



## Background to Nilphamari District

The Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP) aims to improve the livelihoods, incomes and food security of at least one million extreme poor men, women and children residing on the remote char islands of North West Bangladesh. The first phase of the programme, known as CLP-1, operated in the districts of Bogra, Gaibandha, Jamalpur, Kurigram and Sirajganj. The second phase, CLP-2, will continue to operate in the two northern districts of Gaibandha and Kurigram, as well as moving into five new districts: Rangpur, Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari (from late 2010) and Pabna and Tangail (from 2013). This brief is part of a

set of five, whose aim is to provide background information on the new working districts of CLP-2 to relevant stakeholders.



Nilphamari district has a total area of 1,581 square kilometres and a population of 1,572,000, or 335,000 households. It comprises 6 upazilas, 94 unions, 3 municipalities and 370 villages<sup>1</sup>. Nilphamari district is

bordered by Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh.

Map taken from <http://www.bangla2000.com/bangladesh/Districts/nilphamari.shtml>

### Key Demographic Statistics<sup>2</sup>

Average household size	4.66 members (versus national average of 4.72)
Male/female population ratio	106 males for every 100 females
% of population tribal	0.25
Marriage registration, last 3 years	86.9%
Birth registration, children under 5 years	2.4%
Average age of marriage for men	22.16 years
Average age of marriage for women	17.52 years

**Chars in Nilphamari district:** Chars are temporary sand islands formed in or along the banks of rivers. Island chars are surrounded by water all or most of the year, whilst attached chars are attached to the mainland all or most of the year. Thus the former are

<sup>1</sup> BBS (2009a), based on 2001 census

<sup>2</sup> All figures are from BBS (2009a) and based on the 2001 census, except for household size and marriage age which is from BBS (2009c) and birth registration, which are from UNICEF and BBS (2004)

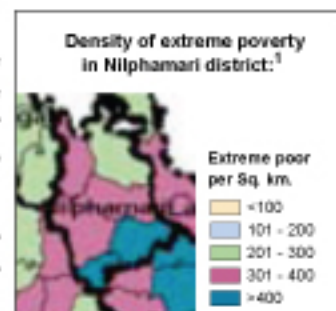
characterised by particular remoteness and environmental instability, meaning poverty levels are especially pervasive.

In Nilphamari district, there are 17 island char villages and 2 attached char villages, which are found in 2 of the district's 6 upazilas, as follows: Jaldhaka (9 island char villages and 1 attached char villages, under 4 unions) and Dimla (8 island char villages and 1 attached char villages, under 5 unions). CLP2 will work with selected<sup>3</sup> households in all island char villages. In total, these villages are expected to contain 8,879 households<sup>4</sup>.

### Poverty in Nilphamari District

According to the 2005 HIES:

- 71% of the population were below the upper poverty line (Tk. 731.73 per capita per month), compared to 40% nationally
- 55% were below the lower poverty line (Tk. 646.51 per capita per month), compared to 25.1% nationally<sup>5</sup>.



### Food Security and Nutrition

Food poverty and child nutrition statistics are comparable to national figures:

- 40-50% of under 5s are stunted (i.e. have low height for age), compared to 51.1% nationally
- Incidence of underweight children in some upazilas reaches up to 55% compared to 48.8% nationally
- 10-20% of Nilphamari's population suffers from hard-core food poverty (i.e. their calorie intake is lower than the recommended minimum of 1805 kcal/day)

**57% of households in Nilphamari are involved in farming, of which the vast majority (86%) are smallholdings<sup>6</sup>.**

**Education Statistics<sup>7</sup>** The table below compares Nilphamari district with national averages for key education statistics:

	Nilphamari district		National average	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Net primary enrolment (%)	76.8	84.8	81.1	84.4
6-10 year olds never enrolled in school (%)	19.1	13.1	14.8	12.8
Literacy rate 7+years (%)	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
	56	46	51	69

<sup>3</sup> according to CLP selection criteria

<sup>4</sup> This data was collected by CLP's Implementing Organisations (IOs); for information on the spatial and union breakdown of those villages, contact CLP's Innovation, Monitoring and Learning division at [info@clp-bangladesh.org](mailto:info@clp-bangladesh.org)

<sup>5</sup> World Bank, WFP and BBS (2005), poverty calculated using Cost of Basic Needs Method, based on HIES 2005 data

<sup>6</sup> BBS (2009a)

<sup>7</sup> BBS and UNICEF (2004), except literacy rate, which is from BBS (2009a)





## NGO Activities

CLP undertook a mapping exercise to investigate NGO activities in Nilphamari district over the past four years. Mapping revealed that a number of international and national NGOs have operated in Nilphamari district. Whilst not a complete list, some of the main NGOs who have been working in various areas are as follows:

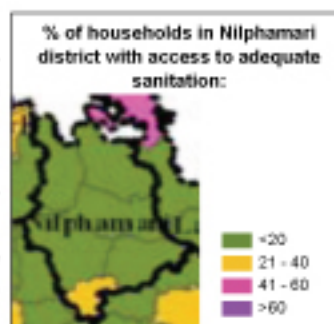
NGO	Social mobilisation	Microfinance	Asset transfer	Market development	Plinth raising	Water and sanitation	Other infrastructure	Health	Education	Agriculture
ASCD	X							X		X
BRAC			X					X	X	
BRIF	X		X	X		X		X		X
CARE	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Concern	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X
CUK-Gaibandha	X									
JSKS	X		X	X	X	X	X			X
MISUK	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
PLAN	X	X				X		X	X	X
POPI	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
RDRS	X	X			X			X	X	X
SERP	X			X		X		X	X	X
SKS	X			X				X		X
UDPS	X		X							X

## Infrastructure, Hygiene and Sanitation Statistics<sup>a</sup>

The information below compares Nilphamari district with national averages for key infrastructure, hygiene and sanitation statistics:

- 74% of the population live in tin/wooden dwellings, compared with 57% nationally, 14% in bamboo homes, versus 6% nationally, 11% in semi-pacca dwellings, compared with 13% nationally, and 1% in buildings, versus 9% nationally
- Less than 20% of households have access to electricity, compared to 30% nationally
- Open defecation is well above the national average of 19.3%, at 69.6%
- 19.8% had heard of the issue of arsenic contamination of water, versus a national average of 76.1%
- 97.7% of tubewells have not been tested for arsenic, compared to a national average of 40.2%
- 47.5% use water and ash when washing their hands, whilst 8.4% use water and soap, versus national averages of 20% and 19.3% respectively

This brief was produced in July 2010. For more information on the Chars Livelihoods Programme, see the website [www.clp-bangladesh.org](http://www.clp-bangladesh.org), or contact the CLP's Innovation, Monitoring and Learning Division on [info@clp-bangladesh.org](mailto:info@clp-bangladesh.org)



<sup>a</sup> BBS and Unicef (2004), except for dwellings figures, which are from BBS (2009c), and map, which is from WFP (2004)

## Infants and children in Nilphamari district

The infant mortality rate (IFR) has been classified by the Government of Bangladesh's Planning Commission as 'very high', at 66.9 per 1000 live births, against a national average of 43 per 1000 live births. Furthermore, whilst the country overall has seen a significant reduction in the IFR between 1998 and 2007, Nilphamari is one of the two districts in which the rate has actually gone up during this period (Ahmad et al, 2010). The other District is Rangpur.

According to a child risk measure developed by UNICEF and the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Nilphamari is rated 17th out of the country's 64 districts.

**Health Statistics<sup>a</sup>** The table below compares Nilphamari district with national averages for key health statistics:

	Nilphamari district	National average
Rural households using contraception (%)	95.5	51
Prevalence of disability (per 1000 people)	8.07	8.96
Exclusive breastfeeding rate, children under 4 months (%)	4.7	11.6
Measles immunisation coverage in rural areas, children aged 12-23 months (%)	84.1	83.4
Diarrhoea prevalence over last 15 days, under 5s (%) - boys	27.6	24.8
Diarrhoea prevalence over last 15 days, under 5s (%) - girls	28.7	22.2
Iodised salt consumption, rural areas (%)	60.7	69.6
At least one antenatal visit during last pregnancy, rural areas (%)	50.3	42.3
Last delivery assisted by doctor/nurse/midwife/trained TBA or FWV	19.7	25.4

## References

- Ahmed, Mostafizul Gaire et al (2010), Infant mortality situation in Bangladesh in 2007: a district level analysis
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