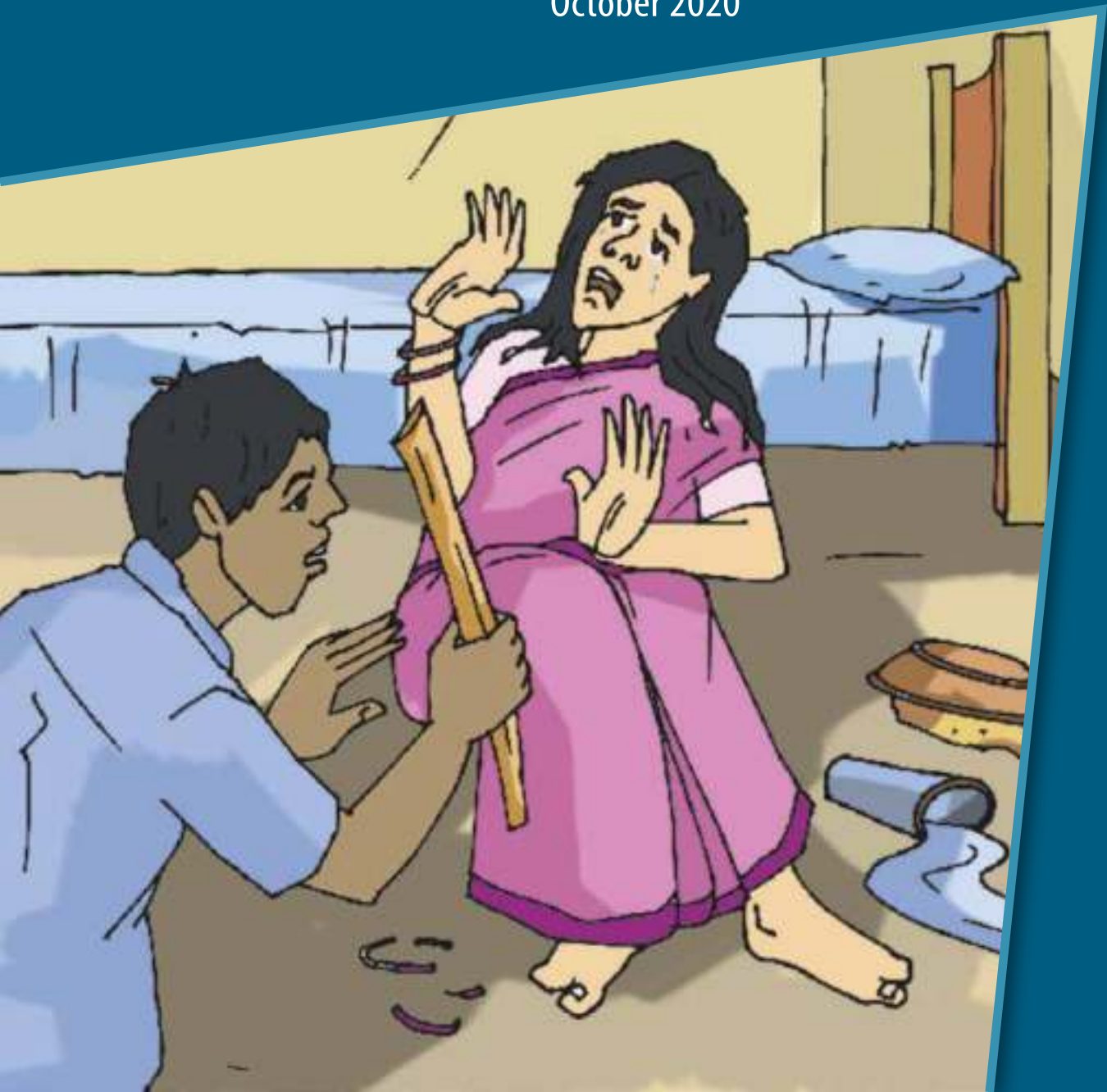


Baseline Study Report

# Confront Land Displacement Induced Violence against Women and Girls Project

October 2020



# Acknowledgements

This baseline study has been carried out in partnership with United Nations Trust Fund to end violence against women and girls.

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Front cover image: This sketch was drawn by one artist Yusuf Hira preparing flipchart on VAW

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## Abbreviations

BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DC	District Commissioner
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HH	Household
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
UP	Union Parishad
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAWG	Violence Against Women & Girls

## Executive Summary

Badabon Sangho - a women's rights organization working in the Southwest region of Bangladesh, has commissioned this report of the baseline study on Confront Land Displacement Induced Violence against Women and Girls Project. The objectives of the baseline survey are:

- I. To develop a baseline of selected indicators – that were set under the project on violence against women and girls;
- II. Guiding the assessment, the changes on violence against women and girls at the end of the project;
- III. Assist in explaining the issue of violence against women concerning land rights abuse, ownership conflict, and disputes; and
- IV. Suggest policy options for improving security and enhanced rights of women and girls.

To fulfill the objectives of the study, data/evidence has been collected utilizing qualitative and quantitative approaches; these are through semi-structured interviews, Focus Group discussions (FGD), case story collection, and Household (HH) surveys. After qualitative data/evidence collection and analyses, the HH survey was conducted through interviews with project stakeholders in Rampal, Fakirhat, and Mangla Upazila of Bagerhat district. The focused areas were- Rajnagar, Hudka, Betaga, Lakhpur, and Burirdanga union.

The land-induced VAWG is evident from the study's qualitative and quantitative findings caused by recent developmental displacement in the area. It has been found that 42% of the respondents are anxious about VAWG for themselves or their family members, and 40% of women did not respond. The reason behind this concern is that one-fourth of the respondents said that their known person had experienced VAWG, and one-fifth of respondents' own / family members are victims of VAWG in the concerned area. The lack of land literacies among the women has perpetuated discrimination, deprivation, and VAW in the study area. A majority (53%) of the respondents have no idea how to collect a succession certificate and do not know about the mutation process (60%); found in the HH survey. The women respondents feel that they have obstacles receiving services from the union land office, UP, police station, and legal aid committee.

To address land-induced VAWG problems and develop an enabling environment for vulnerable women, the targeted women need to have sufficient knowledge and capacity-building support in the following areas. sectors:

- Land ownership, land documentation, and succession certificate;
- In case of land disputes, what measures should they take, what they will do and where they will go, to seek support or to file complaints;
- Knowledge and awareness about support mechanism of legal aid committee;
- Available services in the police station, land office, union parishad, and legal aid committees for women;
- The gender sensitivity of police station, land office, UP, and legal aid committee;
- The demand and supply-side capacity gaps of the legal aid committee needs to be eliminated; and
- Capacity-building support for legal aid committee members, police, UP members, union land office on gender, gender-based violence or VAW, and land induced VAWG.

## 1. Context and Background

This is a baseline study Report for the baseline study on Confront Land Displacement Induced Violence against Women and Girls Project has been implemented by Badabon Sangho, a women rights organization with UN Trust Fund's support in four unions in the southwest region of Bangladesh. The project's goal is that the women and girls who are affected and vulnerable to land rights abuse and displacement-induced physical and mental violence are protected and supported (along with succession certificate and legal aid support).

Badabon Sangho is a women's rights organization that has been working on women land rights and violence against women (VAW) in four unions - Rampal and Fakirhat Upazila of Bagerhat district in the southwest region of Bangladesh; the project areas of conflict and VAW caused by displacement due to loss of land ownership and conflict developed from shrimp cultivation and also from the public, private investment on different development projects in the area. (The underlined sentence requires more clarity and rephrasing to convey the appropriate meaning).

In the last decade, Bangladesh has made significant strides in many dimensions of gender equality by creating opportunities for women and girls from all walks of life. These prospects have created a reduction in fertility rates, achieved gender parity in schooling, and paved the way for millions of women to work in the garments sector. Even though Bangladeshi women make huge contributions every day in the country's economic development, gender gaps remain a rampant issue. Social and economic barriers prevent many women from accessing and deciding on the use of assets, including land, housing, and livestock. Lifting these barriers will help Bangladesh achieve its ambition of accelerated growth and development. Violence against women (VAW) has been a severe social, cultural, and economic problem in Bangladesh. Nearly two out of three women have experienced gender-based violence during their lifetime, and domestic violence is a common, though mostly underreported, occurrence.<sup>1</sup>

The incidence of VAW is high in rural Bangladesh, which is about 74%. The likelihood of increased development displacement caused by shrimp cultivation and public investment has contributed to the risk of VAW in the region. Due to saline intrusion, shrimp farming, and public and private land investment on land and water bodies, the local people are being provoked to sell their lands. A vast network of land brokers engaged in the land ownership transfer and have been greatly responsible for creating disputes and conflicts in the concerned areas.

The local community's displacement has accelerated due to the establishment of the Rampal power plant and other government projects; industrialists are forcing small farmers and poor villagers to sell their lands and move out. According to a newspaper report, the affected villagers migrated to Khulna and other cities after most of them had found no other alternative to selling their lands. This trend started after the Government decided to set up a massive coal-fired power plant at Sapmari in Rampal, a food grain silo, and a naval dockyard at Jaymani village in Mongla. Encouraged by the government moves, private companies have so far purchased around 3,000 acres of land in that area, mainly through adopting illegal and unfair means. The marginalized section of the society is the principal and worst victim of this dispossession and displacement.<sup>2</sup>

Women own land at much lower rates than men in rural Bangladesh. Rural women inherit land much less frequently and in smaller shares than urban women, especially the middle-class urban women. Even if women inherit the land, they face more obstacles than men in registering and legally owning their land, including paying high fees for land registration, which requires the permission of their husbands or other male members of the family as the women are not financially independent. Other drawbacks are procedural obstacles and limited mobility to travel to government offices. Natal families also worry about losing land if given to daughters who could register the land in the names of husbands or children, reflecting the strength of clan-based, patrilineal customary practices instead of religious law that supports women's inheritance and ownership. Women's agricultural land ownership appears to be more determined by their relationships with men (fathers, brothers, husbands) than their ownership of other assets.<sup>4</sup> (requires rephrasing to give the intended meaning).

**Box 1: We had all sorts of facilities in our previous place; now everything has changed.**

I am Rebeka Mandal (F, 29), Hudka Maddy Para, Rampal, Bagerhat. My husband is a day laborer. In 2017, a railway project of 'Khulna-Mongla' rail line was to be constructed. I had my property crossed in that project. As it was a government project, I had it to sell to the government. The acquisition took place with my living place. So, I had to leave that place. I got 2 lac 70 thousand taka from Bagerhat (??? Who from Bagherhat) for my property. I had to bribe the agents to get the money. As soon as we get the money, we bought a land at 2 lac s taka. As we had to settle in a new place, many of our clothes, assets, goods from pervious house got damaged. That time it was very difficult for us to survive. I built a house alone as my husband was ill at that time, it cost TK. 2 lac. (Please be more specific; what cost 2 lacs BDT? Your husband's medication or construction of your house?) I even had to sell my furniture, goat, 6 ducks, and 30 chickens when I left that place. I had nothing remaining in my hand. My family became financially weak and we are in difficulties living in the new place. My husband earns some money; it is not enough to maintain family expenses. Earning is difficult here. We had every facilities in our previous place. The market was very close to our house.

My husband could earn easily. Life was very comfortable there. But now everything has changed. We hardly get any privileges from this new place. At this critical time, none helped us. Now, I want my children to continue study and be a good person and self- reliant aiming to get back everything what we lost.

The women landowners become the easy victims of land conflict, violence, and displacement. Consequently, women become vulnerable and eventually deprived of land rights, becoming the victims of violence. The women concerned have less mobility and lack of awareness regarding their access to land and other fundamental rights. Mostly, women and girls are afraid to move alone, report violence, and seek public and social agencies' support. This baseline survey aims to develop a benchmark for starting the project to measure the output after completing it. It will guide program planning, extended strategy development, and result evaluation.

## 2. Scope and Objectives of The Baseline Study

### 2.1 Scope of the study

Collection and analyses of pre-intervention data describing the project's objective; and a snapshot of indicators in line with project's outcomes and outputs.

The scope of the baseline survey are as follows:

- I. Violence against women and girls were reported and put in the legal framework with land rights abuse and displacement
- II. The perspective of women and girls participating in the project, about their access to and support received from the police, local elected bodies of Union Parishads and land officials; especially on GBV-related land-rights cases;
- III. Women leadership in the project areas are able to go to the police station, land office, and Union Parishad to support other women and girls;
- IV. The perspective of women and girls participating in the project, awareness on land ownership literacy and land documentation and succession certificate
- V. Upazila and district legal aid committee members in the project areas have an understanding on land induced violence against women
- VI. The perspective of local elected bodies participating in the project areas informed on issues and challenges women face related to VAW legal information and succession certificate and maintaining a local database in succession ownership
- VII. The perspective of police officers and land officials in the project areas informed women's issues and challenges related to VAW.

### 2.2 Objectives of the baseline survey

1. To develop a baseline of selected indicators – that were set under the project on violence against women and girls;
2. Guiding the assessment, the changes on violence against women and girls at the end of the project;
3. Assist in explaining the issue of violence against women concerning land rights abuse, ownership conflict, and disputes; and
4. Suggest policy options for improving security and enhanced rights of women and girls.

## 3. Methodology

The design of the baseline study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. After qualitative data/evidence collection and analyses, the Household (HH) survey was conducted through an interview schedule.

The study team engaged with the primary stakeholders of the project. The primary stakeholder, the women landowners, were the key decision-makers in the study process, analyzing causal relationships in changes and transformation and the overview of the project area changes due to public and private investment and development interventions.



### *Study location, sampling and sources of data*

Five unions of Rampal, Fakirhat, and Mangla Upazila of Bagerhat district have been covered under the study; these unions are Rajnagar, Hudka, Betaga, Lakhpur, and Burirdanga, respectively. Among the project areas, the severely affected people and areas were selected preferably. The sampling was purposively finalized with the project teams' consultation and based on the desk review and secondary data findings.

Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Preliminary data was collected from primary project stakeholders, affected/vulnerable women landowners due to land investment, local government representatives, CSO actors, union land officers, district committee members of legal aid, panel lawyers, and office staff.

After utilizing the qualitative approaches of data collection, a Household (HH) survey with 200 respondents was conducted with interviews schedule on primary project stakeholders, that is the women of the study area. Multi-stage stratified random sampling was conducted in selecting the respondents; single women household head was selected preferentially for HH survey. The baseline value of the indicators has been prepared on the basis of findings of the HH survey with qualitative reflections found from observation, interview, and FGD.

## **4. Structure of the Report**

This baseline study report is divided into four chapters.

In Chapter One, the study design is introduced.

Chapter two presents the context of gender and land rights in Bangladesh, contextualizing the study areas - Rampal and Fakirhat Upazila describing the area's historical and land investment context. It also presents the factors of land-induced displacement and violence against women and girls.

Chapter three presents the overview and performance status of government services institutes related to land conflict to combat violence against women and girls aligned with the project documents' indicators.

Chapter four draws conclusions and recommendations based on findings and analyses mentioned in Chapter two and three.

## 2.1 Women And Land Rights In Bangladesh

### *Gender norms and relations*

The gender relations in Bangladesh are typified by classic patriarchy, under which "girls are given away in marriage at a very young age into households headed by their husband's father. There, they become subordinates not only to all the men but also to the senior women, especially their mothers-in-law. Traditional patriarchy produces a system in which men and boys claim superiority to women and girls in nearly all aspects of life, exercising control over women and girls across the life cycle: girls are the first subordinate to boys as sisters and to men as daughters, and later, after marrying, as wives or daughters-in-law. Some scholars argue that such subordination gives power to women and girls' perception as private property—and specifically commodities that can be sold, bought, or exchanged by men—who are entirely deprived of the rights and dignity enjoyed by men and boys. Gender norms related to religious and other cultural factors continue to constrain women's mobility and use of transport, particularly in rural areas, which influences ownership, registration, and control of land by women.

In addition to land, housing is a crucial asset for women as a store of wealth as well as a means of generating income—for example, home production of goods and services—as women's enterprises tend to be home-based. Yet globally, women generally access land through male relatives (Klugman et al. 2014) and exercise only subordinate rights, making them vulnerable in the event of breakdowns in relationships, divorces, and male landowners' changing priorities (UN-HABITAT 2008). Even where women have equal rights to land, religious and social or customary restrictions often prevent them from claiming or controlling the land.

### *Gender gaps in land ownership*

Land in Bangladesh remains mostly owned and/or controlled by men, which constrains women's decision-making and productivity as well as their access to extension services and credit, as discussed in later sections. The FAO's gender and land rights database shows that women own only 10.1 percent of Bangladesh's agricultural land in terms of area (FAO n.d.).

## Causes Of Gender Gaps In Land Ownership

The following section lists factors associated with gender gaps.

### *Gender bias in inheritance*

Inheritance is the primary channel through which one gains access to land in Bangladesh. Whereas statutory laws on land rights and ownership are gender-neutral in the country, customary laws and cultural norms guide ownership in ways that favor men's ownership and control over land.<sup>1</sup>

According to Islamic law, "The provision in Islam is that the girl will get one portion from three, and the brother will get two portions from their father because women also inherit property from their husbands".<sup>2</sup> Under Muslim law, the wife (or wives) gets one-eighth if there is one child, and one-fourth if

<sup>1</sup> Voices to Choices, Bangladesh Journey in Women's Economic Empowerment, World Bank 2019, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30881?deliveryName=DM15148&locale-attribute=es>

<sup>2</sup> Interview with a Imam, local Islamic leader

there is no child from her husband's estate though the husband gets precisely double. Mother gets from the estate of her son's one sixth-when there is a child of her son or when there are two or more brothers or sisters or one brother or one sister of her son, and one third when there is no child and not more than one brother or sister of her son. On the other hand, the father gets from the estate of his son one-sixth if there be a child of his son and in the absence of any child of his son; he gets the entire residue after satisfying other sharers claim, so forth. Significantly, Muslim Law says that daughter, mother, and wife would under all circumstances be entitled to some share in the inheritance and are not liable to exclusion from the estate. However, women are not treated equally with their male counterparts, i.e., son, father and husband and to the extent of discriminatory inheritance rules. Hindu women are deprived of equal rights due to the existence of the non-amended personal law, which does not allow equal rights of women in various aspects of life even though constitutionally, women are bestowed with equal rights in the social and political arena. Hindu law, culture, and patriarchal society deny Hindu women's individual identity.<sup>3</sup>

Although inheritance is the main source of households' land acquisition in rural Bangladesh, the differences between how much land women versus men have the right to inherit and how they are programmed to accept (if allowed by the male members) and use the inheritance are the key contributors to gender gaps. The vast majority of inherited land is from the husband's family, exceeding inheritance from the wife's family by a factor of ten. Khas land is public land owned by the Government, often allocated to poor or landless households. The data suggest that women in rural Bangladesh rarely receive and retain inheritance in the form of land. Given the overwhelming Muslim majority in Bangladesh, hereditament is generally guided by Muslim Personal Law. Despite females having these rights to inheritance according to personal law, they are not necessarily receiving their rightful property shares.<sup>4</sup>

#### ***Gender Constraint in land ownership***<sup>5</sup>

- I. Family and society pressurize sisters to give up their shares of inheritance to brothers.
- II. Fear of losing a good relationship with natal families - brothers and sisters and sometimes societal pressure as "society doesn't recognize it if sister takes inheritance share from brothers". "Women usually do not claim their inheritance from their parents unless they are compelled to. Those who do claim are not usually welcome at their brothers' houses. They do not want to risk jeopardizing their relationships with their brothers." "We feel bad, but we have no choice," said one participant during FGD.
- III. The general practice is that "the brothers appeal to the sisters to accept an arbitrary amount of money in exchange for the sisters' shares of the property. The brothers claim that they are unable to pay more and that the sisters should legally give up their claims in return for the money received. The sisters are asked to allow the land to be registered in the brothers' names. Usually, the sisters cannot refuse."
- IV. The low-income family owns a minimal amount of land, and if sisters take their rightful share, brothers will be in difficulties. Considering this factor, sometimes sisters don't claim father's property.
- V. Some families say that fathers' expenses during girls' daughters' wedding are high due to dowry; they treat dowry as substitutions for women's share of inheritance to justify not allocating the rightful share to daughters. Because the bride's family pays dowry to the groom's family in marriage, and the son's family traditionally is responsible for parents' care, parents are reluctant to give land to daughters after they marry.

<sup>3</sup> Scoping Study on Women and Land Rights in Bangladesh, Land Watch Asia Campaign of ANGO, October 2013

<sup>4</sup> Voices to Choices, Bangladesh Journey in Women's Economic Empowerment, World Bank 2019, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30881?deliveryName=DM15148&locale-attribute=es>

<sup>5</sup> Interview and FGD during field visit

- VI. The women told in FGD that they would give equal share among girls and boys. (Simple sentences should be used to convey exact meaning). Some families perceive that it is costly to have a daughter married off since dowry is a significant factor in rural marriage. Fathers and the society itself use it as an escape route to deprive daughters of their rightful shares as lots of money is spent on their grand weddings and dowry.

Traditional masculine and feminine roles underlie the disapproval of communities and families toward women's control and ownership of productive assets, as these are considered to be traditionally men's roles.

### **Difficulty registering land under women's names**

- Land registration remains highly gendered, with land purchased by families generally registered only in the name of the male heads of households. Registering land under women's names often creates a sense of threat for men that women will become "out of control" and that gender norms within the family will be upended. Women do not want to challenge these norms. Even when women purchase land, the brothers and sisters of the husband create pressure to register the land under the husband or son's name. Some husbands pressurize their wives to register wives' property in husbands' names; otherwise, separation or divorce threats become common practices.
- Land registration fees are high, which is a notable disadvantage own income. Even women who have been allocated land as part of their inheritance reports that their inability to pay the registration fee prevents them from registering the land under their names. Procedural obstacles also limit female land ownership in Bangladesh. Bangladesh's land titling and registration system are inefficient, expensive, and prone to corruption (USAID 2010).
- Gender norms against women owning property, as discussed in the above section, also prevent women from registering land under their names. These norms are encouraged by (a) women's perceptions that their husbands' assets are also their assets and (b) the relative ease of transaction if the property is registered under a male name.
- Illiteracy, ignorance about land administration, and brokers / dalals perpetuate the deprivation of poor women from land rights.

## **2.2 Women And Land Rights – Context Of Rmpal And Fakirhat**

Rampal and Fakirhat are two important Upazilas of Bagerhat district under the South West region of Bangladesh, as names of these areas are mentioned in the media due to recent development initiatives taken here by both the private and public sectors.

**Table 2.1: Characteristics of Ramphal and Fakirhat Upazila**

Rampal Upazila	Fakirhat Upazila
Area: 335.4559 sq.km	Area: 335.4559 sq.km
Total Population: 167070; male 50.83% and female 49.17%; Muslim 75.31%, Hindu 24.42%, others 0.27%	Total Population: 167070; male 50.83% and female 49.17%; Muslim 75.31%, Hindu 24.42%, others 0.27%
Male: 77504, Female: 77461	Male: 77504, Female: 77461
Population density: 462/sq.km	Population density: 462/sq.km
Population growth rate: -1.38	Population growth rate: -1.38
Total agricultural land: 27,644 hectare	Total agricultural land: 27,644 hectare

Source: <http://rampal.bagerhat.gov.bd/>, <http://fakirhat.bagerhat.gov.bd/>, <http://www.bagerhatinfo.com/>

The distinct character of Rampal and Fakirhat as reflected in the above table.

1. A low population density compares to the national average; Population density (people per sq. km of land area) in Bangladesh was reported at 1240 sq. Km in 2018.
2. Very small size land for agricultural cultivation and mostly one seasonal crop
3. The high rate of poverty including extreme /hardcore poverty; High rate of poverty leads to trafficking of women and girls
4. A higher portion of the religious minority population compare to the national average
5. Dependent on shrimp culture; The gher creates spaces for sexual repression of women
6. The population growth rate is less than the national average; In Rampal Upazila, the population growth rate negatively reflects the distinct characteristics of the area.

These distinct characteristics are evident in the selected four (04) unions, Hudka, Rajnagar, Lakhpur, and Betaga union under Rampal and Fakirhat (Table??& Table??). These characteristics made these areas unlivable and hotspots for violence against women and girls.

**Table 2.2: Characteristics of selected unions under Rampal Upazila**

Hudka Union	Rajnagar
<p>Area: 17.66 sq.km</p> <p>Population: 10490, Male: 5100, Female: 5390</p> <p>Occupation &amp; income: Extreme poor 30%, poor:50%, Middle class 7%, Upper class/rich 3%,</p> <p>60% peasants, day laborer (gher) 20%, business 5% and service (employed) 5%</p> <p>Arable land: Single crop/one season: 1200 acre</p> <p>Two season: 200 acre, fellow land: 500 acre, fishing/gher: 10,000 acre</p>	<p>Area: 30.18sq.km</p> <p>Population: 14143, Male: 7389, Female: 6754</p> <p>Occupation &amp; income: Extreme poor 30%, poor:50%, Middle class 7%, Upper class/rich 3%,</p> <p>60% peasants, day laborer (gher) 20%, business 5% and service (employed) 5%</p> <p>Arable land: Single crop/one season: 900acre</p> <p>Two season: 50 acre, fellow land: 350 acre, fishing/gher: 11,000 acre</p>

**Table 2.3: Characteristics of selected unions under Fakirhat Upazila**

Lakhpur Union	Betaga Union
<p>Area: 18.35 sq.km</p> <p>Population: 20664, Male: 11096, Female: 9550</p> <p>Occupation &amp; income: Extreme poor 30%, poor:50%, Middle class 7%, Upper class/rich 3%,</p> <p>60% peasants, day laborer (gher) 20%, business 5% and service (employed) 5%</p> <p>Arable land: Single crop/one season: 1400 acre</p> <p>Two seasons: 285-acre, fellow land: 350-acre, fishing/gher: 12,000 acres</p>	<p>Area:23 sq.km</p> <p>Population: 15892, Male: 8077, Female: 57815</p> <p>Arable land: Total:3020 acre, Homestead: 1535 acre</p>

In Bangladesh, gender roles are defined by strict social norms which prescribe and perpetuate women's subordination to men by imposing limits on their mobility, decision-making authority, and access to opportunities, entitlements, and basic services. Violence against women (VAW) in various forms is widespread and is a significant manifestation of men's control over women. Gender roles are changing in Southwest Bangladesh, in part due to the devastating impacts of cyclones Sidr and Aila, which forced women to take up work outside the home to meet their families' needs for subsistence. However, women and girls in the southwest continue to be highly marginalized and vulnerable due to strongly-held cultural norms, including the concept of 'honor', which constrain and stigmatize women working outside the home and place them at risk of violence both within and outside their own homes. Practices of dowry, early marriage and polygamy, which are socially accepted as unavoidable, place adolescent girls and younger women at exceptionally high risks of domestic violence. Women and girls are also disproportionately vulnerable to both rapid- and slow-onset natural disasters due to the gendered and negative impacts of such events on access to safe water, sanitation, health and hygiene, food security, and the risks of sexual abuse and violence for women displaced from their homes. The high rate of male out-migration from the region contributes to social instability. It results in increased workload, responsibilities, and risks (e.g., abandonment by their husbands and/or exploitation) for women left behind.

### **Box 2: My brothers cheated me!**

I am Rahela Begum (F), Town Noapara, Bagerhat. My husband died in 2012. I sold my paternal property to my brothers 4-5 years ago. I sold 5 decimals of property out of 7. I didn't want to sell my properties but I had to. My stepdaughter demanded the portion of her property. She wanted to sell the property in which I have the most portion. So, I offered her not to sell to the outsiders. I wanted to buy the portion. I wanted to manage the money by selling my paternal property. I was not willing to sell my paternal properties. But the sudden decision of my stepdaughter to sell her properties made me do so. I had no other option but had to ask my brothers for my portion because I never wanted any outsider in to have access to my property.

I went to my brothers, asked them to give my portion, but they refused to give me. do so. We are two brothers and six sisters. My eldest brother refused to give me the property. He misbehaved with me saying "You won't get any portion from father's property, even if you get some, the portion of property is very little ". He even insisted me to sell my portion to him. He offered me a very little amount against the lands. I refused at first. But finally, I decided to sell the portion to him. He offered me 25000 taka against my 6 Katha field. He gave me 20000 taka and 5000 taka is still due. The price of the property is about 2 lakhs taka. I have only about 16 -17 Katha amount of lands which I got from my husband.

Now, I am mentally very depressed, I have lost all my paternal properties and my brothers cheated me. They did not give me actual price of the land. I never complained about it; though they are still owe to me TK. 5000. I did not want to have any bitterness with my brothers though they caused me a great loss. Some of my friends and neighbors offered me to sell it outside my blood relation. Relationship is priority to me, not money.

## 2.3 Status Of Vawg In The Study Area – Findings From Qualitative And Household Survey

### *Findings From HH Survey*

Interview schedule was conducted among 200 women under four (04) unions of Ramphal and Fakirhat upazila mentioned above.

#### 2.3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

The mean age of the respondents is 41.2 years; ranging from 23 to 68 years (Table 2.4).

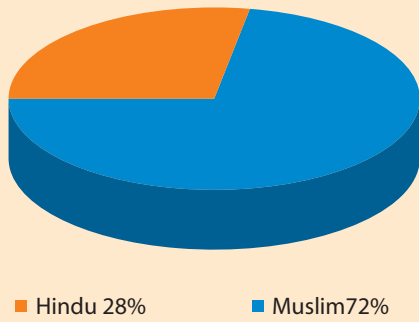
**Table 2.4: Age distribution and land ownership of the respondents**

	Age	Homestead Land	Cultivable Land	Lease & Share Cropping
N	200	200	200	200
Mean	41.20	11.89	16.33	11.56
Median	40.00	8.00	0.00	0.00
Minimum	23	0	0	0
Maximum	68	60	300	200

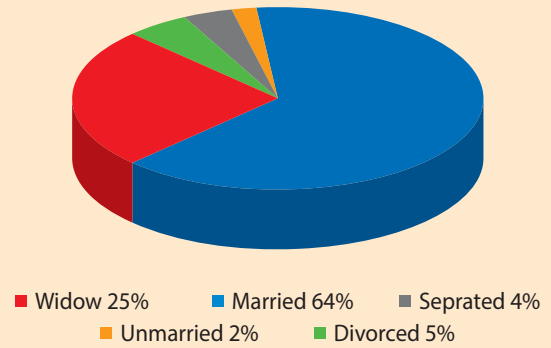
The majority of the respondents are married (64%), and one-fourth (25%) respondents are widows; only 2% are unmarried. The large majority of the respondents are Muslim (72%) followed by Hindu (28%) (Figure 2.1 & 2.2).

In terms of the respondents' occupation, 89% are housewives, and few are engaged in fishing and small businesses 8% and 3% respectively (Figure 2.3). One-third of respondents studied from class six to ten; class one to five is 29%, and SSC passed 7% (Figure 2.4).

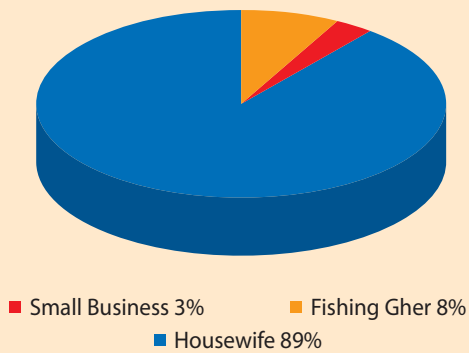
**Figure 2.1: Religion of the respondents**



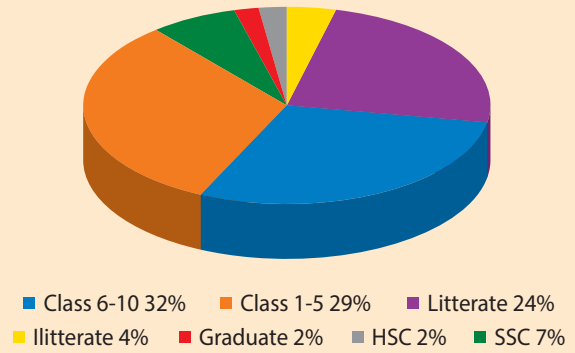
**Figure 2.2: Marital status of the respondents**



**Figure 2.3: Occupation of the respondents**



**Figure 2.4: Educational status of the respondents**

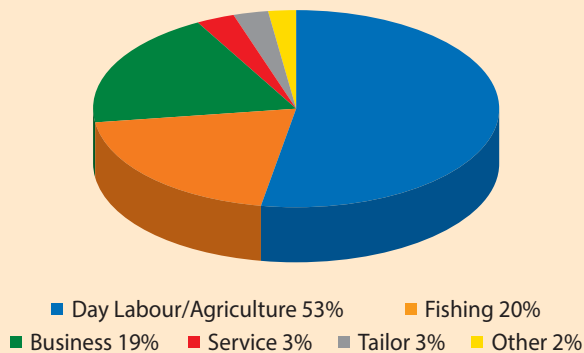


The mean ownership of homestead land is 11.89 decimal, cultivable land 16.33 decimal, and lease/sharecropping is 11.56 decimal (Table 2.4).

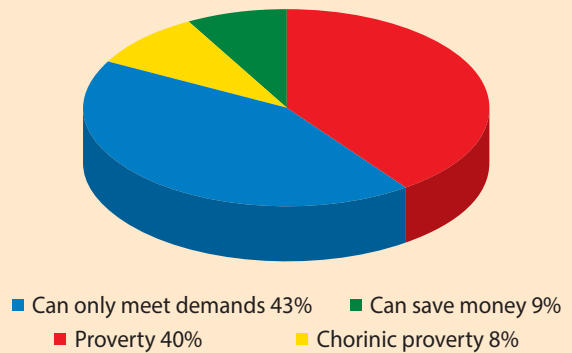
The source income of major HH is day labor or agriculture (53%) followed by fishing / gher (20%) and small business (19%) (Figure 2.5).

In terms of HH wellbeing, 52% are above the poverty line; 40% are in poverty condition, and 8% of HH are in chronic poverty (Figure 2.6)

**Figure 2.5: HH source income of the respondents**



**Figure 2.4: Educational status of the respondents**





### **Context and factors of land induced VAW**

The southwest coastal region of Bangladesh was once a prosperous agricultural hub. Today it is an area ravaged by salinity, natural disasters, poverty, and an inability to cope with recurrent shocks. The introduction of the embankment system in the 1960's and the subsequent spread of shrimp farming throughout the region have caused dramatic levels of environmental degradation and poverty. Today, communities face a regional depletion of natural resources, including safe drinking water, and struggle to maintain livelihoods. Both natural and human-induced disasters and the effects of climate change place increasing pressure on the region and has made it vulnerable.

Continuous and unregulated shrimp farming has immense impacts on human health, ecology, environment, and sustainability. However, few of them directly benefit the shrimp farmers and the people who live around them. The extensive farming systems negatively expedite the processes: infringement of mangroves, salinity intrusion, degradation of land, and de-stabilization of coastal ecosystems. The major socio-economic effects challenge livelihood patterns, displacement of family and social structure, internal migration, and livestock.

#### **Box 3: government acquired all our land and properties including our furnished house**

I am Marium Begum (F), Vhabna South Para, Town Noapara, Fakirhat, Bagerhat. In May 2020, we came to 'Vhabna South Para' from 'Jaria' Baroi' with all our six family members. For Khulna – Mongla Rail project, government acquired all our land properties including our furnished house. We had no choice, but to leave the area. The proposed rail line went directly through my agricultural lands. I had some of my fields nearby but they were not suitable for living. Along our '2 Bigha 6 Katha' property they took about 54 decimals.

The amount what we got against the acquisition was not enough to build a new house. Our house was furnished with all sorts of amenities. We had a big garden there. There were hundreds of plants. Actually, there was everything that is needed to have a good life. In Jaria Baroi, schools, colleges, offices and every institutions were very near to us. We hardly had any problems in our life. Also, it costs a huge trouble and efforts to get our money against the property. We had to provide money to the agents to get our money. When we lived in Jaria Baroi, we could easily run our family. My husband is a farmer. He worked there in our lands. As the transportation system there was so easy, my son did different types of businesses and we could run our family very much with comfort. My grandchild had a good time with his studies. Now the schools are very far from here. I sometimes think of myself as a lucky woman for getting my other daughters married because if they lived with us, they would have faced much troubles. My neighbors suggested me to go to my previous place and build a new house. But the remaining lands were not suitable to make a new house. So, I had to sell them too. I want a happy life with my family. May Allah not put anyone in this type of situation!

These factors contributed to the local communities' displacement and made the area unlivable and enhanced the population's negative growth. The hardship of living in the area affected the women badly. The traditional social fabric has been destroyed, leading to the deterioration of the law and order situation in the area. The migration of male members for livelihoods increased vulnerability and risk of violence and repression.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Interview and FGD



Since 2012, the development projects held by both the Government and private sector in the area have changed the area's feature leading to an increase in land price to 50 to 100 times. The Government acquired a vast amount of land, and private companies have also been purchasing large land with the support of land brokers by unfair means. The land brokers are engaged in the land ownership transfer and creating disputes and conflicts. Industrialists are forcing small farmers and poor villagers of the area to sell land and move out. Women landowners are the worst victims of land conflict, displacement, and violence, i.e., eve-teasing, harassment, and insensitive behavior from male members of families, neighbors, and the community. Therefore, women become vulnerable to expel from land rights and victims of violence. The women concerned have less mobility and lack of awareness (i.e., type, nature, and land claiming procedures).

#### Box 4: Navana Company forced us to sell our land!

I am Nasrin Begum (F, 35) Biddar Bahan, Budirdanga, Mongla, Bagerhat. My husband is a day laborer. In 2006 we came to 'Biddar Bahan'. I bought a property of 5 Katha and we stayed there for about 10 years. We were very happy until the 'Navana' company proposed us to sell my land. They bought all the lands in our neighborhood. We also had some of our lands nearby. Some of our lands were very near to them. So, they wanted to buy our property. We were not interested in selling them. For this reason, 'Navana' company caused a huge troubles to our daily lives. Though there was a separate property for roads we could not even go outside. They made huge barrier so that we cannot communicate with anyone. They created various kinds of difficulties for us to leave the place. But we had no problem there. They even threatened us by through some of their agents. They often threatened us by saying "Today or tomorrow you must leave, you have to leave this place" Ultimately, we knew we had nothing to do. So, we had to sell the property. We sold it at only 4 lacs 50 thousand taka. That place was everything for us. My husband who is a worker had no lack of work in that place. By hook or crook, he earned enough to run our family. We all were very much happy, living with honor and dignity but the joy didn't last long as soon as because we had to leave the place. Now, it is getting very difficult for us economically and mentally to run our family. My husband hardly gets any work. He often remains at home. My parent-in-laws suggested us to live with them but I do not want to cause any problem to them.

The land-induced displacement has been accelerated due to the public and private investment in this area.

Many poor households, including women, faced difficulties to receive money as compensation provided by the Government due to brokers and complexity of land documentation. This happened due to the wrong record and false documents prepared by the syndicate.





**Box 5: I did not receive the compensation on of my land which has been acquired by government. As a widow, it is a harassment!**

I am Manisha Majumder (F), Hudak, Rampal, Bagerhat. I am a widow. My husband died many years ago. He was a landless day laborer who worked mostly in the gher (shrimp fishing). I have a son; now we are two members in the family. I got 10 katha land from my natal family. This is only property of my family. I am living on khas land. Before the death of my father, he gave this land to me.

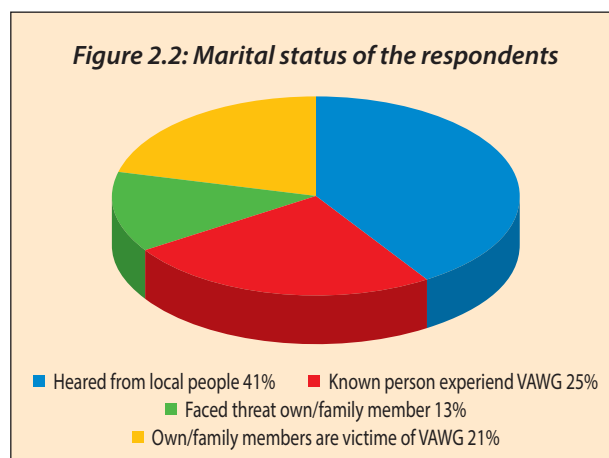
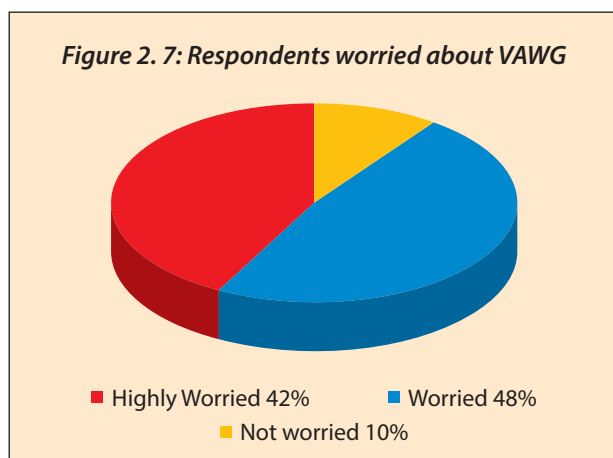
2 years ago, government acquired this land for digging a canal project. I never wished to sell the property because I wanted to retain the memories and affection of my parents. Unfortunately, my property crossed that project and government acquired my land. It happened to our neighbor's property too. Everyone got the money except me. The government also acquired some of my sister's property but they are yet to get the money. I never thought of selling my paternal property, I always wished to do agriculture works in it. As my family is not very big, it would be enough to run my family from agricultural produce of the land. Now I am not getting anything as government acquired it.

I have submitted all the legal documents, yet not received the amount which was promised to me and also not getting any assurance from government office. Bagerhat LG office has been harassing me; as a woman it is a harassment to me. Now I am frustrated; don't know what to do in future. We cannot fight with government office.

The women of the area identified the land related following problems in FGD during field visit.

- Not received the compensation package by some household;
- Bribe TK.10,000 per one lakh as compensation package
- Failure to get just share from natal family – brothers are reluctant and indifferent
- Had legal ownership of land which has been grabbed by the influential.

The land-induced VAWG is reflected in the HH survey. In the HH survey, it has been found that 42% of respondent women are anxious about VAWG for themselves or for their family members and 40% women are did not respond (Figure 2.7). The reason behind this concern is that one-fourth of the respondent said that their known person had experienced VAWG and one-fifth of respondents own / family members are a victim of VAWG in the area (Figure 2.8).



*The ownership rights are recorded in three different offices, and each of them run entirely by different executive processes. The uncoordinated executive processes are the source of most of the problems of land administration in Bangladesh. Women are the worst victim of these issues, which is evident from the findings of FGD / interview, case stories and HH survey. They are mentioned below.*

### 3.1 Women and land administration services in Bangladesh

In rural Bangladesh, income, livelihoods and status depends on ownership of land. The land administrative system in Bangladesh is disintegrated which is often responsible for errors in ownership records. The ownership rights are recorded in three different offices, each of which is run completely by different executive processes. The uncoordinated executive processes are the source of most of the problems of land administration in Bangladesh, which leads to everlasting land conflicts. The women are worst victim of these problems. The separation of offices related with land management with little coordination leads to inefficiency, corruption and contributes violence against women which is evident from the findings of FGD / interview, case stories and HH survey. They which are mentioned below:

- In general, women lack knowledge about land records and laws; mobility problems, access, and fear/confusion about government offices compounded the issues.
- There is also the lack of information about the union information centre's services; it has been found that women have less idea about the union information centre's digital services.
- The broker / dalal take the opportunity to ignore the poor people, especially the women; they create obstacles for the poor people to reach /consult with the Upazila land officer (AC land). The dalal works as an intermediary between and surveyor of the land office and the victim. It increases cost and harassment. For example, the government mutation fee is TK.1120; the dalals charge TK.8000-12000 in addition to harassment. When applicants apply mutation at Upazila land office, it needs to be verified by the surveyor and tehsildar; but unfortunately, they steal money with the help of dalal. The land officer has to depend on the surveyor and tehsil office.
- The land tax (Khajna) record needs to be checked for selling or purchasing land. If the land tax of a property is not paid, the Government may take away the property. If the Government takes the land for not paying the land taxes, the concerned union land office (Tohsil) office can resolve it. Harassment also happens when applicants ask for clearance letters on land tax or record from the tehsil office; the officials can conduct unfair demeanors. The applicant has to settle everything by paying bribes.
- In order to verify the records of the property, all the relevant information related to the land should be collected, particularly the plot (dag) number, Khatiyon number, present possessor, holding address. Khatiyon/Porcha are available in the local Land (Tohsil) office, DC office. Certified copies of all relevant Khatiyon/Porcha needs to be obtained and checked. The name of the owner should be verified against the history of property devolution provided in the deeds. Sometimes people ask/negotiate with tehsil office to collect documents from the DC office or upper offices.
- The application has to be submitted to the court at the district level for record correction, which is not easy for women. It needs money, time, and also support from male family members, relatives or neighbors.

- Nobody listens to our problems! The survivor women said that nobody cares about their problems. Union Parishad and Tohsil office do not listen to their concerns. The issues are mainly due to wrong records.

**Box 6: I did not receive the compensation on my land, acquired by government, as a widow, it is a harassment**

I am Manisha Majumder (F), Hudak, Rmapal, Bagerhat. I am a widow women, my husband died many years ago, he was a landless day laborer, worked mostly in the gher (shrimp fishing). I have a son; now we are two members in the family. I got 10 katha land from my natal family. This is only property of my family. I am living on khas land. Before the death of my father, he gave this land to me.

2 years ago, government acquired this land for digging a canal project. I never wished to sell the property because of the affection towards my parents. Unfortunately, my property crossed that project and government acquired my land. It happened our neighbor's property too. Everyone got the money except me. The government also acquired some of my sister's property but they are yet to get the money. I never thought of selling my paternal property, I always wished to do agriculture works in it. As my family is not very big, it would be enough to run my family from agricultural product of the land. Now I am not getting anything as government acquired it. I have submitted all the legal documents, yet not received the amount which was promised to me and also not getting any assurance from government office. Bagerhat LG office has been harassing me; as a women it is a harassment to me. Now I am frustrated; don't know what to do in future. We cannot fight with government office.

**3.1.1 Findings from HH survey**

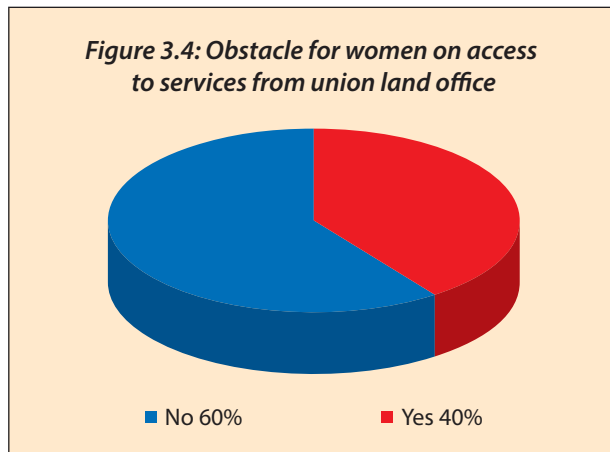
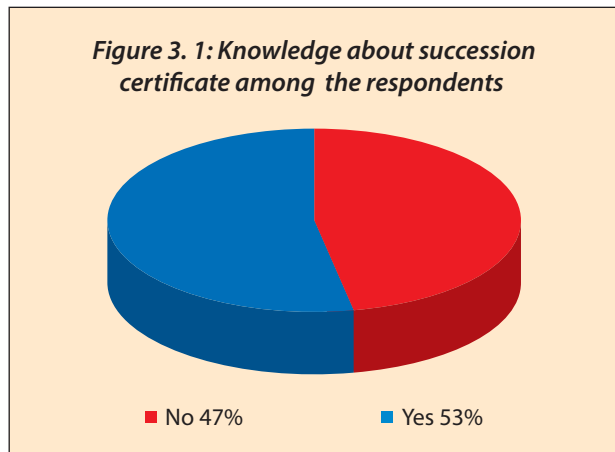
From the HH survey, it has been found that above 40% of women under-sample respondents never visited local union land office for any services or advice (Table 3.1).

*Table 2.4: Age distribution and land ownership of the respondents*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	119	59.5	59.5	59.5
No	81	40.5	40.5	100
Total	200	100	100	

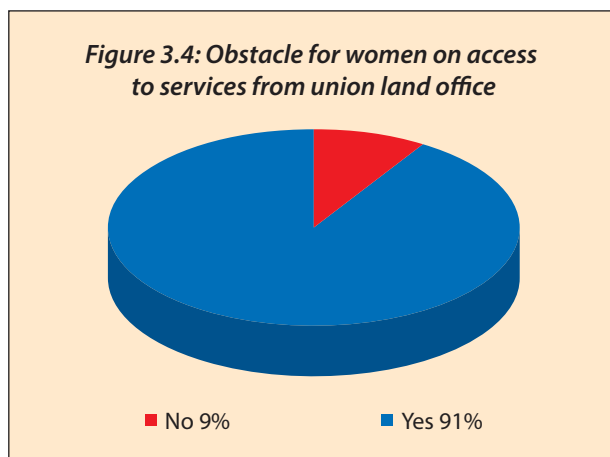
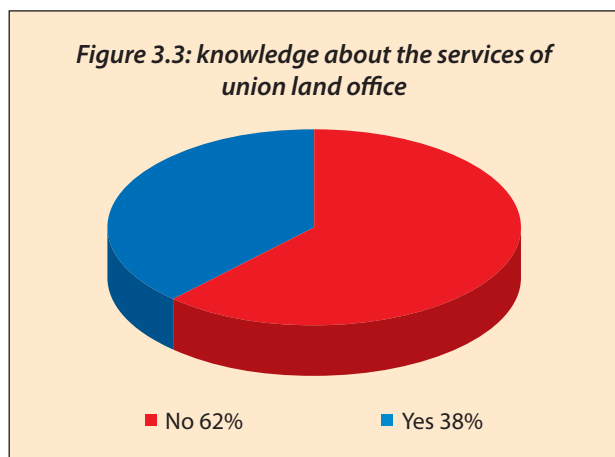
### Knowledge about succession certificate and mutation

The majority (53%) of the respondents have no idea how to collect succession certificates and also not have any idea about the process of mutation (60%) (Figure 3.1 & 3.2).



### Knowledge about services of union land office

The majority (62%) of the women have no idea about the services of the union land office. Furthermore, a large majority of women (91%) states that as women, they have obstacles to receive services from local union land office (Figure 3.3 & 3.4).





**Table 3.2: Baseline Assessment of Land Administration – Union Land Office**

Indicator	Baseline Value HH Survey	Qualitative Reflection from FGD
<b>3.1.1 Perspective of beneficiary HHs about the services of land administration</b>	Above 40% of women under-sample HH never visited local union land office for any assistance or advice.	Women lack knowledge about land records and laws; mobility problems, access, and fear/confusion about government offices compounded problems.
<b>3.1.2 Knowledge of the HH about succession certificate and mutation</b>	53% of the respondent HH have no idea on how to collect succession certificate; 60% of the respondent HH have no information and knowledge about mutation.	
<b>3.1.3 % of HH have awareness about the services of union land office</b>	The majority (62%) of the women under sample HH have no idea about the union land office services.	According to survivor women, nobody cares about their problems. Union land office does not listen to their problems. The problems mostly occur due to incorrect records.
<b>3.1.4 % of HH holds that women have obstacle to receive services from union land office</b>	91% of women (91%) holds that as a woman they face obstacles receiving services from local union land office.	

### **Box 7: The oral exchange of land property without any documents was a big mistake!**

I am Nujhat Begum (F, 40), Town Noapara, Bagerhat. I am a widow, my father is a farmer. Out of my 2 daughters one got married and other one reads in class 9 at 'Vabna High School'. Now, I am the owner of my husband's property. Though I am the owner but I do not have the luxury to fully utilize it. I hardly get any financial support from it.

I am facing different kinds of problems with the property. Different kinds of cases, difficulties regarding the land area are like a regular problem for us. My husband is a farmer. They are 4 brothers and a single sister who died about 6 years ago. We all live in a combined family with everyone having separate houses. We got a property of 9 decimals and 13 decimals combined with my brothers-in-law. The 9 decimal property is ours but we are using 9 decimals from the 13-decimal land. It is due to the fact that my husband and brother-in-law's son had a deal to exchange and use the property between each other. The deal was done orally. There is no written document for it.

So, this created a confusion in my mind that only oral deal cannot last a long. I told my husband about my concern. At first, he did not listen to me but soon after he realized my concern. When he talked to the other members, all of them were in a wrath! They even scolded us with bad words and they misbehaved with us. Soon we realized we cannot fight with them. I asked for help from the chairman. The chairman told us that deals must be done written. Oral deals are temporary and unreliable. They declined the decision and started using our lands again.

When we tried to stop them, they hit us and this happened 2-3 times during the period. So, I could do nothing but to file a case against them. I put a case in 'Bagerhat' at section 7 in 2016. After a year, they signed a bond that they will not use our land again. But in reality, they did the opposite. They again started to misbehave with us and even hit us. They even threatened us with very heinous crimes they will commit against us. They said that they would fire their own house and put blame on us. They also said that they will kill any of their 3 sons and charge us in 'Murder Case'. We cannot even sell our property. They even threatened the buyers so that no one buys the property and they can use it as long as they want.

Now, we understand that the exchange of property without any documents was a big mistake. If we had not done that, had not exchanged the property or if exchanged there had been a written document, we would not have any of these problems. We would have no problems in our daily lives. We would live with honor and dignity. My suggestion is to all out there is not to make deals anything without having the knowledge of it. I have asked for help to the local chairman and to the notable persons of the society to provide us with a proper solution.

### 3.2. Land dispute, VAW and Union Parishad

The UP is under the Local Government Division (LGD) within the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government. According to the Village Courts Act of 2006, there is a village court in every union council in which informal rural dispute resolution has been institutionalized as an alternative route to justice, which combines features of traditional tribunals – Shalish – with the more formal judicial approach.

Village Courts are comprised of a panel of five: the Union Council's chairman; two other Union Council members, one of whom is chosen by each party in the dispute; and then two additional citizens, who are also selected by the parties respectively. The Courts have jurisdiction over civil disputes valued up to BDT 75,000.

From the HH survey, it has been observed that the majority (59.5%) of the respondent HH visited UP for receiving services or dispute resolutions (Table 3.3).

**Table 3.3: Percentage of women visited UP for receiving services or dispute resolution**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	119	59.5	59.5	59.5
No	81	40.5	40.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

It is also evident that in the case of land disputes and VAW, the victim women prefer (97.50%) to visit and seek help from UP. Significantly few 1.5% will go to the police (Table 3.4)

**Table 3.4: In case of land dispute and VAW, where to visit preferably**

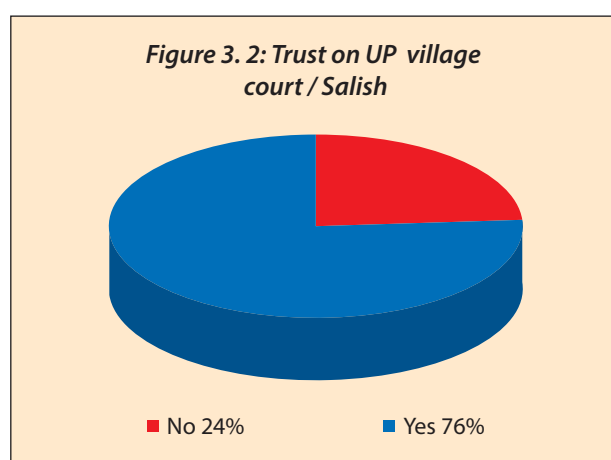
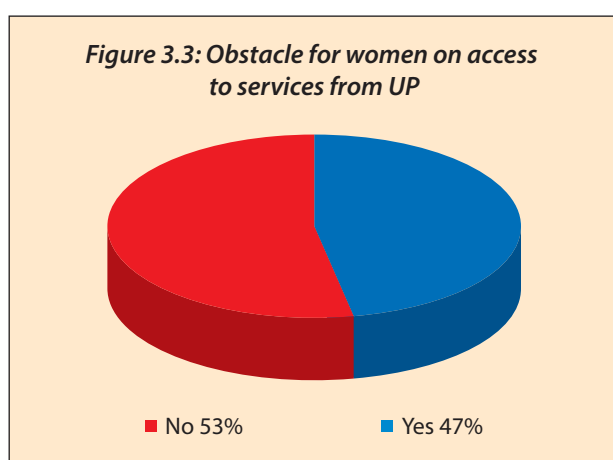
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
UP/ Chairman	195	97.5	97.5	97.5
Union Land Office	1	0.5	0.5	98.0
Court	1	0.5	0.5	98.5
Police	3	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

It has been observed that the traditional conflict management and resolution procedures (mediation of elite villagers, shalish) and the intervention of the Union Council seem to work well for small-scale conflicts. Nevertheless, their efficiency is severely limited in most land ownership-related conflicts.

The village courts are largely defunct and inefficient as they often favors those parties with better financial means or with close contact to institutions. Poor and marginalized women are clearly disadvantaged. Nepotism and corruption hinder smooth conflict resolution processes.

In case of land-related disputes or land induced VAW, people always prefer to visit the land offices at union, Upazila or district level as it is beyond the jurisdiction of UP, said UP member. Furthermore, the survivor women lack trust in UP, as it favors the influential as has been observed in FGDs.

From the HH survey, it has been found that 47% of women hold that there are obstacles for women on access to services from UP. A large majority (76%) of the respondents have trust in village court (Figure 3.3 & 3.4)



The findings from interview and FGD about the services of elected UP members are mentioned below:

- The male household members in the study area work outside the area; the rate of migration is high compared to other places. Women remain alone, which leads to separation, divorce and sometime VAW. The cases related to separation and divorce are high in UP.
- The number of cases submitted in the village courts is not as high as the local ward member supporting the elite person settle the cases informally.
- Women’s inherited succession certification has not been registered at union level.
- Secondly, women are not interested in submitting cases/complaints formally due to fear of losing family members and brothers, perpetuating deprivation and VAW.
- Women face particular difficulties in getting their voices heard, not least in a village court setting. A women-friendly environment in the court premises is therefore essential. UP representatives and panel members need adequate sensitization with gender-friendly behaviour. Whenever a woman's interest is at stake, at least one woman should be on the panel.
- Due to vote politics or fear of losing support from voters, sometimes UP members don't care or listen to deprived women's problems.
- In property and land-related disputes, people know that these are beyond the jurisdiction of UP. The price of land is higher than our limit. The village court cannot give judgment beyond TK.75000. But informally, the UP members can settle the dispute if someone seeks support from UP.

- In the case of land-related disputes, the problems are mostly on land grabbing. Sometimes the accused party don't comply with the verdict of UP, if influential, consequential, or having a strong connection at upper level /political leaders.
- The UP members are not aware of the legal aid committee's services, and they have no opinion about the legal aid committee's services either.
- It is not easy to reach the Chairman of UP; the UP chairman remains busy outside the UP office or remains in the town /city.

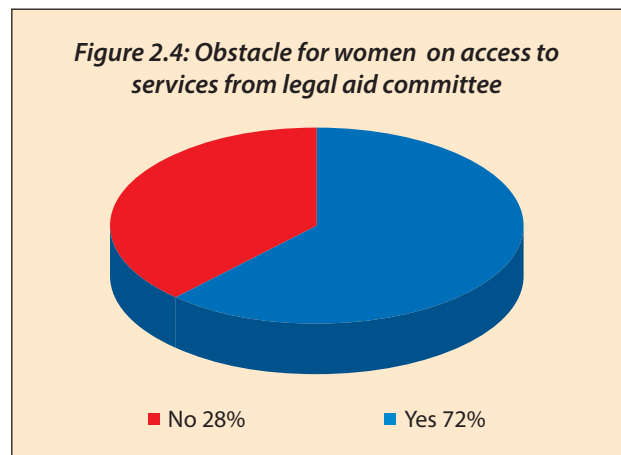
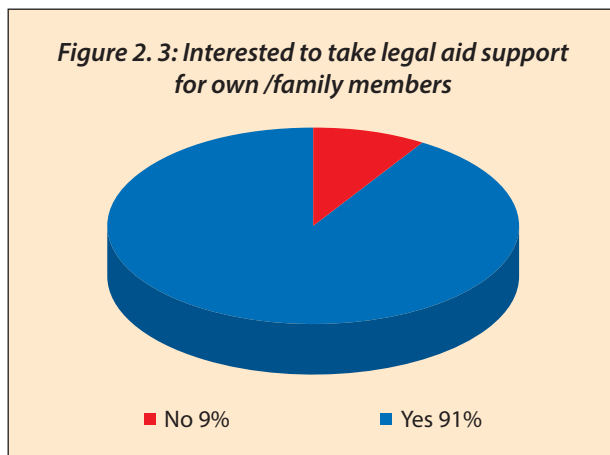
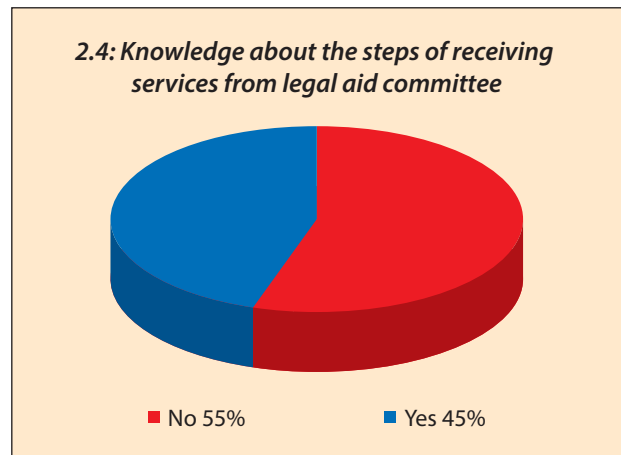
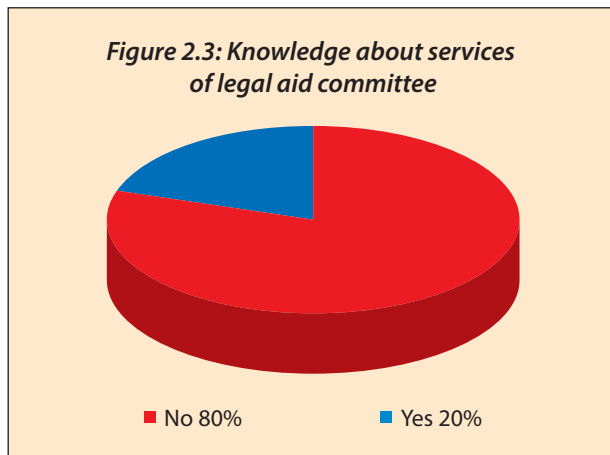
**Table 3.2: Baseline Assessment of Union Parishad**

Indicator	Baseline Value HH Survey	Qualitative Reflection from FGD
<b>3.2.1 Perspective of beneficiary HHs about the services of UP</b>	97.50% beneficiary HH prefers to visit/seek help from UP regarding the land dispute and VAW.	People complain to village court mostly on separation, divorce, and on extra-marital relationships; The land-related cases are beyond the jurisdiction of UP
<b>3.2.2 Perspective of HH about village court of UP</b>	47% beneficiary HH opined that there is an obstacle for women on access to services from UP. 76% of the beneficiary HH have trust in the village court.	Due to voting politics or fear of losing support from voters, sometimes UP members don't care or listen to the deprived women's problems.

### 3.3. An assessment of services of Legal Aid Committee

Legal aid is the assistance given to people otherwise unable to afford legal representation or access to the court. It is neither charity nor mercy; it is a right of the poor and underprivileged section of the society to protect the Constitutional Rights and Access to Justice. It has been observed that there is a gap between the supply and demand of the services of the legal aid committee; the poor people are unserved as they mostly don't know about the benefits and the budget at the district level remains underutilized and unspent.

The findings from HH survey are shown below.



The findings from interviews and FGDs are mentioned below.

- There is no mechanism of receiving information from grassroots /rural areas to district level on VAW; the women affairs department lacks human resources and logistics. The women affairs department cannot enforce and have no power either; people know its inability. They prefer to go to the police and court.
- The district legal aid committee (Bagerhat) comprises 29 agencies /offices at the district level, including judges, magistrates, police super, bar council, public prosecutor, jail super, social welfare, women & children affairs, information office, and NGO representatives. Among the 29, 09 offices/agencies are observers.

- It is supposed to hold the district legal aid committee meetings every month, but due to the covid-19 pandemic, the regular monthly meeting is not taking place, not even online. In the meetings, the agenda primarily concentrates on submitted applications.
- It has been observed that the committee members have no idea about the annual budget of the district legal aid committee. According to the committee members, the budget is under-utilized; remains unspent.
- The women affairs department is concerned about the problems related to VAW. There is a district-level big-size committee like the district legal aid committee, but there is no budget allocation for this committee. Monthly meetings of this committee take place along with the meeting of the district law and order committee.
- At local levels, sometimes justice and legal aid depend on the local power structure and power politics. Sometimes local UP members create obstacles and barriers for poor women in applying to the district legal aid committee. The applicant has to submit a certificate from UP about her/his eligibility for receiving services from the district legal aid committee as poor and underprivileged.
- The Upazila and union level committee has not been appropriately activated; it has been found that the UP members are not aware of the legal aid committee's services.

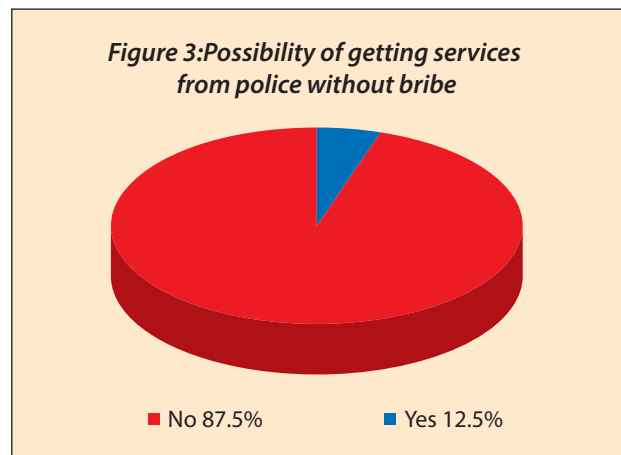
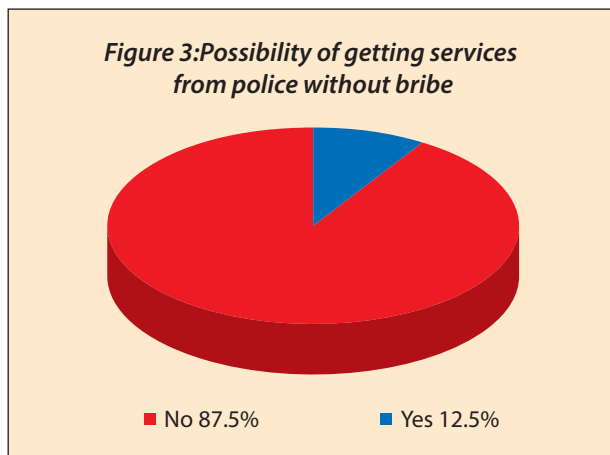
**Table 3.3: Baseline Assessment District Legal Aid Committee**

Indicator	Baseline Value HH Survey	Qualitative Reflection from FGD
<b>5.1.1 Perspective of beneficiary HHs about the services of legal aid committee</b>	80% of the beneficiary HH have no idea about the services of the legal aid committee	Nobody /agency told them about the services of the legal aid committee;
<b>5.1.2 % of HH have are aware about the services of legal aid committee</b>	55 % of the beneficiary HH have idea about the process of receiving support from the legal aid committee (those who know about the legal aid committee)	There is no mechanism from the supply side to aware the grassroots women about legal aid services
<b>5.2 % of HH interested to receive services from district legal aid committee</b>	91% of beneficiary HH are interested in receiving assistance from the district legal aid committee 72% of beneficiary HH holds that women have obstacles to receive services from the legal aid committee	Transportation cost, communication, and trust are three critical factors for the victim HH to avail the services of the district legal aid committee as reflected by beneficiaries

### 3.4 An assessment of the services of police and Thana

As a law enforcement agency, the police's main tasks are maintaining law and order in society and ensuring the people's security and properties. For this purpose, they help the state maintain peace and order, provide securities of different sections of society, identify and prevent crimes, and bring the criminals under the law's purview. At the local level, police investigate cases, provide police clearance certificates, passport verifications, and GD entries.

The perspectives, perceptions, and experiences of beneficiary women group members found both from the HH survey and FGD findings.



The women under the baseline study have fear and confusion about the role and services of the police. Very few of them have acquired services from the police station (GD entry), and some had to pay bribes. The women have a perception that without bribing, the police will not provide any services. Furthermore, mostly (94.5%), women believe that it is not easy to get assistance from the police as a woman.



**Table 3.4: Perspective, perception and experiences about police forces**

Indicator	Baseline Value HH Survey	Qualitative Reflection from FGD
<p><b>4.1. Perspective of beneficiary women about the services of police forces</b></p>	<p>Among the sample HH, 78% of the women told that they have fear about police station and also about forces in relation to visiting /complaining to police if they became the victim of violence</p>	<p>Among the sample beneficiary women, they have mostly (1 out of 10) have fear about thana (police station) and police.</p> <p>Almost all the participants have fear about police forces; a very few told that after a conversation with police, they have no fear about the police station</p>
	<p>Among the sample HH, 87.50% of women have a perception that without bribe/harassment, police will not render services</p>	<p>All the participant women have a perception that without bribe, police will not render services</p>
<p><b>4.2. % of beneficiary women on obstacle of receiving service from police as women</b></p>	<p>Among the sample HH, 94.50% of women believe that it is an obstacle for a woman to get police service.</p>	<p>Among the beneficiary women, very few (1 out of 10) took service of recording General Diary on VAW (GD) from the police station, and the victim paid bribe.</p>

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The land-induced VAWG is evident from the study's qualitative and quantitative findings mentioned in the previous chapters. The unregulated shrimp farming made hardship of living in the area, which affected the women badly. The migration of male members for livelihoods increased vulnerability and risk of violence and repression. Since 2012, the Government and the private sector's development projects have changed the area's features, leading to increasing land price 50 to 100 times. The Government acquired a huge amount of land, and private companies also have been purchasing a large amount of land with the support of land brokers by unfair means. Women landowners are the worst victims of land conflict, displacement, and violence, i.e., eve-teasing, harassment, and insensitive behavior from male members of families, neighbors, and community, as has been reflected in the findings of the study. The lack of land literacy among the women has perpetuated discrimination, deprivation, and VAW in the study area. A majority (53%) of the respondents have no idea how to collect succession certificates and do not know about the process of mutation (60%); found in the HH survey.

To address land-induced VAWG problems and develop an enabling environment for vulnerable women; the targeted women need to acquire knowledge and capacity-building support in the following areas.

- Land ownership, land documentation, and succession certificates;
- In case of land disputes, what measures they take, what they do, and where /they go to seek support or complain;
- Knowledge and awareness about support mechanism of legal aid committee;
- Available services in the police station, land office, union parishad, and legal aid committee for women;
- The gender sensitivity of police station, land office, UP, and legal aid committee;
- The demand and supply-side capacity gaps of the legal aid committee need to be eliminated; and
- Capacity-building support for legal aid committee members, police, UP members, union land office on gender, gender-based violence or VAW and land induced VAWG.
- The legal aid committee could be influential if it is integrated with UP, especially with the women elected members at UP and union level standing committee on women and girls.



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