

002 Village Jamunna: A Socio-Economic Survey
(Published in July, 1975)

a) Researchers' Identity

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b) Objective

- i. The objective of this study was to find out the socio-economic status of the study area.

c) Executive summary

The total population of the Jamunna is 996 and as the village is 1.0 square mile, the density of population is also the same. The female population of the village out-numbers the male population by a very narrow margin. Out of the total population, 96.99% are Muslims. Total number of households in the village is 202. Distribution of population by age shows that the age group upto 10 years is the largest among all the age groups, 37.64% belongs to this group. The large number of children and other non-working population is causing heavy burden of dependency on the working population, which is only 35.47% of the total population. The average family size of the village is 4.93 persons.

The people (996) belonging to 202 families live in the village. Forty six families are landless. Out of this, 15 families even do not possess any homestead. The rest 156 families possess a total of 372.47 acres of land the average landholding per family being 2.38 acres. There are three categories of farm families in the village, small farm families are those, who have less than one acre of productive land, medium farm families are those, who have one acre to less than five acres of land and big farm families are those, who have more than five acres of land. Out of the total 202 families, 61 families are small farm families. 75 families are medium farm families and 20 families are big farm families. It has been found in the village that the larger is

the size of the family, the bigger is the area of its landholding and the smaller is the size of the family; the smaller is the area of its landholding.

There are a total of 419 houses including living houses, kitchens, cowsheds, shops, mosque etc. in the village. The average number of houses per family is about 2. There is no brick built house in the village. Maximum number of houses is of thatched roof with mud walls. There are 15 families who have no houses of their own in the village.

The village Jamunna has a Primary School and a High School. The students studying in College or Madrasha have to go to Sherpur town. Out of the total number of students attending school 68.33% are boys and only 31.67% are girls, 76.67% of the students are studying in the primary school and only 23.33% are studying in the high school. Distribution of population according to literacy shows that, the percentage of literacy is 12.15%. Literacy among the male population is much higher than the female population. The number of matriculates in the village is 13, with is no graduate.

The main occupations of the villagers are farming, day labour, business and services. It has been found in the village that, maximum number of families is engaged in farming then comes the day labourers. It has been also found in the village that the larger the size of the family, the smaller is the percentage of its earning members. All the 202 families have a total of 660 earning members with an average of 3.27 in each family.

The main crops in the village are paddy, jute, potato and other winter vegetables. The maximum number of the total farm families grows aus and aman crops. The cropping intensity in the village is 131.79. The average yield of aus paddy per acre was 12.40 maunds, that of aman paddy per acre were 14.70 maunds and that of jute per acre were 14.40 maunds. The yield of Boro crop could not be ascertained as the crop was not yet ready for harvesting when the investigation was conducted.

There is no river or canal in the village. The surface water from the different tanks of the village is used for irrigation generally by indigenous methods i.e. by 'Honcha' or 'Donga' during the winter season to grow mainly boro crops and other winter crops. Out of the total 35 tubewells, only 4 tubewells are occasionally used for irrigation purposes, 31 tubewells are mainly used for drinking purposes. There is no deep tubewell. There is only one shallow tubewell which is owned by an individual farmer and is mainly used for his personal purposes.

Out of the total 202 families, 119 families or 58.91 percent of the total families used different types of improved agricultural practices like chemical fertilizers, insecticides, better quality of seeds etc., and 27 percent of the total families grow IRRI-20 and the Chinese IRRI crops in the village.

The dairy and poultry condition of the village is not satisfactory. It has been found in the village that bigger size landholders possess larger number of dairy and poultry animals.

There are 48 tanks in the village, out of which 15 are derelict, 18 are fit for fish cultivation and only 15 tanks are used for fish cultivation.

The villagers borrowed money from the different sources like, Bangladesh Krish Bank, money lenders, friends and relatives. Borrowing is also done by land-mortgage, khaikhalashi etc. There is no professional money lender in the village. The rate of interest of Bangladesh Krishi Bank is Taka 6.25 per annum. In case of money lender, where only interest is to be paid in kind the rate varies from two to four maunds of paddy for every one hundred Taka per annum which is very high rate of interest in the village.

There is a village market which sits twice a week. Mainly rice, paddy, jute, potato and other winter vegetables are brought and sold in the market. There are mainly two types of intermediaries involved in the village market, aratdars and beparies or small traders. Beparies purchase goods from the villagers by making house to house contract and sell to the aratdars. The whole salers or aratdars sell their goods to the retailers who sell them to the ultimate consumers.

The mode of transportation used in the village for purchasing and selling of goods are mainly bullock cart, rickshaw, houses and head or shoulder loads. The villagers usually store their products mainly paddy in "Kacha Gola". There is no rice mill or wheat mill in the village market. There is no standard measurement and grading system in the village market. Grading is done by eye-estimation. Maunds, seers, chataks are used as standard weights, 16 chatak:s make a seer, 40 seers make a maund. There is no market information collecting agency for the different prices of the agricultural products in the village market. Generally goods are brought and sold a prevailing market rates.

There are both single and joint families in the village, but the number of single families is much higher than the joint families. 79.70% of the families are single and only 20.30% are joint families in the village. 96.53% head of the families expressed the view that they are strict about observing purdah by

the adult female members of their family and only 3.47% said that they are liberal about it. Wealth is the most important determining factor of social status in the village. 62.38% of the respondents expressed the above view. Among the Muslims 'Pramanik' occupies the highest and 'Fakir' occupies the lowest status according to the social stratification pattern of the village, Kaibarta Das' occupies the highest and 'Konai Das' occupies the lowest status among the Hindus. While selecting bridegroom major importance is given on his economic condition, 86.63% of the respondents expressed this view. It has been found that though cohesion among the various paras of the village is prevalent but it is more intensive among the people living in the same para.

The village, Jamunna is divided into seven paras; out of these six paras have one samaj each and the rest one para is divided into two separate samaj. Every samaj is headed by a local leader. There is no specific title of the leaders; they are addressed according to their family title. Except these formal leaders there are also informal leaders who have much influence within the village. Religious leaders are consulted only on religious matters. Though heredity is given major importance while selection of a leader it is ultimately linked with his economic condition, because these leaders generally belong to those families who are traditionally wealthy class within the village. Distribution of samaj leaders by landholding shows that 62.50% of the leaders possess land above 3 acres. Distribution of samaj leaders by different age groups shows that 62.50% of the leaders fall within the age group of 46- 61 years and above. The functions performed by samaj and its leaders are identical; settlement of disputes, maintaining peace and cohesion, giving advice on various problems, organizing social and religious functions etc. are some of the functions performed by a samaj and its leader. The common people can participate in the decision making process but in most of the cases they cannot disobey the decisions of the leaders.

In the village Jamunna 95.05% respondents replied that they have heard about family planning. Attitude test of these persons towards family planning shows that 59.41% or majority of them think that it is 'important'.

Like most of the villages of Bangladesh the village Jamunna is also devoid of the facilities of modern means of communication and transportation. All the roads within the village are k:uchha. By-cycle, buffalo cart and bullock cart are the major means of transportation in this village. The villagers communicate among themselves by sending messengers or meeting in the common places like weekly hat and mosque (particularly on Jumma day). They gather news and information of the outside world from the shops, hats

and bazars. Only 8 families have radio sets and there is no subscriber of daily news paper in this village.

As regards the recreational facilities, the village even does not have any shops or tea stalls inside it, so the old and the middle aged group of people spends their time by sitting in a common place and gossiping there for hours together. Children and young people play various games. The villagers organize drama almost every year and some times organize ganer jalsha. They also organize village fair.

d) Conclusion

The Jamunna Agricultural Co-operative society has not yet developed as a viable and suitable institution to cater the needs of the village farmers. It could neither succeed in increasing the yield per acre nor made satisfactory progress in the adoption of improved varieties and practices by the farmers. The village farmers in general are unskilled in the modern techniques of cultivation and still use old-fashioned implements. By far the most important hindrance to modernizing the production process in the village is the lack of irrigation facility. To overcome the hurdle a proper net work of small irrigation canals may be constructed synchronizing with the excavation of the nearby river Karatoa.

Existing government allocation of fertilizer is found utterly inadequate to meet the requirements of the society members. Everywhere there is an insistent demand for chemical fertilizers, high quality seeds, insecticides, tubewell and credit. It is worth mentioning that initially subsidies would be required to induce a change in the production process. If the production functions in agriculture were to be raised through the introduction of new technologies, then new inputs would be required and the poor villagers are not in a position to afford them without providing from outside.

To a great extent provide money lending still exists in the village (which provide as the easiest and quickest source of credit). To accelerate the country's onward march towards self-sufficiency in food through green revolution, the government credit institution should be mould a new to increase the flow the supervisory credit funds into rural areas.

Compared to the total household of the village membership in the cooperative is far from satisfactory (less than 15%). Due to its weak management the co-operative society has not yet developed as a truly peoples movement in the village. It failed to attract the majority of the village farm

families outside the society to join the organization due to weak agricultural extension, delays in the introduction of irrigation facility and last but not the least absence of motivational work. It seems that enrolment of members in the cooperative is related to the availability of credit and inputs.

The Jamunna cooperative society has no office. A few record books that are available are with the manager. It has been found on several occasions that the society is failing to uphold the basic discipline of cooperative's action. Weekly meetings are not regular, nor are the savings. Many are reluctant to attend the weekly meetings and lack intrinsic cooperative character. Most of the members are not conversant with their own by-laws. Intensive education should be provided to inform the general members about their rights and duties.

To weed out the existing shortcoming and defects of the society for assuming its proper role to uplift the socio-economic conditions of the villagers, periodical evaluation of its activities may be done by the IRDP officials.

Facilities for processing and marketing of agricultural produce need to be developed.

Better off farmers have generally managed to retain control of the managing committee in the society. By monopolising the decision making power they are powerful enough to divert all improvement efforts and government subsidies to themselves.

The society has to be re-structured and managed in such a way that the small farmers have easy access to the decision making process, while opportunity is created for the landless labourers. It is to be remembered that any endeavour to develop rural Bangladesh must remain futile without devising alternative strategies to increase the productivity and income of the vast majority of the people at the bottom of the rural pyramid-small farmers and landless labourers. The earlier the start is made the better it is for the country.