities, for example, marriage, birth-death, intention of sending their offspring to foreign countries have pushed 28 rich families to

gradually losing of landed property. On the other hand, 17 households in the village are now owner of most of the landed property who were once the landless households. In this process, besides loss of land and concentration of those lands to the rich farmers, one landlord class is also emerging. This process is also intensifying sharecropping system and slowly emerging landless class besides the polarization process. Because in this process, no household in the village is losing all land rather it is slowly shrinking the land ownership and the land ownership has been reduced. In its consequences, marginal and small farmers can not meet the household subsistence need with the production of this small piece of land which leads them to become sharecropping farmer or day laborer. In this process, the numbers of sharecroppers are increasing and the number of the day laborer is increasing.

At present, the use of wage labour in rural agriculture along with family labour are very much observable. The data shows that same tendency in agriculture is dominant in the Char Dumla. In this village the agricultural production is mainly carried by the household labour for meeting the food demand. But now a day the crop sowing and cutting is almost extinct by household labour only in this village. For that reason, only few households are dependent on household labour for crop production. Data shows that at present the demand of wage labour in agriculture has increased by many times in crop sowing and cutting and in other activities than before. In addition, *char* areas are more disaster prone and thus are affected in agriculture. In this village, 95% of the households hire wage labourer for sowing seeds to post harvest activities because of their dependency on nature and for fighting against natural calamities such as storm, heavy rain, flood, etc. to save their crops. The agricultural labour which is used in the village is locally called as “*bodollia*” or “*gabur*”. According to the inhabitants of the village, early agriculture was not as much dependent on wage labour as now because then in addition to household labour kin members of lineage and neighbors used to assist in agricultural activities. In its return, the farmer who was assisted by others also used to return back his support for others’ crop sowing and post harvest activities which was known as “*badli*” among the household members. However, at present voluntary labour exchange such as “*badli*” is almost extinct because the crop production rotation has increased which occupy a farmer in agricultural work for crop production of their own land and sharecropping land. On the other hand, all farmers harvest crop at a time which is another factor comes as obstacle for assisting in agricultural labour. Eventually the demand for wage labour is increasing. The table 8.3 below shows the using pattern of wage labour in Char Dumla.

Table 8.3: Labour Using Pattern of Cultivator Households

Pattern	No. of Household	Percentage
Used Household Labour Only	30	6.62
Used Household Labour Mainly	42	9.27
Used Hired Labour Only	86	18.98
Used Hired Labour mainly	295	65.12
Total	453	100%

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The agricultural labour pattern found in the study area is predominantly household and hired labour pattern where the prevalence of mixed agricultural pattern is high. The data indicates that the labour using pattern of the cultivator households in the study area shows high existence of hired labour among the households involved in agricultural activities. Among the 453 total households, there is high prevalence of hired labour in the agriculture particularly in small, middle and large households. In the study area, out of 453 households, 30 households used household labour only which is 6.62% of the total labour pattern, 42 households used household labour mainly which constitutes 9.27% of agricultural labour, 86 households used hired labour only which is 18.98% of the total labour pattern and 295 households used mainly hired labour which constitutes 65.12% and is major trend of the labour pattern in the study area. The following table 8.4 shows the conditions of labour hired by types of contract during the crop years in the village.

Table 8.4: Labour Hired by Types of Contract during the Crop Year in Char Dumla

Types of Contract	No of Household	Percentage
Casual	359	79.25
Seasonal or Contractual	84	18.34
Annual or Permanent	10	2.21
Total	453	100%

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

There are mainly three types of labour contracts in a crop year in the study area, though there are different characteristics within these categories. The predominant labour contract patterns are as casual, seasonal or contractual and annual or permanent. The table data shows that there are 359 (79.25%) households which use casual contract labour, 84 (18.34%) households use seasonal or contractual labour and 10 (2.21%) households use annual or permanent contract labour. Basically labour contract pattern is composed and

determined by the household capacity and dependent on the requirement of the household's agricultural need. The table data indicates that the casual contract of labour pattern is high in the study area which is 79.25% and this contract pattern is found irrespective of marginal to large households. On the other hand, annual or permanent labour contract pattern is found only among the large and rich households which are 2.21% because contract pattern is dependent on the economically viable capacity of the households and shortage of labour in terms of land area these households own.

The above mentioned data indicates that all social classes also use both family labour and hired labour for farming though the large and middle farmers are used more hired labours while the landless, marginal and small farmers gradually depend on family labourers. In the study area the farmers of all size groups used both family and hired labour, but the proportion of family labour to hired labour decreased at the farm size increases and it becomes insignificant with the large farmers. In this regard the peasants of this village can be differentiated or stratified into various classes such as: rich farmers with sufficient land, others with small or tiny pieces of land and still others are sharecroppers and landless labourers. In another way they may be classified as different types of patron and clients, the landowners and sharecroppers: the lender and debtor; employer and labourers. The rich farmers give surplus land, the more distance and remote to the marginal and small landholders or landless peasants on a sharecropping basis 50% share. Usually land is sharecropped out to efficient and experienced peasants or who have a reputation for being able to produce higher yields in the village. The landless is also engaged in sharecropping or some times seasonal agricultural workers. They are also involved in petty trading, rickshaw pulling, mechanics, fishing etc. These landless and poor peasants are engaged in others non- agricultural activities he have to depend on their rich neighbor or relatives or *samaji*- to provide them with some amount of cash capital support for this purpose. The relationship between the landless and debtor is that the landless gives capital in cash or kind such as food grains, money and other necessities on the debtor's interest basis. There are no cases of same practice were found without interest.

In the village the number of landless households is 15.89% of which 12.14% households are engaged in sharecropping. Small, middle and large landlord households more inclined to employ "*kamlā*" instead of letting their land for sharecropping, though many of them are interested to take land for sharecropping. However, landowning households remain suspicious about the investment in land, for this reason they avail the opportunity whatever they get. In this period, supply of a large number of external labourers is also added with local agricultural labour. But there is high incidence of employing wage labourer from the village laborer. External Labour supply from outside village

largely work as “*thika*” or “*kamla*” on a daily contract basis and their wage is determined on that basis. In the pick season, the external labourers get three meals a day and eight hours labour and additionally get Tk. 80 to 120 per day. In the lean season, they receive three meals a day and 60 to 80 Tk. per day. Though the wage is paid in cash in Char Dumla, but in the case of female labourers they are also paid in commodity such as food grains (rice). Specially middle and large farmer households employ female labourers in post harvesting works. At present, “*thika*” labourers are hired for one season which is three months tenure. In this three months tenure, they are paid a package of Tk. 3000 with three meals per day. Another kind of labour contract is arranged which is a year round tenure. Such a year round tenure of wage labourers is employed by ten households. A year round tenure of wage labour costs Tk. 25,000 with living arrangements and three meals per day. In addition, traditionally some food grains are also given to the labourers. The research found that increase of wage labourer in agriculture is on move. According to the inhabitants of Char Dumla, now production of agriculture is not possible depending only on household labour. According to the data, use of wage labour in agriculture is almost 90% of the total agricultural labour.

The traditional patron client relationship is also gradually being replaced by more contractual form of relationship. It is widely reported by villagers that patron client relationship is more or less widely visible. The traditional form of cooperative labour force prevalent among subsistence peasants’ households is also now being replaced by modern wage labour in the process of productions system. The people of Char Dumla, living in an adjacent *char* area, are habituated in utilizing different modern technologies for their agriculture and production system. By doing so they are being able to bring a lot of success in their agriculture. As it has been observed in the present study village, the farmers in this *char* village are neither using the traditional techniques nor depending on the traditional agrarian system for cultivation in the land. In course of time and with the change and introduction of modern technology in the village land both the agrarian system and its techniques have gone through a gradual change.

At present, almost farmers of all class use modern technologies instead of oxen and bullocks such as tractor, power tiller, etc. The owner of the modern technologies of production is farmers of middle and rich farmers. Other farmer households of the village specially small and middle farmers hire modern technologies of production for preparing their land and sowing seed of crops on charge of Tk. 1200 to Tk. 1500. So people living in this *char* village do not use their traditional methods in the land and are bringing changes in their fate by using the mechanized systems of cultivation, which have replaced the use of cattle and plough. Use of modern technology is another important

phenomenon where almost all cultivable lands are tilled by power tillers, HYV seeds, chemical fertilizer and pesticides are gradually increasing in the study area. These agricultural inputs belong to big landowners, money-lenders, rich farmers, and they also influence and motivate the farmers in terms of using of these inputs. In the following table 8.5 use of modern agricultural technology in the village is shown.

Table 8.5: Modern Agricultural Technology used in the Village

Types of Technology	No. of User (HH)	Percentage	HH associated with Agriculture
HYV Seeds	430	94.95	432
Power tiller	295	65.12	
Thresher	180	39.74	
Pesticides	320	70.64	
Chemical Fertilizer	410	90.15	

Source: Fieldwork in Char Dumla, 2006

The above mentioned table shows that 94.95% households use HYV seeds, power tiller is used by 65.12% households, thresher is used by 39.74% households, pesticides is used by 70.64% households and 90.15% households use chemical fertilizer. The data indicates that there is high prevalence of using modern technologies; however the villagers are concerned of using these modern technological and machinery inputs in agriculture due to the negative effects in their livelihood.

The pattern of investment is also quite interesting. In Char Dumla, the profitable investment for a surplus peasant can be in more than one direction. For example, apart from expanding the farm-size by purchasing more land or taking land in mortgage, they seem to calculate the profits of investment in non agricultural sector as well. Whenever they find any investment more profitable in the non agricultural sector, they tend to go for it. In fact, investment in agriculture is no longer a profitable concern for the peasants of Char Dumla. Hence, rich peasants to some extent, middle peasants too, always tend to have some kind of non agricultural investment. In the commercial setting, however, further investment in agriculture is quite profitable, especially if cultivation remains under personal supervision of the farmers. But in the present form of technological development, investment in the non-agricultural sector is more profitable, which is also occurring in Char Dumla. Hence, in a commercial setting, there is a back and forth movement of investment in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. So, these are the major relations of production of agriculture in the study village. On the basis of above discussion, some characteristics of the agrarian structure of Char Dumla are briefly sketched below:

- i) *Concentration of Land ownership;*
- ii) *Unproductive expenditure and investment attitude of large land owners;*
- iii) *Small land owners and tenants or sharecroppers utilize a large proportion of their surplus for productive investment;*
- iv) *Sell of labour power has been increasing;*
- v) *According to technology existing – the small peasants are more efficient and more product oriented than village large farmers;*
- vi) *Rich peasants or large landowners have much more access to institutional credit than poor farmers;*
- vii) *Large farmers generally do not adapt modern technology, but in some cases, if necessary, adapt it in a very small scale;*
- viii) *The large owners consider that investing for purchasing land and other unproductive activities;*
- ix) *Sharecropping out lands is profitable and more riskless preparation towards the production system of the village;*
- x) *Day labourers or kamla – for casual labourers have been increasing and permanent wage labourers are declining in the village;*
- xi) *The proportion of hired labour increases the technological progress in agricultural product;*
- xii) *Negative affect and attitude of adaptation of modern technology; and*
- xiii) *The production of agrarian sector remains in this village slightly stagnant.*

From the above discussions it can be said that in the present study area the peasants are organized in production in the following manner:

- | | | |
|--|--------|-----|
| i) Only family labour households | —————→ | 30 |
| ii) With the help of family and hired labour households | —————→ | 42 |
| iii) With the help of only hired labour households | —————→ | 86 |
| iv) With the help of only hired labour mainly households | —————→ | 295 |

8.5 Mode of Production in Char Dumla

On the basis of the significant features stated provisions it may be concluded that the predominant mode of production in Char Dumla is neither “peasant mode” nor “feudal mode” nor even “capitalist mode” of production. In fact, it could be viewed as a combination of “peasant mode”, “semi-feudal mode” and the “semi-capitalist” mode of production. Where the use of family members or a labourer as gave a significant *char* characteristics of self exploitation. This self-exploitation in some area has been defined as ‘peasant mode of production’. It is semi-feudal as well as certain features of semi-capitalist and peasant mode of production can also be seen. In this regard some features of the organization of production in the village is given below which would show a tendency towards a much more complex mode of production.

- *Though the amount of land owned by the landowners is 67.49% of the total farm land, the sharecropping system is still predominant because 43% marginal and small farmers rent land from the large landowners for sharecropping. That is why owner and sharecropper together rent 48% of the total farmland, though the land rented as tax is gradually decreasing downwards;*
- *In the sharecropping system, the traditional norm is sharing the crops produced as 50:50 ration and Rabi crop as 33:66 ration distributed in-between landowners and sharecroppers;*
- *In the mode of production, private ownership of land is legitimized. Land selling and purchasing system is also legitimized. In this sense, land is a commodity. However, the distribution of ownership system of land is predominantly unequal. In the study area, 29.81% of the total households own 87.02% land and landless household occupies 10.73% of the total number of households in the village. It indicates that the absolute control on the mode of production is exercised by middle and rich farmers in this village;*
- *Production is organized by the pre-dominant practice of wage labour. Though its character is seasonal – regular percentage is low. On the other hand, rich farmers are not investing their surplus or capital for increasing the productivity of land;*
- *The production relationship between original producer poor farmer and rich owner farmers still reveals some of the features of peasant, semi-feudal and semi-capitalist mode of production;*
- *The technique of using production in agriculture mainly dependent on wage structure, exploitation by mahajani system, mortgage system,*

market control mechanism and using of technological inputs in land – that is the total production system – is controlled and grabbed by the investors (land owners), not by the producers (sharecroppers and landless labourers);

- *The state control over the farmers is forceful though state itself is not the tax collection agency;*
- *Although pure feudal exploitation is absent here but sharecropping, which is the main feature of semi- feudal mode of production, exists here;*
- *Sharecropping agreement without any written agreement but is verbal: the national survey shows that the percentage of the sharecroppers (owner-cum-tenants and pure tenants) was 39% in 1960 which decrease 34% in 1968 and further decreased in 33% in 1974, again increased to 39% and 35.47% in the years respectively in 1977 and 1978. This amount is 33.77% in 1996 and further increased in 39.92% in 2005. Of course the tenancy was under a crop sharing arrangements in which the land owners and the tenants share half of the main crops each. In this arrangement, the sharecroppers or bargachasi who is fully responsible for all types of investment on land and the land owners only pay the annual land revenue. In many cases, the landowners play the role of a patron and the sharecroppers play the role of a client (Chowdhury, 1978). Sharecroppers have dependency relations and some of them are patronized labourers (Arens and Beurden, 1977). This type of arrangement is fully applicable in the study village Char Dumla. The data collected from the study village indicates that the percentage of sharecroppers is 39.29%. The compare of national survey that the percentage (39.92%) of the sharecroppers already increased during the last two decades. So the rate of sharecropping, as shown, is very much significant in the study village;*
- *Marginal and small sharecroppers are gradually down into debt. In the study village marginal and small peasants, most of whom are sharecroppers suffer from strong indebtedness. Char people have got into a trap of the distress, flood and drought are almost regular phenomena, the farmers strongly suffer from crop failure, and faced other natural hazard. The small and marginal farmers (sharecroppers) then have to depend on the middle and rich landowner for production and consumption loans. These loans are usually repeated in cash or in a kind during the harvest time. This scenery is shown that the sharecroppers of char land always suffer for high indebtedness and insecurity;*

- *The pattern of the distribution of the size of landholding is also indicative that the land is being concentrated to the owner; on the other hand it is decreasing gradually from the sharecroppers. The big landowners operate a large amount of land, so concentration of landowning has been increasing in the study area. They operate simultaneously as landlord, moneylenders, traders, whole-sellers, govt. dealers, marketing intermediaries and power holders. The small landowners and tenants utilize a large proportion of their surplus for production invests. But big landowners thus exact surplus from the sharecroppers or small producers, by money lending, control all over the means of production and rural agricultural market, they exploit the small and marginal producers although a large portion of wealth of the rich peasants used for unproductive expenditure and for investment so the real produce is evict for their own product in the study village;*
- *Sharecropping prevents the adoption of any technological change which would substantially raise land productivity in Char Dumla. The landowners have two types of income sources- one is rent and another is usury. Their share of the crop is fixed 50:50 by verbal law but in addition they exploit their sharecroppers or bargachasi through consumption loans which keep them in a state of perpetual indebtedness;*
- *The landlords block any technological change which by increasing output and enhance tenants' income, would either reduce their usury income by a greater amount than their gain from the increased output;*
- *Along with family labourers the use of wage labourers (particularly in times of pick season) is increasing in the agriculture of the village;*
- *Landless labourers are increasing with a growing amount of the wage labourers. There is a tendency for the growing rate of the user of hired labourers in the process of production;*
- *Use of modern technology in the process of production system is seen (from sowing, tilling to post harvesting activities) with the use of HYV seeds, pesticides and fertilizers;*
- *Investment of credit institutions are gradually replacing traditional money lenders (mahajani system);*
- *There exists both direct and indirect commercialization of some of the agricultural products; and*
- *Class exploitation is very sharp and it has been gradually increasing over the years. Because the rich peasants are exploiting the poor and*

landless peasants through the process of users' interests, sharecropping, mortgaging and subsistence wage, etc.

From the above discussion it can be said that the nature of mode of production in the village Char Dumla does not indicate to any single pattern of production system. From time to time and also with the intervention of different influencing factors in the production system it has not been possible to develop any one type of mode of production in the village. It is seen that the people of this village are largely integrated with sharecropping system in their production relations where sharecropping is itself a way of mode of production. Again the village production indicates that over the years wage labour and family labour have become important factors in the existing production system. Therefore, these features show that the mode of production in the village is dominated not only by sharecropping but also by wage labour and family labour.

However, the village production indicates that over the years wage labour and family labour have become more influential factors in the existing production system. These features show that the mode of production in the village is dominated not only by sharecropping but also by wage labour and family labour. Thus it has become a common aspect of the village Char Dumla where the agrarian communities have not tied them with any single trends of mode of production. So the nature of mode of production in the study village cannot be addressed neither as "peasant mode" nor "feudal mode" nor even "capitalist mode" of production. Therefore, the overall picture reveals that the predominant mode of production of Char Dumla is a complex one, such as the combination of different modes that the "peasant mode", "semi-feudal mode" and "semi-capitalist mode" of production

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All societies rest on an economic foundation or base because people must produce goods and services if they are to survive and attain any goal. Their economic processes are called mode of production that prevail in a society and constitute the foundation on which all other aspects of social life rest. Although most of the societies contain different types of modes of production, one of them, at any given time tends to dominate the economy and hence turns into the dominant mode of production of that society. In an agrarian society the dominant mode of economy is its agriculture containing two major components. Its 'forces of production' includes all those factors determining how that kind of economic production is performed: its necessary resources, relevant technology, production techniques, labour force, organization structure, division of labour and so on. Although all of these forces are important within the economy, their effects are largely limited to their own realms of activity. The other component is the 'relations of production' consisting of economic, social, political and legal arrangements that define who owns and or controls that mode of the economic production system. The relations of production constitute the primary source of social power in a society. This is due to the fact that the functional primacy of the economic base in any society, whoever owns or control its dominant mode of production, will have access to its major resources and hence will become the principal wielder of social power in the society.

Considering the overall conditions of the agrarian community of rural society the attempt has been made in the present study on the people of a *char* village in Bangladesh to understand, argue and analyze the agrarian class relations and mode of production. Bangladesh as well as her rural society is based on agrarian relations where most of the people of different types and categories are associated with agriculture. All these factors constitute the agrarian class structure through the agrarian livelihoods of the people and their interrelationships.

Therefore, in the present study, attempts were taken to examine and understand the different interplay among the agrarian classes and their interrelationships in the rural community through an investigation into the forces of production and relations of production in the agrarian community under study. The rural community taken for this study exists in the coastal *char* areas of the district. Char Dumla, a pseudonym for the study village, has been used to address the village rather than using its real name following the research ethics.

The agrarian social structure is one type of structure that has a subset of institutions governing the distribution of rights in agrarian means of

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production, notably 'land'. These rights include not only ownership but also such arrangements as tenancy, mortgage and credit relations, which create a divergence between ownership and actual operation of land. The accurate mode of production determines the agrarian structure which can affect both the static and dynamic efficiencies of agricultural production. Considering the actual agrarian relation and mode of production in the village this study focused mainly on two principal aspects: a) identification of class relationships in *char* village; and b) identification of the existing pattern of mode of production.

Bangladesh displays substantial disparities in control over land and high levels of landlessness or near-landlessness though the country is a nation of small peasant cultivation. In the 1970s there was an increasing emphasis on rural inequalities, together with the growing debates over the nature and causes of agrarian differentiation and the mode of production. The data presented in this study clearly shows that the inputs of agriculture are being monopolized by the land owning class, and the marginal and small farmers and landless labourers have hardly any access to these facilities because different types of credit institutions like *Union Parishad*, *samaj*, NGOs, in their present form, are dominated by the landowning class.

In *Introduction* focuses have been given to the proposal for conducting the research on agrarian class structure and mode of production in a village in Bangladesh. The main emphasis has been to make a critical study of the nature of agrarian class structure, social structure and mode of production in Bangladesh, particularly in the village under study, because these are some important phenomena in understanding the rural economic structure. In order to make an in-depth research some major objectives as well as supplementary issues have been taken for consideration. Accordingly this study integrates the issues of rationality and importance, justification and focus of investigation to conduct the research on the ground that in the early studies the subject of mode of production has not been taken as the main focus of interest. In this regard the present study is a unique one for taking both class structure and mode of production of rural Bangladesh both synchronically and diachronically.

In terms of methodology different methods and techniques of data collection, both qualitative and quantitative methods, such as fieldwork, formal and informal observation, interviewing has been used to conduct the study. This is followed by techniques of data analysis. After selecting the study area and unit of analysis the study has been conducted in different phases where both pains and pleasures of fieldwork have been the integrated aspects. Finally, a well organized literature review has been used where the works of different scholars and researchers have been critically analyzed to understand the previous status

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and pattern of agrarian class structure and mode of production in rural Bangladesh.

In *Background of the Study Area* discussions are made starting from Bangladesh to *Noakhali* and study village scenario including location, geographical settings, climate, ecological settings and demographic features, the population by age, sex and residence focusing both the urban and rural areas. This is followed by a general description of some major aspects of the country such as transport and communication network (road, rail and air transport), agriculture (a central issue for socio-economic and sustainable development of the agrarian country), measurements of agriculture, agricultural subsidies and assistance, irrigation, use of fertilizer, industry and the form of government and administration of the country and village. Having some knowledge about the country as a whole the early history of *Noakhali* district has been analyzed on the basis of its location and geographical settings, its ecology and climate. The district was a vast reservoir of flora and fauna in the past, but over the years some changes and damages have done to these resources either naturally or through human interventions.

The study area belongs to a *char* of Southern coastal belt of the country. In this regard some basic concepts and meanings of *char*, types of *char*, *char* land laws (Pre-Partition laws, laws of Pakistan and Bangladesh period) and land ceilings with a historical background (British, Pakistan and Bangladesh period), etc. have been incorporated to understand the nature and geography of the village. Based on some basic characteristics of *char* some illustrations are made about the cropping pattern, intensiveness of productivity, fisheries, cattle herding, riverbank erosion, flood, drought, storm, excessive rainfall and natural resources of the village. Finally, *char* people's interactions and disputes, unity, local government, responsibilities of different institutions, health and sanitation facilities, use of technology, and role, activities and participation of women in both the agriculture and decision making process of the *char* have been incorporated to understand the nature of rural class structure and other related modes of the *char* based rural community.

In *Socio-economic Profile of the Study Area* different dimensions of social and economic aspects of the village people have been studied. *Chars* are the coastal flats stretching out in front of large sections of the coast of Bangladesh and Char Dumla is one of the attached *chars* in the mouth of the river *Meghna*. Here a focus has been given to the settlement history of Char Dumla which appeared from the river bed people from *Raamgati*, led by some *jotdars* and occupied most of the lands claiming it there ancestral land. In this respect the physical settings of the village has been analyzed taking land settlement pattern because land is gold for the common people in this village. The people settled in this area in different ways where the landmass is sheltered by the

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embankment and free from erosion and normal flooding. Apart from these, the socio-economic profile of this village includes several other facts such as the composition of households and population by *para* and the age-set distribution of the members of these households. Education is considered as one of the key indicators for bringing social and economic change and development but considering the rural village, particularly Char Dumla, the status of education or literacy rate is very low in comparison to the other parts of the country. In Char Dumla a less importance is given to primary and adult education through the support of different government and non-government organizations. In terms of occupation there exists diversity among the villagers.

Traditionally most of the villagers were confined in agriculture, livestock and handicrafts oriented occupations, but with a change in the socio-economic and cultural realities the villagers are attaching to different professions other than only depending on the agricultural economy. Even then agriculture is the major occupation of the villagers; only difference is seen on the ground of the degree and status of their class structure. Eventually the study revealed that different modes of exchange and transactions are centered on the land and agriculture in the village because due to the favorable environment this agriculture is the dominant mode of economy. However, for a general understanding the village people are classified into two different occupational groups such as major and subsidiary occupants where wide differences of income exist among the villagers. Here the agro-ecological conditions of the village people have also been included to address the land classes in Char Dumla. It has been observed that the village people can be classified into different land classes such as high or *uchu*, medium or *majhari* and low or *nichu* land classes where, depending on crop production, the constraints are different in degree and effectiveness. Because as a coastal *char* the crop intensity depends on various factors including stability of land, size of holdings and land tenancy, soil properties, rainfall distribution, soil moisture availability, seasonal temperature and length of growing seasons among others. At large all these illustrate the nature of socio-economic conditions of the people of Char Dumla.

In *Social Organization of the Study Area* different social and community organizations of the village have been analyzed. The understanding of community organization is very much important to understand any kind of social and cultural work in the village. Discussions, therefore, have been made on the issues of formation, function and role of different social organizations of the village including *khana* (household), *paribar* (family), *bari* (homestead), *gusthi* (lineage), *samaj* (society) and so on with reference to the rural communities of Bangladesh. The *samaj* is controlled by the *matabbars*. They combine the dominance of property relations in the society and the dominant role of authority.

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Like many other villages studied by different social scientists the physical structure of Char Dumla is internally differentiated by its inhabitants and it reflects, to some extent, their social structure and also the pattern of stratification. The physical structure of Char Dumla consists of five *paras* and these are partially uniformed and scattered over. The village is totally inhabited by the Muslims. The so called *khandan* families of the village live in respective *paras*. Despite status differentiation, the settlement pattern of the village shows differentiation among its population on the basis of unequal distribution of landownership, power and status. This means that the population of Char Dumla is not distributed randomly irrespective of status, power and wealth among others.

In Char Dumla family or *paribar* is the most important institution required to perform some essential and optimal functions, and fulfill the basic needs of the members. This village is very much traditional and the people lead their family life like others. Aged persons are very much honored and cared by their other family members and property belongs to the household members. Considering social organization of Char Dumla, the size and structure of large and extended large joint family is mainly decreasing, on the other hand recently predominantly nuclear families are increasing. It has been observed that out of 453 households, a total of 319 households (70.42%) are of nuclear types. Households are splitting due to de-fragmentation of inheritance in land rights. Thus it is evident that the popular family type in the village is nuclear in structure. So the nuclear families are predominant in the study area. These families were traditionally male dominated and womenfolk never enjoyed the freedom of making decision for their own families. All families live in the "*baries*" and these are extended families having blood related members. All the *baries* are large joint or extended large joint families representing at least two or three generations reside in the same *bari*. The families of a *bari* are of same *gushti*. Married couples and their children are living separated from their parents and forming their new *bari*. This practice is very much common among the households who own a very little amount of arable land. Kinship relation is one of the most important criteria in Char Dumla where agricultural production prevails. The agrarian *char* people are very much closely related to each other. It is based on both blood relations and marital processes. They are also related through fictive relations.

Agriculture is the major source of earning in Char Dumla. The environment of the village influenced the economic life of the respective people and the formation of their social structure. It has been observed that due to favorable environment agriculture is the dominant element in the economy of the study area. However, from a distribution of the village people on the basis of their occupations it can be said that all people are related directly and indirectly with agricultural products. All of them who have owned an amount of arable land

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either by buying or by inheritance keep them in touch of agriculture and productions. Small portion of the village households have more than one or two earning sources or subsidiary occupants. But occupational mobility has stagned within the village. Because agriculture influences their land relations and those who possess a large amount of land enjoy their power and supremacy in their own community. The *samaj* plays an important role and now-a-days it is not weakening than other part of rural communities of Bangladesh.

In *Agrarian Relations in Bangladesh: An Overview* a comparative picture of the agricultural groups in Bangladesh has been given categorizing among owner, owner cum tenants and tenants from a time perspectives. A general description has also been given to the tenancy status of the country including total land under sharecropping arrangements and total number of sharecroppers. Tenancy, labour and credit markets are, nevertheless observed to be more exploitative in Bangladesh. The rich farmer in the country can evict any tenant at any time for which they can not create pressure for higher share than the customary fifty percent rate, bearing all the costs of production; pure tenants are not allowed to take institutional loans, while landowners can get credit against the total amount of owned land though they operate only a part of it. In Bangladesh, on the contrary, while the rich farmers' power over the sharecroppers is institutionalized by the state itself, the large landowners may not feel tempted to resort to interlinkages of various markets to exploit the sharecroppers from other markets. As a result, that if larger amount of surplus is extracted in the form of ground rent, the tenant will be left with lesser amount of residual surplus for which landowners' temptation to extract will not be large.

Despite some initial remarkable changes in the production possibilities in the country the diffusion of new seed fertilizer irrigation technology for about three decades could bring only a moderate label of technological transformation. It is often argued that technology adoption is indeed capital biased and depending on the amount of additional requirement of capital. It may lie outside the capacity of the tenants and small owners' cultivators to adopt it. In Bangladesh, it can be observed that even if small farmers and tenants initially lag behind in adoption of the new technology, eventually they catch up and ultimately they may use it even more than the large owner farmers. The relation of tenancy with productivity on systematic and significant differences in production ties between owner farms and tenants are observed to be existed in the economy. The production performance on owned land is, nevertheless, significantly higher than that on rented land of the same cultivator, implying that if tenants get ownership rights on their rented land, they would produce more in the country.

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The more striking finding is that savings and surpluses are substantially higher for larger farmers than the smaller ones who utilize significantly a larger portion of their surplus or savings for productive investment compared to their larger counterpart in Bangladesh. The subjects on the terms and conditions of various formal and or informal contracts in land, labour, and credit markets and their interlinkages along with the act of productive investment and surplus appropriation may provide some pointers towards the process of capitalist transformation and its limits in the country. In the absence of political solidarity of the vast majority of peasants against the exploitation by a small minority of the property – owner the path ahead in the country is likely to be harder than ever before.

However, the overall condition illustrates a comparative picture where it is seen that though the owners are few in number, they gather a vast majority of the productive land in the agrarian rural communities of Bangladesh. Thus different agrarian groups existing in the villages vary in different degrees at large. To some extent this practice is helping in the gradual increase of tenancy status of a large section of people related to the agrarian production relations. At the same time the status of the landless labourers is increasing, though the data showed that the percentage decreased a little in recent years.

In *Agrarian Class Structure of Char Dumla* it has been dealt elaborately with the pattern of class structure and mode of production in the agrarian society of Char Dumla. It shows the nature of class formation, class conflicts and relations of exploitation in the agrarian society on the basis of the findings from both the micro-level study and macro-level (national) data. The agrarian social structure of rural Bangladesh consists of three agrarian class hierarchies and this is also the same in case of the study village. These classes are: landowner, sharecroppers or tenants and the landless labourers. This classification of the agrarian population of the village is based on the ownership and non-ownership of means of production and their position in the organization of production.

So the class differentiation of the agricultural production in the village is based on the ownership and non-ownership of land. The landowners, mainly the rich one, live on income from the land. It is also true that they do not have same subsidiary occupation where these subsidiary occupations are mainly non-agricultural. The non-owner class or the marginal and poor peasants have to depend on the rich land owners for sharecropping. So land has been a scarce commodity for the mass people. The actual producers, like the poor peasants, go through frequent dissatisfaction with their own participation and relations of production with agriculture. If Marx's theory of class identification is applied in Char Dumla it can be seen that only the landowning group and the

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landless group can be treated as class on the basis of landownership. Sharecropper or the small holding peasants are not a class in true sense.

Every society and every social class tries their utmost to change their economic as well as their social position. The villagers are mobilizing them vertically or horizontally. Some are losing their lineage status of high land ownership and becoming landless labourers, while some from the landless labourers are now the richest persons in the village. Some are expanding their land-scale, and invest capital on it. Here 'land' is the prime means of production, and land ownership is the major social determinant, which controls person's power and position. There is no high status lineage, which still holds supremacy in land holding, rather newly emergent farmers, who consider land as profitable and marketable commodity, cultivate by wage labourers. In these days the lineaments of high status or *khandan* families are no more widely in existence because *char* people and their fragmentation into small and nuclear households with the distribution of the land by owned by lineally. But still *char* land people are categorized on the basis of their land ownership into rich, middle, small, and marginal farmers and landless labourers. So land is the main basis of class differentiation in Char Dumla.

Therefore, with the changes in land ownership pattern, relations of production also are changing. Earlier there was a patron-client relationship between landowner and sharecroppers in the *char* village. But depending on a mode of inheritance among the descendents, in later times, land holdings are getting scattered and unequally distributed. Today most of the big land owners in this village are not engaged directly in agricultural production. A few families employ themselves directly to cultivation of their own land with the help of hired labour. Landless working class or the marginal farmers are more interested to share in and mortgage in of land to change their miseries and survives. Thus the theory of class formation and identification of Marx, Weber's conception is more appropriate in Char Dumla. In this village land has been a marketable commodity, everyone is enjoying the opportunity to achieve it. So, land purchase is most important and significant in study village and, in this sense, market situation determines the class situation in study area. In other words, the present study village shows that the village people are accordingly categorized into different classes where the factor of landownership used to determine the belongingness of these people to different classes, i.e. the class structure of the village as a whole.

In *Power Structure of Char Dumla* discussions have been made on the existing power structure of the village and is concerned mainly with the analysis of power relations at the local level of *char* land. It deals with the socio-economic and political function as well as the background issues of the power wielders of the UP and *samaj panchayat*. It shows that those leaders are the power wielders

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who exercise full economic and political control and influence in the *char* land. They are the big landowners and, thus, class dominance corresponds to political dominance. It has been observed that these power wielders are the rural exploiters where patron-client system, for instance, serves to organize the political and economic order within the village.

As being an agro-economy based country agrarian mode of production still prevails in Bangladesh and experiencing a series of land reforms to minimize the amount of land, often described as 'a land of small farmers', the reality of the *char* villagers of the country is more complex in nature. Considering the power structure in relation to class based rural and *char* area of the country preferably the focus has been given to the dominant mode of production, relations of production, and the land ownership patterns. In Bangladesh, there are fewer than 10% of rural households have own more than half of the country's total cultivable land (Jannuji & Peach, 1978). On the other hand, the agricultural sample survey (2005) shows that 60.08% of the rural families own less than 10% land (BBS, 2005). Almost 39.92% own no cultivable land at all. Thus according to this study it can be said that the small families who own over half of the country's farmland are at the apex of the structure of power in rural Bangladesh.

The village people are involved in a diversified occupation and achieved different sources of income, fragmentation of land through inheritance, free competition and expansions of market economy, abolishing land tax on holdings below 25 *bighas* (8.3 *acres*) and the per capita cultivated land ownership as 0.13 *acres* (Ibid). It is gradually declining. But still land remains in its traditional form as the core concern for different kinds of economic activities in the village. Land is treated as a symbol of social position and honor for the rural elites and enables them to practice rural power. The villagers are competing for control of land within an unequal atmosphere. In the study village people, those who are rich farmers (owning 7 and above *acres* of land) or those who own comparatively a large amount of production and resources, have access to power and this they employ on the poor and landless villagers. A series of land reform in Bangladesh agriculture is sometimes referred to as subsistence farming. But in Char Dumla still the productions are greatly consumed by the large landowner and merchants through the mechanisms of sharecropping, mortgage system and widely used for wage labour.

Moreover, in the village landowners often rely on their sharecroppers for political support, and many are reluctant to break the economic ties which ensure their clients loyalty. In these relations the landowners' consideration to make their choice of tenants (*borgachashi*) is of a political in nature. Often the landowners recognize that they can gain political support from their tenants.

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The political support may be support in village affairs, *shalisher* or perhaps physical protection from attacks (*lathiyal* or *muscleman*) by enemies.

It should be mentioned that the sharecropping system is a very common phenomenon in Char Dumla. Sharecropping arrangements are almost exclusively depend on area agreement and will of the well to-do-landowners, which forced their tools of power. Rich and middle farmers in the village are accumulating productions and these productions are changeable to be commodity goods. These groups are always watch dog for this chances when to be the owner farmers of good and lucrative fertile land from the marginal and poor farmers through purchase or mortgage. They are the real power wielder or power elite who wield actual power and exercise of politico-cultural and religious activities control and influence over their locality. Within the village the class domination corresponding to political domination. This evidence shows that the land owning class also power wielders and exercise political dominance over the non subsistence and economically weaker classes. So the landowning classes are the actual exploiting class in Char Dumla who are closely related with state exploiting classes. In this case due to their interrelations with the national political leaders they have changed their exploiting process in recent times.

In *Mode of Production in Char Dumla* the Marxian literature sets to conceptualize the production structure on the pattern of mode of production into different categories such as semi-feudal, feudal, pre-capitalist or capitalist by analyzing the character of the elements that belongs to it. In capitalist structure actual producers, who are dispossessed of the main means of productions (land, labour, capital, farm employments, etc.), sell labour to capitalists who organize production and sell the products in the market to appropriate surplus labour in the form of surplus. Value, which is then, a re-investment for accumulation of capital (Hindess & Hirst, 1975). On the other hand, in feudal system, the direct producer is not separated from the means of productions but he is excluded from the legal rights of ownership of land and means of production, which enables the landowner in the form of rent. The form of rent is such that the producer is only allowed to reproduce- the means of production leaving the surplus for the landlord and, thus, it simultaneously reproduces the exploitative production relation. Recently a term 'semi-feudalism' is used to describe a structure which has four dominant features. a) sharecropping, b) perpetual indebtedness of small tenants, c) concentrate on two modes of exploitation rent and usury in the hands of the same economic class, and d) the lack of accessibility of the majority of producers to the market (Bhadhuri, 1973). The first two features enable the landowners to appropriate surplus in the form of rent and interest, and the last two features give him control over the tenant by means of which the landowner reproduces the exploitative relations.

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The relations of exploitation determine the mode of production. So this chapter is devoted to the discussion of relations of exploitation and, thus, it examines which mode of production is dominant in the agriculture of Char Dumla. After a careful examination it has been observed that the mode of production in this village is much more complex and represents a combined and mixed form of mode of production.

In village, according to above mentioned criteria, a complex mode of production is seen, which may perhaps be called a mixed mode of production. The pure feudal mode where surplus labour is appropriated by a landowning class from cultivators in the form of rent, and through extra-economic coercion, does not seem to be present in the study village. Some elements of capitalist mode of productions can be found here. There is private ownership of land, means of production, in some cases there is a market for production, for wage labour and modern types of credit relation and modern technology used, but these are only marginal.

On the other hand, although private property in land exists, land is not exchanged freely as a means of production, because, its ownership is very much prestigious and can be used as a means of exercising power and prestige. But land is available in tiny plots for tenancy under a sharecropping agreement of certain terms and conditions like at similar near by feudal type. Furthermore, some large landowners operate simultaneously as landlords and money lenders, traders, government dealers and marketing intermediaries. By controlling these markets they extract surplus from numerous small producers through economic and extra-economic coercions. Thus, feudalism, in a real sense, is absent in Char Dumla, but the production structure seems to contain some of its characteristics in an impure form.

In the study village these types of owner-cultivators or owner-cum-tenants are traditionally subsistence peasants. They organize their production mainly with family labour, but they do not employ labourers or sell their labour to others. They do not receive debt or land money and they do not offer sharecropping and other agreement. But in practice the owner cultivators in the village survey data represents that the cultivators may also hire in a small piece of lands. These owner cultivators are majority of marginal and small poor landowners. Natural hazard, crop failure and other crisis push them to receive different types of consumption loan and mortgage out of land.

Regarding these features in the agrarian system of Char Dumla it may be said that rather than reinvestment there is a multiple and diversification of economic activities. Whatever surplus agriculture generates it is utilized not for the reinvestment of agricultural production instead peasants tend to invest this surplus in non-agricultural sectors. Observing all the conditions it has become

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a common aspect in the study village where the agrarian community have not tied them with any single trends of mode of production and can be referred to a complex mode of production. So it can be said that the predominant mode of production in the study village is neither “peasant mode” nor “feudal mode” nor even “capitalist mode” of production. In fact it could be viewed as a combination of “peasant mode”, “semi-feudal mode” and “semi-capitalist mode” of production.

Therefore, in the above discussions the contemporary agrarian structure has been analyzed in terms of ownership of land, tenurial condition, labour and credit relation, marketing policy and agricultural mechanization in Bangladesh. Furthermore, it has been observed that the study village is the interlinkages of land, labour and credit markets are analyzed in order to grasp the complex reality in the changing patterns and process of the main mode of production and the process of the structure that have taken place. At this point an attempt has been made to sum up the observed results for a clear understanding about the pattern of agrarian class structure and mode of production in the study village in the following notions.

First, the village is the land of small farmers. But this does not appear to be a barrier to the emergence of non-egalitarian land relations. As a matter of fact, this key asset of land is unevenly distributed in the village. It can easily discern the increasing concentration of land despite that fact that small and marginal farms proliferate, average size is small and has a decreasing tendency in the village.

Second, the pattern of the distribution of the size of landholding is also indicative that the land is being concentrated to the owner; on the other hand it is decreasing gradually from the sharecroppers. The big landowners operate a large amount of land, so concentration of landowning has been increasing in the study area. They operate simultaneously as landlord, moneylenders, traders, whole-sellers, govt. dealers, marketing intermediaries and power wielders.

Third, the small landowners and sharecroppers utilize a large proportion of their surplus for production invests. But big landowners, thus, extract surplus from the sharecroppers or small producers, by money lending, control all over the means of production and rural agricultural market. They exploit the small and marginal producers although a large portion of wealth of the rich peasants used for unproductive expenditure and investment. So the real producer is evicted from their own product in the study village.

Fourth, an extreme sub-division and fragmentation of land holdings, scattered over a wide range of areas, is a notable and more acute feature of the contemporary agrarian system in Char Dumla. This is, however, not unlikely in

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the face of higher population growth, low urbanization and higher polarization tendency and the Muslim inheritance law in the village. In fact the number of larger firms is decreasing gradually.

Fifth, in the mode of production, private ownership of land is legitimized. Land selling and purchasing system is also legitimized. In this sense, land is a commodity. However, the distribution of ownership system of land is predominantly unequal. In the study area, 29.81% of the total households own 87.02% land and landless household occupies 10.73% of the total number of households in the village. It indicates that the absolute control on the mode of production is exercised by middle and rich farmers in this village.

Sixth, data on the tenancy market marks the fact that the land owner has the ample scope to exploit the tenant's check and surplus family labour. It shows that the tenancy is not reduced to any significant extent even though there has been significant growth of wage labour. Pure tenants are not allowed to take institutional loan, while landowners can get credit against the total amount of owned land, though they operate only a part of it.

Seventh, sharecropping agreement in the village exists without any written agreement and is verbal. In many cases, the landowners play the role of a patron and the sharecroppers play the role of a client. Sharecroppers have dependency relations and some of them are patronized labourers. This type of arrangement is fully applicable in Char Dumla. The data collected from the study village indicates that the percentage of sharecroppers is 39.29%. The compare of national survey that the percentage (39.96%) of the sharecroppers already increased during the last two decades. So the rate of sharecropping, as shown, is very much significant in the study village.

Eighth, sharing in land is the base of subsistence for the marginal and landless agricultural labourers in the study village. Sharecropping not only pay better than wage labour, but also offense more security. Although the sharecropper has no permanent claim to the land at least he does not face the uncertainties of the wage labour. Though the rich farmer consider and rebuke cultivating their land with hired labour more profitably than with sharecroppers, they possess the tendency to share out land to get rid of all anxiety and hired labour.

Ninth, in the village wage labour is widely used in agriculture, but it does not denote the existence of capitalistic mode of production rather than it represents the availability of labour created by gradually increased pressure of peasants on the limited land. However, wage labour is predominantly practiced though its character is seasonal and regular percentage is low. On the other hand, rich farmers are not investing their surplus or capital for increasing the productivity of land.

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Tenth, the data presented in the study clearly shows that the inputs of the agriculture are being monopolized by the landowning class; marginal and small farmers and landless labourers have hardly any access to these facilities because different types of credit institutions such as *Union Parishad*, *samaj* and NGOs, in their current form, are being dominated by the landowning class.

Eleventh, those who seek for sharing in land depend on the mercy of their landowners and try their almost to maintain a good chain of relations, which form a patron-client relationships among them. Landowners, who have *bargachashi*, deserve support from them in case of necessary and the sharecroppers remain loyal towards their landowners. Again casual labour type occupies the most pre-dominant position amongst all other types of arrangements in hired labour. Interlinkages of land labour and credit markets or the methods of labour typing appear to be more common in the cultivation with real technologies in the study village.

Twelfth, use of modern technology in the process of production system is seen (from sowing, tilling to post harvesting activities) with the use of HYV seeds, pesticides and fertilizers; but the landlords block any technological change which by increasing output and enhance tenants' income, would either reduce their usury income by a greater amount than their gain from the increased output. However, the marginal peasants utilize the modern agricultural technology and elements, and they produce much more than the rich peasants.

Thirteenth, the rich peasants do not invest capital for modern agricultural technology rather than they accumulate the incentives provided by the state. This is possible for them because of their absolute control over means of production and power structure.

Fourteenth, the rich peasants are exploiting the poor and landless peasants through the process of usurious interest, mortgaging, sharecropping, rack rating, subsistence wage, etc.

Fifteenth, landless and vulnerability are creating not only for economic crisis but also for population pressure and property transfer from rural areas to urban areas and urban biasness in development planning.

Sixteenth, the poor peasants are structurally divided and they have no class solidarity due to the diversification of profession and income sources for their minimum subsistence.

Seventeenth, the credit market in the char village appears to be more unfavorable to the marginal and poor peasants and tenants. This picture indicates that the credit institutions in the study area that creates barrier to the development of

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capitalist relations. Furthermore, investment of credit institutions is gradually replacing traditional money lenders (*mahajani* system) in the village.

Eighteenth, the industrial production in agriculture has not been flourished except in the adjacent localities of urban areas;

Nineteenth, there exists both direct and indirect commercialization for some of the agricultural products, especially *rabi* crops.

Finally, in terms of power structure the power of the landowners is institutionalized by the state itself. Rich farmers do not face any obstacle to exercise their overriding power on the poor tenants.

From the above point of views it can be said that the nature of mode of production in the village Char Dumla does not indicate to any single pattern of production system. From time to time and also with the intervention of different influencing factors in the production system it has not been possible to develop any single type of mode of production in the village. It is seen that the people of this village are largely integrated with sharecropping system in their production relations where sharecropping is itself a way of mode of production. Again the village production indicates that over the years wage labour and family labour have become important factors in the existing production system.

However, observing all the conditions it has become a common aspect of the village Char Dumla where the agrarian community have not tied them with any single trends of mode of production. In other words, in reality they are making adjustment to different types of modes of production in the land for production. So the nature of mode of production in the study village can neither be addressed as “peasant mode” nor “feudal mode” nor even “capitalist mode” of production. Therefore, the overall picture reveals that the predominant mode of production of Char Dumla is a complex one, such as the combination of different modes that the “peasant mode”, “semi-feudal mode” and “semi-capitalist mode” of production.

This research is the result of a single village study at the micro level that may or may not exist in some other rural communities of Bangladesh and the result may vary in terms of different regions. Even then it can be said that the formulated hypotheses and understandings of the predominant mode of production in the contemporary agriculture of Bangladesh may set path for more future at both macro and micro levels and for different scholars as well.

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Appendix-1 Checklist

- Household Information
- Kinship Pattern
- Ownership and Non-ownership of Land
- Techniques of Cultivation
- Classification of Farmers
- Social Stratification on the basis of Land, Power and Status
- Pattern of Peasant Mobility
- Modern Technologies in Agriculture
- Intervention of NGOs
- Formal and Informal Credit
- Participation of Women in Agriculture
- Labour Pattern in the Village
- Crops Diversification
- Process of Irrigation
- Ecological Factors of the Village
- Household Consumption
- Formal and Informal Politics in the Village
- Relationship of the Mode of Production

Appendix-2 Household Census Schedule

Appendix-2 Household Census Schedule

01. Name of the household head: 02. Household no.: 03. Age: Male: Female: 04. Sex: Male: Female: 05. Religion:

06. Family (no. of household members):

Family	No.	Income	No.	Literacy	No.
Male member		Earning member		Literate member	
Female member		Non-earning member		Illiterate member	
Total		Total		Total	

07. Lineage status: 08. Level of education: Educated: Non-educated: 09. Marital status: Married: Un-married: 10. Occupational status: Major: Subsidiary: 11. Monthly income (in Tk.): 12. Types of house living in: Semi-pacca: Semi-kacha: Kacha: Others: 13. Types of assets: Cassette player: TV: Bicycle: Rickshaw/Van: Motorcycle: Wage labour: Rice husking machine:

Appendix-2 Household Census Schedule

Dheki: Furniture:
 Sanitary latrine: Others:

14. Landownership pattern by the household:

Type of landownership	Amount (in acre)
Land owned (L. O.)	
Land sharecropped in (L. S. I.)	
Land sharecropped out (L. S. O.)	
Land under operation (L. O. + L. S. I. – L. S. O.)	
Land mortgaged in (L. M. I.)	
Land mortgaged out (L. M. O.)	

15. Total land occupied by the household:

Type of landownership	Amount (in acre)
Homestead area	
Own cultivated land	
Shared in	
Shared out	
Total	

16. Organization of production in the land:

Family labourers: Kinship based labourers:

17. Wage rate:

Type of wage rate	Amount (in Tk.)
Peak season	
Lean season	

18. Pattern of wage labour:

Wage labour: Wage rate:
 Landless labour: Wage rate:

19. Land leased in the household:

Leasing land in: Leasing land out:

20. Land leased outside the household:

Leasing land in: Leasing land out:

Appendix-2 Household Census Schedule

21. Rearing of livestock:

Cow: Own: Shared in: Shared out: Goat: Own: Shared in: Shared out:

22. Food deficit in the household:

Food deficit: Time period (in month): No food deficit:

23. Technique of mitigating food deficit:

24. Use of technology in land:

Indigenous: Modern: Both:

25. Types of indigenous technology:

26. Types of modern technology:

27. Purpose of production in land:

Household consumption: Commodity production:

28. Communication and interpersonal relations with urban area:

Yes: No:

29. Role of women in agriculture:

Cultivation: Harvesting: Husking: Rice production:

30. Wage for women in agriculture:

Yes: Wage rate (in cash or kind): No:

Appendix-2 Household Census Schedule

31. Role of women in decision making:

Yes: No:

32. Role of HH in cooperatives and rural development:

Yes: No:

33. Role of HH in village politics:

Yes: No:

34. Interaction of HH with local government:

Yes: No:

35. Role of HH in national or central politics:

Yes: No:

Appendix-3 Photographs



Photograph 1: Regular task of a farmer in the field



Photograph 2: Key Informant of the study



Photograph 3: A traditional house of a landless farmer in the village

Appendix-3 Photographs



Photograph 4: A traditional house of a poor farmer in the village



Photograph 5: A traditional house of farmers in the village



Photograph 6: A *kacha ghar* in the village

Appendix-3 Photographs



Photograph 7: A paddy field in the village



Photograph 8: Traditional method of preserving paddy immediate after harvesting



Photograph 9: Prepared land for *rabi* crops attached to homestead area

Appendix-3 Photographs



Photograph 10: Sowing of water melon seeds: A popular economic crop for the farmers in the village



Photographs 11 & 12: An indigenous way of security shed usually prepared with rice stipples during harvesting period



Photograph 13: Activities during post harvesting season



Photograph 14: A day labourer during the harvesting period



Photograph 15: Usual feast by a day labourer during working hour



Photograph 16: Fishing with *bale*. An indigenous netting system

Appendix-3 Photographs



Photograph 17: Catching fish from paddy field with *jal* (net)



Photograph 18: Catching fish from village pond using *jal* (net)



Photograph 19: Gathering of a group of children of a household



Photograph 20: Livestock: a common source of livelihood for the villagers



Photograph 21: Coconut, grown in the homestead area, is a common source of food and economy



Photograph 22: Woman (a middle farmer's wife) busy with post harvesting



Photograph 23: Woman (belong to poor peasant) preparing feed for domestic animals





Photograph 25: Woman preparing and collecting traditional fuel wood



Photograph 26: Women going for visit neighbours





Photograph 29: Traditional food preparing system



Photograph 30: Village women (of a joint family) gathering for a ceremony