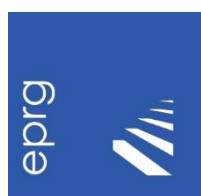


Understanding the effectiveness of access to khas land: Comparing khas land receivers to Non-Receiver

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Uttaran

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Abstract

Recent poverty literature in Bangladesh suggests that one key method of poverty alleviation is to create working opportunities for the poorest or to help them to achieve the ownership of productive means. Uttaran, a national NGO has been particularly effective in its attempts to distribute both *Khasland* and assets to extreme poor households in an effort to move them out of extreme poverty. Distribution of khasland is assumed to boost national GDP as individual households should be able to expand their agricultural and industrial produce for sale in markets. It is argued that if an estimated 3.3 million acres of khasland (Barakat, 2010) were to be distributed to the bottom 17.6% of the entire population, 6 million of extreme poor households (HIES 2010) in addition to IGA support, each household would have ownership of 55 decimals of khasland each, they might move out of extreme poverty. Moreover, individuals would become stronger consumers in the market which would stimulate demand and accelerate economic growth in Bangladesh, enhancing demand for employment and wages.

The majority of the 430 khasland receivers out of 11816 of 1st phase beneficiaries who have the permanent took part in a collective movement to get access to khasland in the 1990's in Debdaha and Kaligonj Upazila under Satkhira District. This study refers to those permanent lease holders as *khasland receivers*. There were other households who had taken part in the movement but were unable to gain khasland access. This study refers to those households as *non receivers of khasland*. To assess the effects of access to khasland an exploratory, qualitative study has been carried out in Noapara Union of Debdaha Upazila under Satkhira District, Bangladesh by Uttaran. Six weeks of extensive fieldwork in between January and February 2013 aimed to assess the effects of khasland by comparing the perspective of khasland receivers with non-receivers.

This study highlights that access to khasland is a strongly political process where the collective movement played a pivotal role in shaping the livelihoods of land receivers. The paper shows that 1. khasland provides insurance and security through creating diverse income opportunities which can often mitigate the negative and long term impacts of shocks and allow khasland receivers to cope better with shocks 2. khasland allocation incentivises women's engagement with labouring activities, household asset management, as well as their mobility within the village 3. Livelihood comparisons between khasland receivers and non receivers of khasland show that the income diversification effect of khasland and the potential for women to contribute to the household's income gives household beneficiaries the opportunity to save 4. The norm of *landless* has changed. Now the father of a girl at *daanga* (highland) wants to marry off his daughter, which was previously unheard of 5. Being a landholder has changed their identity opening them up to the benefits of the market 6. Using one large piece of land has changed the structure of the market. They are the key market players as suppliers 7. Social setbacks may still have implications for retaining khasland. Though *bhumihin* (landless) leaders' contributions are undeniable, they have a controversial role which is creating social insecurity to some extent. However, the leaders are negotiating with the external institutions and personnel to solve their community problems. So, by following a similar process and organizing a community movement to get the landless access to khasland, similar benefits may be realized.

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Section 1: Introduction

1. Context rationale:

Recent poverty literature in Bangladesh suggests that one key method of poverty alleviation is to create working opportunities for the poorest or to help them to achieve the ownership of productive means (Bangladesher daridro o khas jamite vumihinder odhiker, 2010). Uttaran¹ has been particularly effective in its attempts to distribute both Khasland² and assets to extreme poor households in an effort to move them out of extreme poverty. Khasland on both permanent and temporary leases³ is being cultivated by the BHHs with the support of Uttaran and there is confidence that there will be sizeable income gains from harvesting which will ensure their graduation from poverty (shiree annual report 2010)⁴.

Distribution of khasland is assumed to boost national GDP as individual households should be able to expand their agricultural and industrial produce for sale in markets. It is argued that if an estimated 3.3 million acres of khasland (Barakat, 2010)⁵ were to be distributed to the bottom 17.6% of the entire population- 6 million extreme poor households (HIES 2010)⁶, in addition to IGA support, each household would have ownership of 55 decimals of khasland and they might move out from extreme poverty⁷. The Uttaran package of asset transfers would enable the extreme poor to use the khasland more productively and potentially secure their livelihood. Moreover, these individuals would become stronger consumers in the market which would stimulate demand and accelerate economic growth in Bangladesh.

Uttaran has been implementing the Uttaran-shiree Project (Sustained and Expanded Effort to Take the Extreme poor out of Extreme Poverty by Transferring Assets, Cash and Skills in an Integrated Approach) since April 2009. The project completed its first phase in March 2012. The aim of the project was to reach 12,000 extreme poor households from the most vulnerable and inaccessible communities living in eight Upazilas of Satkhira and Khulna districts. This project has been helping extreme poor people come out of the poverty trap through creating access to khasland and khas water bodies complemented with skills development training and assistance for income generating activities. The status of land lease of 1st phase is given below.

¹Uttaran (transition), a people centred NGO using a rights based approach to empower poor communities and reduce poverty. We work across the coastal region of south west Bangladesh. We are gradually expanding our activities to other parts of the country. Our work is focused on human rights, land rights and agrarian reform, sustainable water management, community based river basin management, adaptation to climate change, sustainable agriculture and food security.

²Khasland usually refers to the vast areas of land in government possession and managed by government appointed managers or agents. It can be Char Areas (accretions) appeared from the bed of big rivers or sea by way of new formations, large chunks of land acquired by the government any big land-based projects, like-railway or even Abandoned Property or enemy properties specially after the independence.

³ A temporary settlement of khasland means the user can lease the land for one year from the Government while a permanent settlement entails a lease period of 99 years. The one year settlement needs to be renewed every year paying a fixed amount of fee to government.

⁴ www.shiree.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/annual-Report-2010.pdf

⁵ Barakat, A., S. Zaman and S. Raihan. 2010. Distribution and Retention of KhasLand in Bangladesh. Association for LandReform and Development.

⁶ HIES 2010. Bangladesh Household Income and Expenditure Survey, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

⁷ If the same amount of land is distributed to 31.5% (8.7 million poor households (HIES 2010) across Bangladesh), each of these households will possess 39 decimals of land, reducing the effect on poverty reduction.

Table 1: Land lease status of 1st phase beneficiary households

Types of lease	Permanent lease	Temporary lease				Out of access	Total HH
		Water body	Agricultural land				
			Not in possession	In possession	Wapda		
No of HH	430	363	2531	5557	105	2830	11816
% of HH	4%	3%	21%	47%	0.89%	24%	100%

From the first phase of the Uttaran-shiree partnership project, we found that out of 11816 beneficiaries, only 430 households have permanent lease where 15 are not in possession. Another 420 households are on the way of getting that kind of lease. 47% of temporary leasers are in possession while 21% of temporary leasers are not in possession of khasland. 23% were left behind and did not get ownership of any kind of lease.

The majority of the 430 khasland receivers who have the permanent lease had taken part in a collective movement to get access to khasland in the 1990's in Debdata and Kaligonj Upazila under Satkhira District. This study refers to those permanent lease holders as *khasland receivers*. There were other households who had taken part in the movement but were unable to gain khasland access. This study refers to those households as *non receivers of khasland*. Section 2 explores why these households were successful whilst others were not.

To assess the effects of access to khasland an exploratory, qualitative study has been carried out in Bangladesh by Uttaran. Six weeks of extensive fieldwork in between January and February 2013 aimed to assess the effects of khasland by comparing the perspective of khasland receivers with non-receivers.

The specific research questions are:

- What is the impact of khasland on intra-household dynamics?
- What is the impact of khasland on household and community relations?
- What is the impact of khasland on market relations?

2. Methodology:

In the selected area the above three specific research questions were investigated using qualitative methods: group discussions, life histories, informal interviews and observations – carried out with individual/groups of khasland receivers, non receivers, influential leaders, local government representatives and different market actors. The sample participants of non receivers based on a similar socioeconomic context were stratified from surrounded villages.

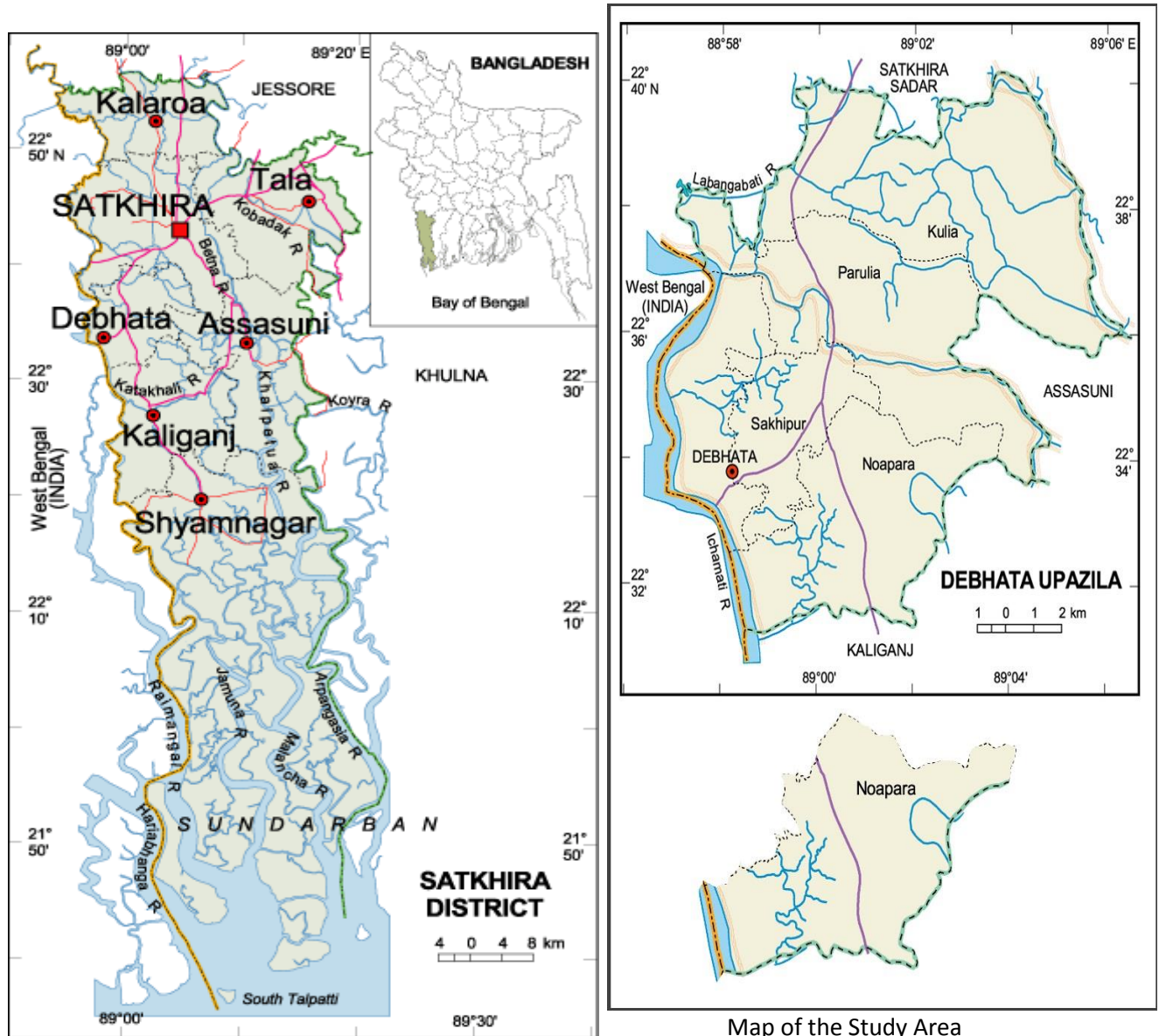
2.1. The study site:

Kalabaria is a village of Noapara Union in Satkhira District. In the early 1990s, some people moved to Kalabaria, with the exception of 20-25 households who had settled in the village generations ago. The 20-25 earlier settlers came from a Hindu caste called *tior*⁸ and they lived in low land areas beside the river and canal where they used to live off of fishing from natural sources. After the demolition of the Jamindari period, in an attempt to grab the land the local elite cut off the embankment and the area was flooded. They migrated to *attsoto bigha*⁹ village which is comparatively a high land area. This area was controlled by a rich Hindu family known as the *Swarnaker Family*. This family provided shelter to the migrants and engaged them as their bonded labour. The second generation of the *tior* migrants started living beside the embankment of Kalabaria gher. In 1992, hundreds of families from the adjacent Unions, Upazilas and Districts started migrating there to occupy the khasland. At that

⁸ Tior is a local caste of hindu fisher folk community.

⁹ Adjacent village of Kalabaria

time, Kalabaria was not recognized as a village; rather it was known locally as a *gher*¹⁰. It was not until the late 1990s that the *gher* was declared a village. Now the total land coverage of the village is about 266 acres with 350 families living - Hindus are in the eastern part and the Muslims occupy the other parts (source: group discussion with opinion leaders).



2.2. Study Participants, their selection and access

The research was carried out with two main categories of respondents:

1. Khasland receivers (Uttaran beneficiaries) and non-receivers who participated in the movement of getting khasland.
2. Different market actors and community opinion leaders.

¹⁰Shrimp farming (*chingre Gher*) is an aquaculture business that exists in a marine or freshwater environment, producing shrimp or prawns.

The 35 khasland receivers and 32 non-receivers were in the same socioeconomic condition, who participated in the process of getting khasland through the movement.

10 market actors and 10 community leaders were interviewed informally to gain insight into their perspectives on the relationship between the market and community. To get access to the participants we got support from khasland receivers' leaders who acted as gate keepers. The table of sample participants is given in annex 1.

2.3. Methods

Qualitative methods – group discussions, Life history interviews, informal interviews and observations – were used to collect the data.

5 group discussions were conducted with 2 groups of khasland receivers, 2 groups of non khasland receivers and 1 opinion leaders in Debhata project office. For group discussions, a day long data collection session was held to learn about their overall livelihood pattern, their working opportunities, intra household dynamics, labour market and market relations of both group of respondents where one researcher facilitated the session while the other recorded the data manually and electronically. To record electronically, we obtained consent from the participants. To understand the specific and diversified stories, life history interviews and informal interviews were conducted where the researchers individually collected data by 2 hour long discussions with the head of the household. Data was recorded both manually and electronically by taking notes and using a tape-recorder. To record electronically we obtained consent from each of the participants. We used observation tools to get data on different events like marriage, shalish, community association meeting and market activities.

2.3.1. Pilot studies

The study instruments were piloted in a neighbouring village in another district. Group discussions were held with one group and a life history was conducted with one household. Based on the experiences from the pilot work, revisions were made to the study instruments – mainly the group discussions and life history interviews.

2.3.2. Group discussions and life history interviews

4 group discussions were held with 8-10 participants in each group – male and female of both khasland receivers and non khasland receivers. Group data was collected from a daylong discussion. Life history interviews were conducted with selected participants. Each group identified these participants based on underlying factors of success and failure status of their livelihood. The list of the participants is in annex 1. For group discussions and life history interviews a separate research guideline was followed which was prepared before data collection.

2.3.3. Informal Interview

Informal interviews were conducted with land receivers' leaders, and various market actors – including shrimp cultivation sellers, Faria (who buys fish from the field and sells at depots), depot owner (who buys fish from Faria and khasland owners; they also provide advance payment to the khasland owner for cultivation), local buyers, suppliers who supply shrimp to the processing factory, commission agents and local government representatives to understand and triangulate the context, community dynamics and market chain.

2.3.4. Observation

Besides the above methods, we recorded daily observation on key issues of the study at the household, community and market level. A number of community events were observed, including khasland preparation, local marriage, local shalish (dispute resolution), local political meetings and local market.

2.3.5. Data Analysis and ethical matters

Data analysis was used on coding techniques which consisted of thematic categorizing and compiling description, cases, and quotations according to categorization. Finally in addition to the fundamental principles of respect, research ethics were followed closely with the researchers obtaining informed consent and practicing total confidentiality throughout the study. As we decided to electronically record the interview sessions, we always took their consent. There were some limitations of the study such as identifying non receivers from adjacent villages based on historical context, managing different political interest groups and arranging data validation workshops with the participants going back to the field.

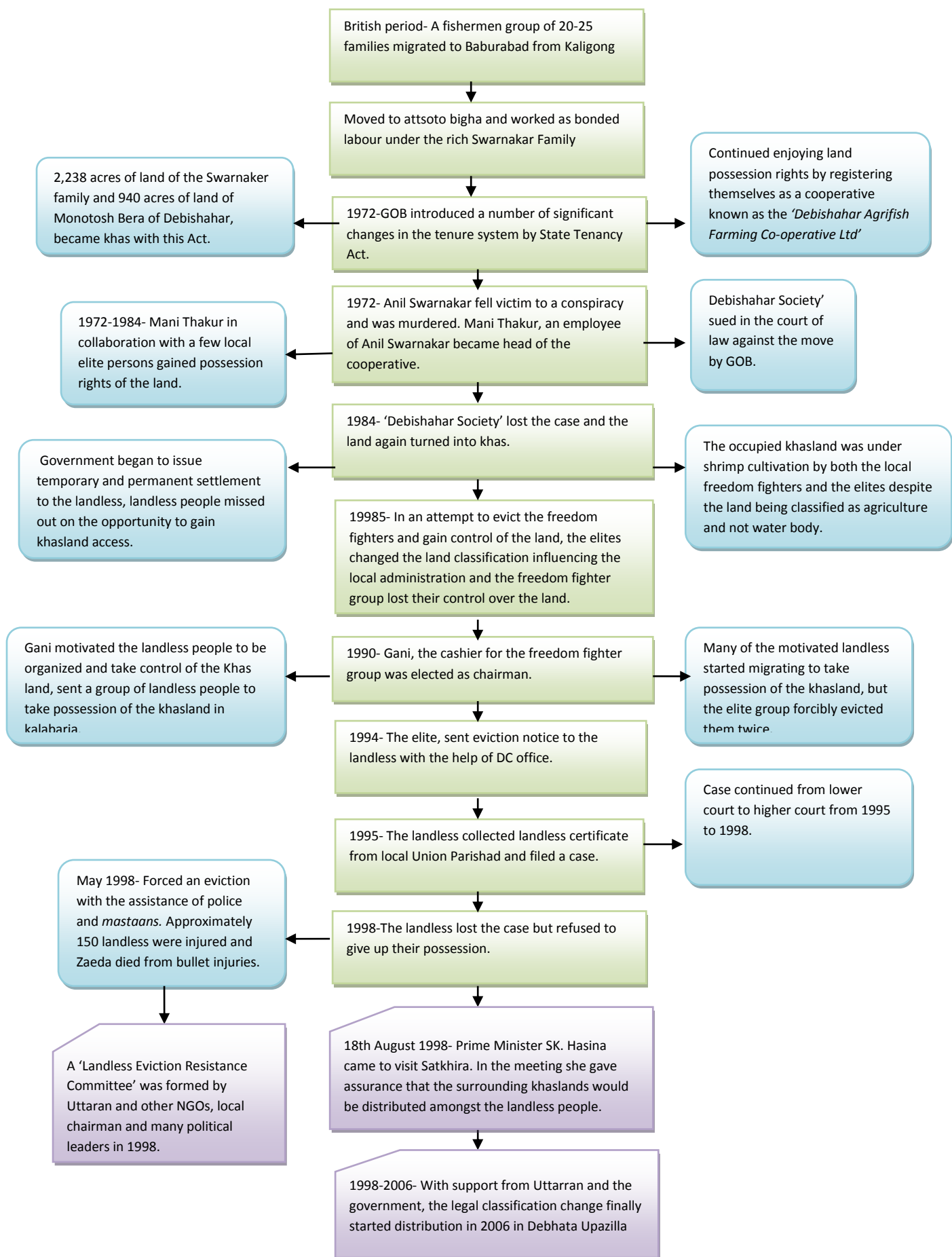
Section 2: Access to khasland

To understand the effects of access to khasland it is very important to explore the context of the process of acquiring access to khasland which is closely linked with the dynamics of household, community and market.

This section will:

1. Explore the context –how landless people of the adjacent Upazila and Districts migrated to Kalabaria, and were able to organize, fight, and occupy khasland to finally become landholders.
2. Explore why a number of those who migrated were unsuccessful and went back to their villages and remained landless.

The flow chart below shows the chronological process of access to khasland by the landless which has been described later from the source of group discussions with opinion leaders.



Birth of 3,178 acres of khasland that was under possession of local elite:

The struggle for khasland centering around 3,178 acres of khasland of Dehhata and Kaliganj District started almost half a century back. At this time 2,238 acres of land of the *Swarnakar* family and 940 acres of land of *Monotosh Bera of Debishahar*, became khas with the promulgation of a State Tenancy Act in 1972¹¹. However the owners of the land took advantage of the inherent weakness in the law¹² and continued enjoying land possession rights by registering themselves as a cooperative known as the '*Debishahar Agrifish Farming Co-operative Ltd*'. Later on, the Government took the initiative to bring the land under khas. Meanwhile, in 1972, the original owner of the land *Anil Swarnakar* of the '*Swarnakar Family*', fell victim to a conspiracy and was brutally murdered. Consequently, *Mani Thakur*, an employee of *Anil Swarnakar* became head of the 'Society'. He, in collaboration with a few local elites, gained possession rights of the land from 1972 to 1984.

Transfer of khasland where landless were ignored:

However, the 'Debishahar Society' sued in the court of law against this move. The case continued for a few decades as it moved from the local judge to the Supreme Court. Finally in 1984, through a decree of the Supreme Court, '*Debishahar Society*' lost its case and the land was again turned into khas. Following the Supreme Court decree, the Government began to issue temporary and permanent settlement to the landless as per landless policy¹³. Under the process of khasland distribution by the government, the head of the '*Debishahar Agri fish Farming Co-operative Ltd*' and many other individual elites were able to manage the local land authority and got the government entitlement of agricultural khasland in the name of landless. One local freedom fighter association also got land as per government policy¹⁴ and possessed a portion of khasland in the name of the landless. So, the landless lost the opportunity to gain access to khas land because: a) they were unaware of the process and b) the cooperative with other elites and one freedom fighter association took the land.

Conflict between elites to get control over Khasland:

The occupied khasland was under shrimp cultivation by both the freedom fighters and the elites despite the land being classified as agricultural land and not a waterbody. The freedom fighters were at risk of losing control over their shrimp farming business because they were only entitled to agricultural khasland. In an attempt to evict the freedom fighters and gain control of the land, the elites changed the land classification to water body by influencing the local administration. As a result, the freedom fighters lost their control over the land. But as per CS/SA records, this land actually remained cultivable agricultural land. Instead of issuing DCR¹⁵ and permanent settlement, the process of leasing the waterbody on yearly basis started that ensured the shrimp businessman had control over the land under the banner of a cooperative society. This resulted in an ongoing conflict to get control over the shrimp farming business between the freedom fighters and the local elites.

¹¹The government of Bangladesh from 1972 onwards introduced a number of significant changes in the tenure system. The immediate change was lowering of ceiling on ownership of total land - both agricultural and non-agricultural - by a single family or body. The limit of 375 bighas was brought down to 100 bighas. A further change was made in respect of ceiling on agricultural land. It was provided that subject to the overall limit of 100 bighas of land throughout the country and another significant measure was the exemption of rent in respect of agricultural lands up to 25 bighas held by a single family. Finally the government decided to handover the khasland to the landless people for settlement.

¹² As per law, the land ceiling was 100 bigha in cases of personal ownership. However, cooperative organizations could own more.

¹³ Under the landless policy of 1984, the landless was defined as those who possess up to 50 decimal of land and didn't have to rely on agriculture, which was revised later in 1997.

¹⁴ Freedom Fighters are entitled to khasland whether or not they are extreme poor

¹⁵ Duplicate Carbon Registration

First step of landless on khasland:

In the early 1990's, Gani, the cashier for the freedom fighter group was elected as chairman. As a *patron*, he motivated some of his landless *clients* to be organized and take control of the khasland. Accordingly he sent a group of landless people to take possession of the khasland in Kalabaria and take revenge for losing their control of the shrimp farms. The landless people legally built small huts along the bank of the waterbody.

Policy changed by the elite to protect the control over land:

Under the threat of occupancy by the landless, the elite group was able to change the land classification into '*specialized shrimp farming Jalmahal*'¹⁶ in 1992. As per policy, if any khasland remains under a shrimp farm area, that khasland cannot be accessed by the landless. So it remains off limits.

Mobilisation of the landless:

In this context, among the landless many of them led to organize a movement to occupy the land. With the influence of the Chairman they continuously motivated nearby villagers to take possession of the khasland. Many of the motivated landless started migrating from nearby areas to take possession of the khasland, but the elite group forcibly evicted them twice to be protected from the occupancy by the landless. As a result, many landless returned to their village with fear and gave up hope of receiving khasland. However, the leaders continued to motivate people from distant villages of other Upazilas and districts through various networks and thus, the migrated landless continued to take possession of the land. As a result, a landless community gradually mobilized under the leadership of the landless leaders who continued the process with the help of the local chairman/freedom fighters association who earlier lost their control over the shrimp farming.

Withdraw of eviction notice:

In 1994, under the influence of the elite, the DC office gave notice to the landless households through the *Upazila* land office requesting them to vacate the place. In response, the landless people called a meeting in front of the DC office where they mentioned that as they were staying on *collector khasland*¹⁷, by law they cannot be evicted. Accordingly, the DC office formed an investigation team and found that the landless were not occupying the leased waterbody. As a result, the DC withdrew the eviction notice from the landless families.

Landless people occupied the land and started a legal process:

Though the landless were collectively organized under the leadership of landless leaders, a local lawyer suggested that as per policy they would have to prove that the land is under their possession and get the classification changed from waterbody to agricultural land. The landless leaders took his advice and continued the collective movement as well as following legal procedures. After receiving the order of not to evict, they occupied the land within a few days and prepared a list of all landless households. They collected landless certificates from local Union Parishad. With this list they filed a case at Satkhira Judge Court in 1995 to argue against the tender of the shrimp farming as there were

¹⁶In 1992 this policy was circulated. As shrimp is an exportable product, the area where it is cultivated was announced as *chingri mahal*. As per policy, the khasland that remains in that specialized area are not to be leased to the landless.

¹⁷ As per landless policy, collector khas is the land on the bank of the waterbody - canal or river which is not entitled to lease to anybody.

1200 landless families living in that area of 9 villages. The case continued up to 1998 from lower court to higher court. In the end, the classification was not changed and the land remained as waterbody but the landless refused to give up their possession, which lead to their eviction.

Initiative of forced eviction and the death of Zayed

In May 1998, the elite group forced an eviction of the landless households with the assistance of police and *mastaans*¹⁸. A 'Landless Eviction Resistance Committee' was formed by Uttaran and other NGOs, local chairman and many political leaders to counter the eviction move against 1200 landless families. But in the event of eviction, Zayed (32), wife of Hamid Miya of Baburabad, died from bullet injuries to her chest. After her death, this became a national issue. Approximately 150 landless were injured in a firing incident by the police and hired hands (based on an interview with land receivers' leaders).

Prime Minister's announcement in favour of the landless:

On 18th August 1998, Prime Minister SK. Hasina came to visit Satkhira. In the meeting, she gave assurance that the surrounding khaslands would be distributed amongst the landless people of the locality and a massive program, known as the 'Asrayan Project' would be instigated to rehabilitate the homeless people. With support from Uttaran and the government, the legal classification change finally started in 2004 in Kaligonj District and in 2006 in Debhata Upazilla. But it took six years to maintain and accomplish the lengthy bureaucratic process.

A number of households remained landless – why and how?

The study area where the landless people migrated was low land with few earning opportunities. The landless lived in tiny huts beside the embankment where they had to cook food. Open defecation was very common. They worked in the high land area which was 7-8 kilometers from the low land area. There was no source of drinking water and they had to collect it from 3-4 kilometers away. There was no road and they had to move on to the embankment of the *gher*. They were always under threat of eviction by the musclemen. At the same time, as the landless people under the leadership of landless leaders with the help of chairman, advocate, NGOs – Uttaran, IDEAL were fighting the court, lobbying, holding various campaigns, meeting in different places, they had to collect money from the inhabitants. Many landless people did not have the capacity to provide money and they were frightened they would be tortured by the elites. They were unable to stay in the area. Furthermore, when the landless people occupied the land by building a house and partitioned off their land, this cost a handsome amount of money. Many of them were unable to afford the cost. This forced many households back to their villages to remain landless.

¹⁸It was found from the discussion with the land receiver's leaders that the local elite shrimp producers used to keep musclemen to grab and protect the farming land.

Section 3: Intra household dynamics

This section will:

1. Explore how access to khasland has shaped the dynamic relationship at household level through livelihood and life trajectories.
2. Finally, it will seek to explain whether the khasland has secured household beneficiaries' livelihoods or not and if it had a positive effect on women's role and status inside their households and within the community.

1. Livelihood of both khasland receivers and non-receivers before access to khasland:

To understand the livelihood of the khasland receivers' in those days we focus on two key points:

- Livelihood of landless households before they benefited from access to khasland
- Livelihood of the migrated landless when they were in the low land (before they occupied the khasland)

It should be noted that high and low land areas have different income generating activities available. Low land can often be difficult to use for daily labour whereas high land areas are more conducive to multiple IGAs. Thus, when the landless moved from the high land to the low land areas they faced new difficulties in securing their livelihoods.

1.1. Livelihood of the landless when they were in *Daanga* (high land)

Based on group discussions with both the land receivers and non receivers group we found that in the early 1990's the landless people worked mainly as day labourers in the high land area before receiving the khasland. The working opportunity was basically agriculture based. According to the livelihood calendar of annex 2, they worked all year round but not regularly. The wage of males was 60 to 70 tk. Many males were engaged in fishing during the monsoon season where they earned 60 to 70 tk per day. Besides that, it was found that few males were engaged in the depot de-heading shrimp or worked as van pullers and transported labour. The depot labourers worked for a monthly payment of around BDT 4000. The group of female headed household said, "**Very few women were seen to do agricultural work in the field.**" To mould the harvested rice women worked as day labourers in other households. Many women worked in well-off households as housemaids for payment in-kind, such as food.

1.2. Livelihood of the migrated landless when they were in *baada* (low land) (before getting khasland)

All land receiver and non receiver groups confirmed that the main objective of the migrated landless people was to occupy and permanently possess the khasland. This process required a continuous participation in the landless movement. Parallel to this process they had to look for regular income to maintain their family's needs. It was found that in many cases the non khasland receivers' households faced every day difficulties to manage their double responsibilities – participating in different meetings, staying in certain houses to make them appear occupied, guarding the area at night and labouring for daily household expenses. Female members who lived there stayed at home as well as worked as day labourers in the surrounding area. If male members had to guard at night and attend meetings during the day time, it often hampered their daily income. As a result, livelihoods were very difficult to maintain. It was calculated by the khasland receivers that the average household monthly income was around 3000-4000 BDT for male headed households whereas the female headed household's income was around 1000 BDT per month as per their livelihood calendar of annex 4.

2. Present livelihood status of khasland receivers and non-receivers

As shown in annex 4, generally khasland receivers have multiple earning sources including fish farming on their own khasland while the non-receivers are not able to do fish farming because they do not have access to water bodies. There are a few non khasland receivers who are fish farming in their own way and have succeed in their livelihood.

2.1. Households who received khasland

In the study area, according to the livelihood calendar (annex 3) we found that all khasland receiving households are earning from multiple sources. Using khasland for shrimp farming is constant for all khasland receivers. It was observed that most of the farms are very close to their homes. In many cases, the farms are in the middle area of the village and there is some distance between the farm and the house. The maintenance of the farm is not everyday work. After preparing the khasland and releasing the larva, the farm only requires maintenance once or twice a month. But to harvest each household has to spend at best two hours every two weeks.

To explore the market chain of the shrimp farm we found that all inputs – shrimp fries, fish feed, fertilizer, lime and others are available and accessible. Also, all household members are able to sell their produce from their house if they wish. As such, it can be concluded that the market is now more fluid rather than static and fixed. By staying at home, household members are able to get inputs and sell their produce as well. All business information is available to producers and they are also connected with the different value chains. The business system has been developed and as a result anybody in the household is able to manage the shrimp farm. As females are primarily responsible for managing household chores, they are the key managers. All of the khasland has a water body and a space for homestead gardening adjacent to their homes. This creates opportunities to engage both male and female members to earn from other sources.

Besides productive uses of khasland, some khasland receiving households rely on alternative earning sources. All able-bodied members are earning from different sources in the locality and in other districts from daily labour, monthly jobs, small enterprises, agriculture and fish farming and other businesses. It was calculated with the group of men that 50% are earning extra from day labour in other districts and the remaining 50% are involved in transport, vegetable selling, earning by leasing other waterbodies, working in the local area, or selling fish in the market. Within the male khasland receiving group, it was calculated that with an enabling environment of production, each male headed household earns approximately 18000 BDT from all IGAs including female's income from daily labour. They spend an average of 8996 BDT, leaving a monthly savings of 9000 BDT per month. Multiple sources of income generally enable the households to be well off.

Box 1: How khasland has successfully contributed to move out of poverty

Shukumar (51) lives in Kalabaria village. At the age of 11 he worked as a bonded day labourer for a well off family. At the age of 16 he got a monthly job as a fish farmer earning 1,000 BDT per month. The farm owner used to give him an additional 60 tk per week for daily expenses. He continued the job for 8 years on the same remuneration and other benefits. Since he did not smoke or chew on betel leaves, he was able to save around BDT 5000. With this money, he started a grocery shop in the village. His average earning was 1200 taka per month. Besides that he used to catch fish in the canal about 10 days a month. From fishing, his average monthly income was around 700 taka making his total monthly income BDT 1900.

He joined the landless movement and got 1 acre of khasland. He started cultivating shrimp in 1998. In 2002, he leased $\frac{1}{4}$ share of the government waterbody of 9 acres under the name of fisher folk association¹⁹. At that time, the government lease money was BDT 7500 per acre. In 2004, he leased another fish farm of 1 acre from a neighbour who got sick and needed to lease his khasland to raise money for the treatment cost. Later he bought a water pump and bored pipe to reach underground water. He is now the owner of 5 acres of khasland, 1 acre of which is high land 3 kilometres away from his home on which he cultivates rice and other crops. He has also made a brick house and has an account in the commercial bank. He said, "In any social event, if everybody contributes 50 taka; I have to share 100 taka because of my well off status. People now call me to mediate social conflicts."

The group of khasland receivers argued that khasland accelerates one's wellbeing regardless of their socio-economic background. Even a beggar has been able to change his life with khasland. From the life history interview of Gaffar Shikder we found:

Gaffar Shikdar (45) migrated from Kaligonj District to the village under study in 1995 with his parents. He worked as a rickshaw van puller. He got married after one year. In 1997, he had an accident falling from a mango tree and broke his leg. He explained, "I got treatment from a local religious healer but it failed as I was attacked by black magic". Finally he had an operation on his leg in Badartola hospital in India. After coming back from India he started begging in the locality. His wife started working as a day labourer.

As part of the landless movement, in 1994, when the landless people occupied land, he received 80 decimals of khasland but continued begging. His family was surviving off begging and shrimp farming, but the farming was not going well. To buy inputs and land preparation they had to take out a 20,000 BDT loan. However, things began to improve. His sister-in-law started living with them last year, and she also has 66 decimal of khasland. At that time he was able to repay the loan with the money from leasing his own khasland and soon after that, he stopped begging. This year he has also leased his land for BDT 19,000 and invested the money in agricultural land of 18 decimal. He is also working on his sister-in-law's shrimp farm.

The above cases demonstrate that land has created other opportunities and an asset base for Shuklal. While for Gaffer Shikdar, it has provided security and the opportunity for other types of cultivation.

¹⁹ Fisher Folk Association: a government approved association where all members should be fishermen. The Association allows members to participate in the bidding process to get yearly lease.

On the other hand, 17 female headed households were earning for around 80 days from day labour in the local area where they are getting 50 tk. less than their male counterparts. They were found to labour in other shrimp farms and government road repair and construction work. With the female land receiver group we calculated that with an enabling environment of production, generally each female headed household earns around BDT 15000 per month.

Based on the story above of productive uses of khasland, we found that the receivers are using their land for shrimp farming. Beside shrimp cultivation, we found that there are some comparatively highland plots in adjacent villages where the landholders are cultivating prawns, paddy and vegetables. The box below demonstrates from the life history interview how Rozina is making a profit from her khasland.

Box2: Cultivation of Prawns, paddy and vegetables profits BDT 1300 per decimal

Razia Khatun (36) got 50 decimals of khasland as permanent settlement where she cultivates prawns, white fishes, rice and vegetables. She releases 40kg of young white fish and 4000 pies of prawn fries in March- April. Including all other input such as fish feed, broken snail etc the total production cost is about 29000 taka. At the end of the season (Dec-Jan) she can harvest about 70000 taka worth of fish. From December to March she cultivates paddy on the land and the total production cost is about 10000 taka. In harvesting season she harvests about 28200 taka of rice. She also cultivates vegetables all year round on her plot of land. The total production cost of vegetable cultivation is 300 taka and the produce is worth about 9000 taka, which she used for home consumption and for sale at the market. The cumulative yearly income was BDT 107200 and expenditure was BDT 39300. Hence, the profit from these activities is about BDT 67000. Through hard work it is possible to make a profit of around 60000 taka from 50 decimal of khasland if there are no idiosyncratic and covariate shocks.

Both male and female khasland receivers are able to use this money to invest in other livelihoods and assets, including mortgaging rice fields, fresh water fish projects, providing loans to neighbours, depositing money in different commercial banks(i.e. Agrani and Islamic), leasing other fish farms for 3 to 5 years and buying jewellery for their daughters' marriages. These changed livelihoods of multiple income sources enable them to be resilient in different crisis and hazards. For example, from CMS 5 we found that Shah Alam recovered the loss of his house and shrimp farm due to a flood in September 2011 through various income earning activities, including working as migrant labour, his wife's income and leasing his farm (<http://www.shiree.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/ROI-2-Shah-Alam-Jan-2013.pdf>).

2.2. Households who did not receive khasland:

The households who did not receive khasland are earning from other sources but not fish farming. The non khasland receiving group calculated that generally they earn on average 6000 BDT per month when both household heads are able to work. They usually spend whatever they earn to meet their basic needs and have little money left. As a result, they do not have a strong asset base that secures them from different social and environmental setbacks. The life history interview of a non khasland receiver, Khalil who is the sole earner of his household, shows the general picture of a non khasland receiver:

Khalil (60) has been involved in the fruit selling business for the last two decades. Every day before sunrise he moves to nearby villages to collect fruits and vegetables and then goes to the local market in the morning. After selling the fruits he returns to his house at noon. This has been his daily routine for twenty years. He explained that sickness and marriage costs have been obstacles to improvements in his livelihood. His wife and his younger daughter had to undergo three operations which cost about 30000 taka in total. The cost of marriage of his three daughters was another 40000

taka. To make matters worse, he had to marry off his second daughter twice and his only son left him to work elsewhere.

Many non receivers have to migrate to other places to survive. The non receivers' group said that male household members typically migrate to other districts for work opportunities like Dhaka, Savar, Shariatpur, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet, Jhenaidah, Mongla etc. In different districts, they work for more than 90 days where each of them earn 300 taka per day. It is fairly common in the area for people to go to India for labour opportunities since the wages are higher. Furthermore, they are able to send money back regularly. We found that non receivers are increasingly taking the risk and migrating to India as the border is nearby. One non receiver said,

"India is closer from the village and it is possible to reach India in time to have lunch there if you leave in the morning. This is the reason people have started to go there in recent years. Migration has increased because of income opportunities, higher wages and easier communication from being able to use the same mobile operator across the border".

The Indian contractors are happy to get Bangladeshi labour as they can save BDT 50 per day on wages. The participants said that every day more people are migrating to India for labour. Even women are migrating frequently to Tamil Nadu, Mumbai, Gujarat, Karnataka, Hyderabad, Kolkata etc. The non receivers' group said that the households who received khasland usually migrate within the country, especially during the winter, but the people who did not receive khasland²⁰ or those who are newly non khasland receivers²¹ prefer to migrate to India and usually stay there for one year. One of the respondents calculated, *"In India, day labourers earn around BDT 500 for 9 hours a day plus overtime of BDT 200. Overtime is calculated at a rate of 500 tk for 9 hours."* Whereas, in Bangladesh, day labourers earn around BDT 300 for 9 hours a day with no overtime. When the men migrate to India the household can save around BDT 7000 per month.

For the women who stay behind, they may earn on average BDT 3000-4000 per month working as housemaid, earthwork, rice moulding in other houses, and planting, cultivating and harvesting rice in other people's fields.

3. Livelihood comparison between land receivers and non-receivers

This section explores the income difference of 'before and after' and 'with and without' of receiving khasland, other factors of the household to maximize their benefit besides land cultivation, how a non land receiver becomes successful in his own way, how a failed khasland receiver is hoping to move up, and finally how land receivers are pushed into destitution from not being able to retain their khasland.

Based on the description above, the households who received khasland are now earning 14,000 taka more per month than they were when they had no khasland. These households are earning 12,000 taka more than the non receivers. Receivers of khasland commonly argued that:

"Land is a constant livelihood security and creates other opportunities." Their perception is that success depends on the capacity of the household to maximize their benefit from other income generating activities besides land cultivation including petty businesses, day labour, cultivating more than 1 acre through leasing or mortgaging additional land, using modern technology and through networking and support from the community in the form of informal loans, credit facilities and getting government work in the area.

²⁰ As they were evicted and didn't get back to khasland.

²¹ the next generation of khasland receivers who are regarded as landless but have no scope of getting khasland due to unavailability of khasland.

During the focus group discussions with non-khasland receivers, participants reported that although their income had increased in the last 20 years they were still unable to save. They are only able to save around 7000 BDT a month if they migrate to India for work, which is still 2000 BDT less than the khasland receivers. The non-khasland receivers clearly explained their desire to access land and also highlighted how their current livelihood could not allow them to achieve it. One of them said, *“Even if we continue working as daily labourers till we die, we will still not be able to buy a plot of 1 acre of land.”* The box below provides a case study on how one household has succeeded in his livelihood and how he became one of the most well off households in the village.

The example below illustrates how land ownership can significantly affect the livelihood and the well-being of non-khasland receivers’ households.

Box 3: A new khasland receiver

In the 1990’s Sayed Sayed (50) was a day labourer. He had no land assets of his own and lived with his parents. He migrated to the village under study but returned as a result of torture by the land grabbers. In 1993-1994, he got a job as a monthly labourer in a grocery shop where he worked until 10pm for 25 taka per day. When the shop owner’s son grew up he didn’t want to keep Sayed as an employee anymore. After leaving this job he started a stall business of betel leaf, cigarette and fruits. He used to buy fruits from India and sell them in this shop. To start this business he took a loan of 500tk from his owner’s brother. Using the profits he made from this business he bought 14 decimal of land and built a mud house. After one year he bought another 7 decimals of land. However, as more shops started to open, his business fell due to competition. He moved his stall to the village but it didn’t go well. He got an informal loan but failed to repay and was forced to sell 7 decimal of his land to repay it.

After the death of Zayeda the market became bigger²². With the help of the chairman and business association he was able to get a contract for tax collecting in the market. The association gets the contract from the government with an amount settled by informal negotiation. They sell the contract to another party who will repay the amount on a daily basis by collecting tax from the market. He continued this work for years. Through this job, he bought 35 decimal of land in 2004 and he started agricultural work – one acre as shared land and 55 decimals as lease. By doing agricultural work he bought a shallow tube well and started a water selling business. In the beginning, it ran by diesel but after a few years his TW was running by electricity. He provided water supply service in 8 acres of land. In the boro season, he received ¼ of the crops and about 60 taka per hour. This business is still running and he is cultivating one and a half acres himself. In 2008 he bought²³ 1 acre 50 decimal of khasland. The price of per decimal was 566 tk. He also leased off 66 acres of land from a neighbour where he is cultivating shrimp. So now he is cultivating shrimp in the khasland village as well as cultivating crops and selling water in the high land area. Although he did not get khasland he was still able to maintain multiple sustainable IGAs.

This case study shows that not all non-khasland receivers are in worse positions compared to khasland receivers and that some have managed to successfully access and retain land.

²² How the market got bigger is explained in the sub section of ‘process of market development’ under section 5 of market dynamics.

²³ As per policy, khasland receivers’ cannot sell their land. However, before getting government entitlement papers, some receivers sell the possession verbally. But after getting the document, to sell, one has to transfer the land under the law of *gift of heba deed*.

The limits of Khasland's impact on land receivers' livelihoods

In discussions with both male and female land receiver groups, participants explained that there are households who have failed to secure their well-being for a variety of reasons. This included a lack of male working members in the household, dowry costs, illnesses of household members, having no son, being elderly, a large family size, having only a small amount of land or having land positioned in the middle of the village with no access to water. However, they are hoping to move forward.

Evidence collected from FDGs and interviews provided that although khasland receivers can face significant challenges in improving their livelihood and building their resilience, land ownership seems to have important positive effects on their livelihood strategy. It is important to emphasize the difficulties khasland receivers can face in trying to retain their khasland. The case study below illustrates these issues.

Box 4: Naila Begum lost her khasland due to death of her husband and son and Monjuara lost her land due to land grabbing

Naila Begum (59) lives in Satkhira district with her two sons, a divorced daughter and six grandchildren. She received 100 decimal of khasland but sold her possessions to pay for her husband's treatment. Now she has only 7 decimals of homestead land. Like all other landless people, her family went to Kalabaria in 1995 to get possession of the khasland. After a long struggle, she took possession of 1 acre of khasland. From 2000 they started shrimp farming and built a house there. Meanwhile her elder daughter died and she took the responsibility of looking after her only granddaughter. They were doing well by using the earnings of day labour and shrimp farming. Her elder son got a job in Dhaka and her second son started a small-scale shrimp business.

Her happiness didn't last for long. Her elder son died in an accident leaving behind his three daughters and wife, and her husband began suffering from cancer. After the death, the family became economically vulnerable. As they had no other source of income, she sold her khasland for 80,000 taka to bear the treatment cost of her husband and to maintain the family expenditure. This left the large family dependent on the physical labour of her second son, government safety net programs and any help from wealthy relatives.

Monjuara (59) also lives in Satkhira District, along with her only son, his wife and their three children. In 1985 they bought 7 decimals of land for 1000 taka. After buying the land her husband started to run a hotel in Gazi-er haat bazaar which was not going well and they were living at the extreme poor level. When the landless movement for khasland started he was influenced by a political leader and went to Kalabaria with his family. After some struggle, they took possession of 1 acre of khasland and started shrimp farming. With the profit from the shrimp business, in 1995 they bought another 10 decimal of land adjacent to his house and married off her only son. Her son started a business of supplying ice to shrimp traders. In 2004, he became paralysed from an illness and died in 2006. After his death, one of the leaders grabbed the land. Now they are mainly dependent on the ice supply business and water selling for their livelihood.

These women, as a result of not being able to retain their land, fell back into worse economic conditions.

Strategic empowerment of women

The information presented in this paper highlights the role khasland plays in securing rural livelihoods and in diversifying income sources. Besides this, the information collected from female

participants indicates that land ownership might have an effect on female interaction within the households and with the community.

The female land receivers acknowledged that these opportunities have had effective and fruitful consequences in their social and familial lives. Before receiving khasland, females were not hired for daily labour on fish farms but now they are actively involved in earning for their families on their own khasland. All female household members of khasland receivers' households participate in the preparation of their own shrimp farm. But many of the female members do the same job in other people's shrimp farms. As women's daily wage is comparatively lower than men's, they tend to work harder and often longer than their male counterparts. This made them popular in the labour market, and facilitated their access to the public space.

A woman respondent reported: *'Relations with our relatives and the community is based on "give and take". Therefore, with the increase in our income, our prestige and acceptance among relatives and the community has increased a lot.'*

As they need to work in the fields, women's mobility is not as restricted as it used to be. They work in the fields and travel to nearby relatives' houses, neighbours' houses, group meetings and NGO offices. When they go to public offices, the upazila town, the hospital or nearby towns, they need to take permission from their husbands or move in a group. They mentioned that community norms and values do not permit them to move independently. It was observed that many Muslim female members wear a *borkha* when they go to other areas outside their village. Each female of the village has access to local government offices and hospitals near their houses. In emergency cases they can also go to district government hospitals. Now many female headed households who have received land are confident enough to talk with outsiders and they have learnt a lot from different NGO trainings such as consciousness about children's education and health.

Within their households too, women reported on their wider responsibilities. Attitudes toward household chores and the contribution of male members remain as before with little change. In addition, they said that most of the time male members used to stay outside of the house for work and so do not have time to contribute to household chores. However, elderly males who stay at home are able to help the women look after the children. Generally male members still play a dominant role in decision making. In some cases females can take the decisions collectively which are mostly about asset management in the absence of a male. They have also acknowledged that their participation in decision making has increased a bit. During an FGD a female participant said, *"Relations with our husbands and other family members have improved significantly because before we were always short of money to maintain the daily necessities of our lives so we were unsatisfied with each other. Now we can maintain ourselves properly and have good relationships within the family."*

Many female respondents were found to buy items for themselves with their income. In the very early days of paid work they had to give all of their earnings to their husbands to maintain household expenses. One female land receiver respondent said, *"I bought 2 beds last year using my own money"*. Some of the female headed khasland receiver households were found to have a bank account. One of them said that *"I have opened an account in the bank to keep my money safe because it's risky to carry all of my money with me"*. Furthermore, most female headed households across receivers and non receivers were found to be saving regularly especially in different *samities*.

Section 4: community dynamics

Access to khasland led to the development of leadership and new forms of organization in the villages which will be explored in this section. It is argued that the context of landless movement is the key to change the identity of the khasland receivers. The section will also explore the negative perception of *daanga* people²⁴. It is important to note that the non receivers are not united; rather they are living in the low economic social strata in the mainstream community. Therefore, this section focuses only on community dynamics among khasland receivers.

1. Leadership:

All the villagers are directed by a few leaders of khasland receivers. These leaders played a role to migrate the landless in the village, motivated the landless, organised the movement and fought against the elite land grabbers. The leaders play a crucial role in the community of land receivers. They control the villagers and lead all kinds of external support and land related activities. All of them have one acre of khasland. Under each leader there are a number of households who were mobilized by them when the movement took place. They govern the customary rule of the village. One leader said, “*we have very good relationships with the local administration. When any new officer comes, they call a meeting with the landless committee*”. It was found that one of the key roles of the khasland leaders is to facilitate the process of getting government entitlement for permanent leases for people living in his cluster. The leaders said, “*We all have a very good relationship with the local land office*”. Based on this relationship, they are able to facilitate the distribution and allocation of khasland and facilitate getting the government entitlement papers. The land receivers who have not received the government entitlement papers, usually give the expenses of the process to the leaders to get this done. Uttaran had very good relationships with the leaders. From beneficiary selection to government entitlement, Uttaran always worked well with them. Regarding getting government entitlements for permanent leases, one of the khasland leaders said, “*Gradually with the handing over of the government entitlement paper, the practice of individualism becomes more common. However, they also believe that if there is a common interest, the villagers will stand together.*”

The leaders also started negotiating with different organizations and personnel to meet their community needs, such as ensuring drinking water, building schools and constructing roads.

2. New forms of organization

Though all villagers have received khasland they are still identified as *landless (vumihin)* and *abaader lok* (people who live in low land area) or *landless villagers* (across the District of Satkhira). In every *landless village (vumihin gram)* there is a village committee which consists of 15 members. These committees have a vertical association at Upazila and District level. Every year they observe the death anniversary of Zayed who died in the landless movement on 27 July 1998. Uttaran is working in the area from the time of the movement. It has its own group and there is a vertical network of committees: primary group at village level, Gono Unnayan Federation at Union level, Upazila *bhumi* committee and District *bhumi* committee. But it was found that the community people were mobilized as per their own committee line-up.

²⁴ The local people who live in the high land area of the Union for a long time ago. Earlier, they controlled the shrimp farms in the low land area. The local elite, UP chairman, UP member, shrimp businessmen and the members of the *Bazaar* association live in this area.

An increasing number of associations established themselves in the community like *Atshotobigha Motshojibi Shomobay Samity Ltd.* and *Kalabaria gram unnayan samobay samity ltd.* The fisher folk association ensured the land receivers were able to get lease of fish farms which are leased yearly by the Government. This association opened a secondary source of income besides productive use of their own land which ensures finance and relaxed installments according to the harvest. Based on a case study on an association formed by the land receivers, we found that the context of the movement influenced them to form a financial institution which was designed based on their livelihood practices and was different than other financial institutions.

Five friends contributed 2200 taka to start the association on 11th May 2012. They continued to visit every household in the village to recruit other people. Within a month, a team of 4 members turned into 40 members. After enlisting members from Kalabaria village they approached other people of neighbouring villages. People from Katmahal, Norerchak, Gazirhaat and Ramnathpur are enlisted in this association. To date, the association consists of 79 members which includes 30 female members. Of them, 71 members are beneficiary households of the Uttaran-shiree partnership project.

Each member deposits a minimum of 10 taka every week. When one's saving deposit reaches 500 taka s/he is entitled to take a loan. Up to 25 January 2013 the collective savings was calculated at Tk. 64,968 of which Tk. 62,500 was sanctioned as loans to 26 members of the association. Initially they started providing maximum loans of Tk. 2,000. After registration in 31 December 2012, loan ceiling was increased to Tk. 5000. All members can also withdraw their savings through an application as per their need.

They got their registration on 31 December 2012 from Satkhira district co-operative office. They had to spend Tk. 14,000 for registration purposes which was collected from the interest of the last six months. Now they can get loans sitting in their houses when they need and if someone fails to pay regular installments in one week s/he can pay two installments in the next week.

Credit facility from this association allows them to avoid the business trap. Besides shrimp farming, they are taking loans for many other purposes. Male members were found to take loans for buying vans, rickshaws, grocer shop items, cosmetic shop items, fish business, leasing land and to marry off their daughters. On the other hand, female members were taking loans for rearing livestock, releasing shrimp fries, fish business and leasing shrimp farms.

3. Negative perception of *daanger lok* (highland people) about the *baader lok* (low land *landless* community)

The group of opinion leaders of *daanger lok* perceived that landlessness is a continuous process. Someone who was once landless, is no longer landless after occupying and getting government entitlement. However, when his or her son gets married and start living on their own, they identify as landless. This identity always creates ways of getting different types of external support.

Daanger lok perceive the *vumihin* (*landless*) as social negatives. They explained that based on this unified community, the *Vumihin* leaders including other well-off people promote *mastanism*. To do shrimp farming in their own land, the *vumihin* leaders often have to buy shrimp fries on credit and in many cases they do not pay back the credit amount. Influential persons cannot run a shrimp

business adjacent to the *landless village* as the *landless* ‘terrorists’ will rob them and steal their shrimp during peak season. One local journalist said,

“The local influential shrimp businessmen are facing continuous loss because they are unable to harvest the produce. To control the farms, the vumihin terrorists use guns, bombs, local swords and bows and arrows. As a result, daanger lok are not interested to do business in the area.”

The danger lok also perceived that the *vumihin* leaders use women as protectors against any conflict, but in reality many women are unable to defend themselves. The box below will show how the *Vumihin* leaders are misusing their power.

Box5: A girl had to stop going to school after being threatened by a leader

Shaikat (40) is a leader who lived in Baburabad who has been married four times. Recently he decided he wanted to marry Rashida (14) and proposed to her mother, female household head, offering 1 acre of land. She questioned, *“What will I do with the land that comes from the price of my daughter?”* The mother took her daughter out of school in an attempt to marry her off to someone else and get her out of the village. She silently collected a birth certificate saying her daughter was 18 years old. However, the leader was informed. At once he announced, *“If I don’t get her, no one else will be her husband.”* The family has no protection against the leader and lives in a state of constant insecurity. The mother has continued to refuse the leader’s marriage proposal, but they continue to be threatened by him.

The highland opinion leaders claimed that many *vumihin* leaders have become millionaires with this money. Many own high-rise buildings in different towns. Many of them have built brick houses in the community, bought land, different shops in the high land area, send their children to good schools and universities, are connected with influential persons in the high land and are getting involved with different financial and social organizations. They always keep strong relationships with the political leaders so that they can carry on with their illegal activities – stealing shrimp from others’ farms, grabbing other shrimp farms, forced marriages and brokerage of government entitlement of khasland which ensure the votes to the political leaders as they control the vote bank of the land receivers. They do not care much about the local administration. The high land opinion leaders said, *“At night they rob other shrimp farms but in the day light they move like simple men – they seem poor and like very good people.”* Thus, the highlanders do not trust them and see them in negative light.

Vumihin leaders, due to their contribution to mobilize the land receivers during the movement period, became permanent *Vumihin* leaders among the land receivers. Because of their position, they got access to various GO, NGO and civil society organizations and local associations as their representatives and became influential in the local power structure. Besides raising their voices for the rights of the land receivers, they also abuse their power to make money through illegal activities. Most of the time, general land receivers are dependent on them and even deprived due to their unfair decisions.

Section 5: Market dynamics

After the landless movement, access to 1068 acres of land in four villages for 609 households shaped the existing market and provided opportunities for the land receivers. This section will explore the process of market development, how and in what ways the land receivers are taking advantage and what barriers still exist.

1. Process of market development

It was found from the discussion with the businessman that to engage in the business of fish depot one must have few fixed suppliers. Earlier, when there were only 4 waterbodies under mainly shrimp cultivation in the area, this business was limited. Now the depot holders shared that to start a depot business, one businessman needed to ensure the availability of at least 100 acres of shrimp farmland. If one land receiver's household possesses around 3 acres of fish farm, one has to confirm at least 25 to 30 shrimp farmers who would only sell their produce in the depot. So the introduction of a huge number of new shrimp farmers created the opportunity to start this business. As a result, many people started this business. Now there are 140 registered depots in the Gazirhaat market. With the high pace of business opportunities, new depot owners entered into the market close to the village. New formal markets established themselves– Baburabad in 1994, Zayedabad in 2000 and Nura Carkoni in 2004. Following the value chain of shrimp cultivation, many land receivers have entered in the chain as depot holders, retail dealers, fry businessmen and fish trap sellers. Besides different types of input business – fries, cow dung, different fertilizers, lime, fish feed, net, bamboo, different traps and water pumps like shallow tube wells and low lift pumps entered the market. Parallel to fisheries business, many other businesses have started like groceries, fuel, solar panel, motor bike etc due to local demand.

2. The potential benefits of market development for khasland receivers

2.1. Depot business competition ensured anytime loan to the khasland receivers:

From group discussion with the land receivers and informal interviews with the businessmen, we found that when the farm owner sold produce to this depot, the depot owner would get 100gm per kg as a commission. From this depot, the factory agent / supplier would buy the shrimp. It was designed so that the depot owners would have no loss at all. Thus, a competition started to offer incentives and build good relationships with the farm owners to start this business. To ensure supply of produce to the depot, the owners usually lend an interest free advance of up to BDT 1,000-15,000 to the fish farmers. This amount would help the producer to support production costs. Now the farm owners can take out interest free loans anytime from the depot. It was found that most of the farm owners have taken a loan and in many cases they take advance payment from other depots which is in violation of their business contract. But the depot owners usually cope with this unwanted situation as the fish farmers may stop their supply.

2.2. Fry business competition ensured credit incentive to the landless:

On one hand, the scope of shrimp fries business attracted many businessmen. On the other hand, the land receivers' fish farmers group shared a strategy of cultivation which is buying inputs as much as you can as there is a probability of a virus attack. They always prefer to repay loans or credit after harvesting which is two times in a month where each period consists of 5 to 7 days. So the agents of the local market and the village level hatcheries started to sell on full or partial credit to all farmers.

The business strategy of starting a credit system also allowed for an emerging local fry market. The input sellers confirmed that around ¾ of the total farmers buy shrimp fries from local level agents.

2.3. Access to land helped to become depot owners:

Due to good relationships, many khasland receivers gradually moved into this depot business. One of the *vumihin* leaders confirmed that there are 18 depots in Zayedabad, 5 in Baburabad, 6 in Nura Charkani and 6 in Gazirhaat Bazaar. Life history of one land receiver revealed that he received 1 acre of khasland in the late 90s. Besides shrimp farming, he started fish business in the Gazirhaat market in 1999. In 2005 he started his depot business. He contracted 25 shrimp farmers to ensure supply through *dadon* (advance payment) of one to five thousand taka. Now 40 farmers are selling their produce in his depot.

One vumihin leader said, "He is going to establish a new depot point in his village near their club since he has more than 40 fixed farm holders."

2.4. Changed market chains helped many land receivers to diversify their sources of income as retailers:

The land receivers' group said that on many occasions the farmers were receiving small amounts of produce and when they wanted to sell small amounts of shrimp they were unable to do so because of transportation time and the costs of getting to the market. As a result, a business opportunity emerged to buy produce at the domestic level at a lower price and sell to the depot or commission agent's centre. There are currently 152 retail dealers doing this business in the markets. Most of them are from *landless* villages. So, besides shrimp farming, these households benefit from a secondary source of income from this business. It was reported that many of these businessmen were also provided *dadon* (advance money) from the depot owners. In the same way, the shrimp farmers are taking *dadon* (advance money) from the retailers.

2.5. Many land receivers started fries and white fish business:

In the monsoon season, many farmers cultivate prawns and white fish as these are fresh water fishes. Among the landless villages, there are 10-12 prawn fry businessmen. They buy from the adjacent villages of the Bay of Bengal at wholesale rates and then sell to the villagers. One said, *"From mid April to mid June, I do this business every year. Last year I bought fries at the average rate of BDT 2500 per 1000 pieces and sold them for BDT 3000."*

In the case of white fish fries, the land receivers' group said that usually Hindu landless people of the community do this business in the area. They buy from Jessore at a wholesale price and sell in different waterbodies and ponds in different villages.

3. What barriers still exists?

The main source of income for the farmers is fisheries. They always prefer to repay in the harvesting period. There are many businesses which do not allow this kind of installment system like solar panel businesses led by mainly NGOs and water pump related devices – engines, pumps, pipe and pipe installation to get ground water.

With the intensity of salinity in surface water, water pumps are becoming popular among the villagers to cultivate prawns and white fish. Many people are preparing a portion of *gher* as ponds to keep the small white fishes and prawns that come out at the final harvest time of the year. Every now and then they pump water into the ponds. Also, if there is inadequate rainfall during monsoon it requires additional ground water. It was calculated by the *vumihin* leaders that 50% of the farm holders have a water pump of their own. One of the *vumihin* leaders said,

“If we could get a pump installed, which is payable after each shrimp harvest as instalment, most of the households would buy one to make their life easier.”

Section 6: Conclusion and Recommendation

This study shows how access to khasland in the study site is a strongly political process which has the potential to provide benefits to the landless through facilitating community interaction and creating better market opportunities for income diversification.

The analysis of the information gathered at the community level shows that khasland provides insurance and security through creating diverse income opportunities which can often mitigate the negative and long term impacts of shocks and allow khasland receivers to cope better with shocks. Moreover, the evidence collected at the community level suggests that khasland allocation provides incentives to women’s engagement with labouring activities, household asset management, as well as enhances their mobility within the village. Livelihood comparisons between khasland receivers and non receivers show that the income diversification effect of khasland and the potential for women to contribute to the household’s income gives beneficiaries the opportunity to save. Khasland receivers save higher amounts and have increased their assets more than non receivers(including those who are earning from migration to India). There is evidence that even those from the lower socioeconomic strata, such as beggars, can benefit from khasland to the extent where they do not have to take loans to access khasland.

Social setbacks may still have implications for retaining khasland. Such social setbacks depend on community norms and we learnt from our analysis of community dynamics that *vuminin* leaders are the key to achieving anything. Though their contribution is undeniable, they have a controversial role which is creating social insecurity to some extent. However, the leaders are negotiating with the external institutions and personnel to solve their community problems. The norm of *landless* has changed. Now the father of a girl at *daanga* wants to marry off his daughter, which was previously unheard of. Being a landholder has changed their identity and they can now reap the benefits of the market. It is evident that using one large piece of land to provide individual plots of khasland has changed the structure of the market. As a producer, they are taking benefits of emergency financial support from the selling point. Different secondary sources of income have been opened and many households are working as petty traders, fry sellers, fish trap sellers and even depot holders. The villagers are getting incentives based on the nature of competitive markets and this has created an enabling environment in the existing input and output market.

The collective movement played a pivotal role in shaping the livelihoods of land receivers. By following a similar process and organizing a community movement to get the landless access to khasland, similar benefits may be realized. If this is possible, then thousands of beneficiaries out of the 11816 Phase 1 of Uttaran-shiree project may not be denied permanent lease.

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Annex 1: Study Participants and method

Sl.no.	Method	Khasland receivers		Non Khasland receivers		Market actors	Opinion Leaders	Total Participants
		MHH	FHH	MHH	FHH			
1.	Group Discussion*	10	10	10	10	-	10	50
2.	Life History Interview	8	7	7	5	-	-	27
3.	Informal Interview	-	-	-	-	10		10
Total		18	17	17	15	10	10	87

*Each group discussion contains 10 participants

Annex 2: Livelihood calendar before receiving khasland

Livelihood potions	Apr-May	May-Jun	Jun-Jul	Jul-Aug	Aug-Sep	Sep-Oct	Oct-Nov	Nov-Dec	Dec-Jan	Jan-Feb	Feb-Mar	Mar-Apr
	Boishak	Joistho	Ashar	Srabon	Bhadro	Ashin	Kartik	Agrahayan	Poush	Magh	Falgun	Chaitra
Earth work	√	√										
Clearing social forest	√	√										
Repairing roof of the hut	√	√										
Ploughing land			√	√								
Preparing divider of land			√	√								
Rice transplanting				√								
Rice Planting, weed controlling					√	√	√					
Rice harvesting								√	√			

Annex 3: Present gender segregated Livelihood calendar of khasland receivers and non receivers²⁵

Livelihood potions		Apr-May	May-Jun	Jun-Jul	Jul-Aug	Aug-Sep	Sep-Oct	Oct-Nov	Nov-Dec	Dec-Jan	Jan-Feb	Feb-Mar	Mar-Apr
		Boishak	Joistho	Ashar	Srabon	Bhadro	Ashin	Kartik	Agrahayan	Poush	Magh	Falgun	Chaitra
Fish farming	Male	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√
	Female	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√
Cleaning water hyacinth	Male	√	√										√
	Female	√				√	√	√					
Putting cow dung	Male									√			
	Female												
Paddy harvesting	Male									√			√
	Female												
Paddy harvesting/grinding/boiling	Male												
	Female								√	√			√
Catching fish in other shrimp farm	Male								√	√			
	Female												

²⁵ The non receivers' landless households are not concentrated in a village like the land receivers. They are more scattered and their livelihood pattern is more diversified than the land receivers which depends on their expertise of work and the availability of working opportunities. Their working opportunities also vary depending on geographical location, age, sex and market.

Harvesting Mustard	Male												
	Female									√			
Rice plantation	Male												
	Female			√						√			
Potato Harvesting	Male												
	Female									√			
Rebuilding farm boundary	Male								√	√			
	Female								√	√			
Earth work	Male			√									
	Female									√			
Sparying lime	Male												
	Female									√			
Putting Fertilizer	Male												
	Female									√			
Weeding in paddy field	Male												
	Female			√							√		
Separating shrimp head	Male												
	Female	√									√		
Transplanting Guti Urea	Male												
	Female										√		
Catching Crab	Male												
	Female				√	√	√						