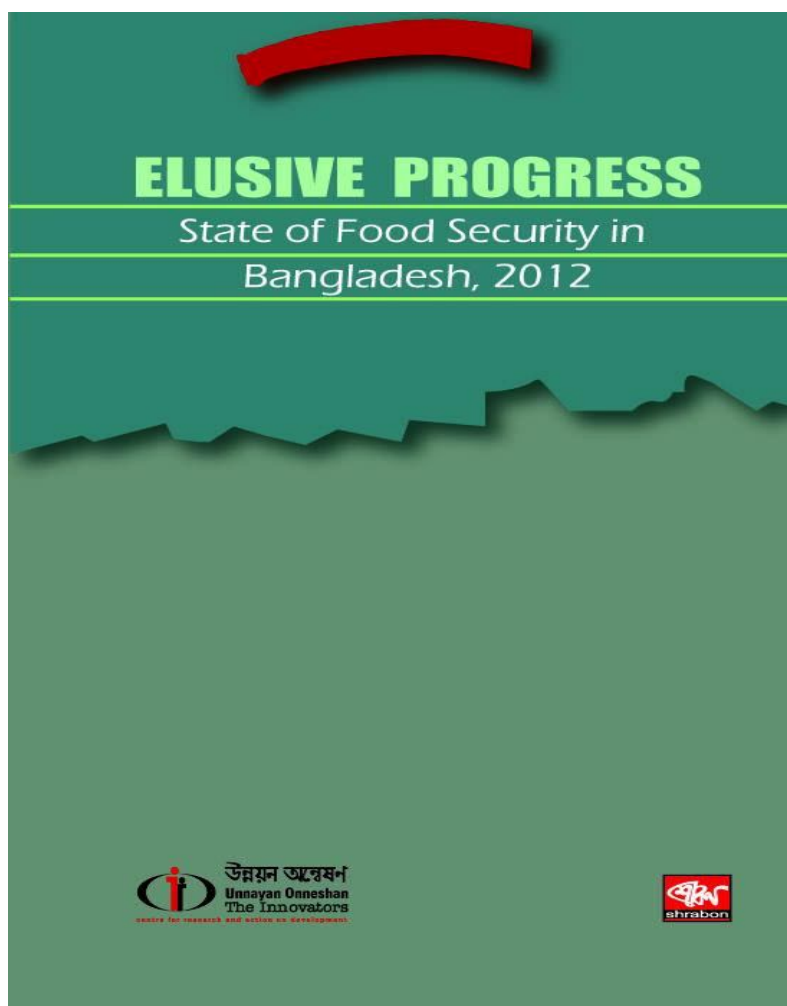


FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOOD

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1 INTRODUCTION

Now-a-days, the term 'food security' is very significant in the local, national and international level though it mainly focuses to the household and individual level in this occasion. Availability and access of food for all kinds of people are the two main elements of food security. Quantity and quality of food supply means availability of food in this context. Entitlement of food through purchases, exchange and claims include access to food. Food security is essential for a sustainable livelihood security. Insufficient food is the cause of malnutrition what reduces the capability of work and damage long-term and healthy livelihood.

This chapter is an attempt to depict the picture of the living conditions of the respondents¹ which have been assessed in a year round survey to improve the status of the poor people living in hard to reach areas specially, the three selected districts of concern here-Sirajgonj, Gaibandha and Shariatpur with variety of interventions for food security and better livelihood as well.

The chapter purposively targeted the poor of geographically vulnerable areas of northern, southern and central Bangladesh. Historically, the regions are being inundated every year and periodic flooding is influencing local ecosystems. Despite sufferings of the people, flood makes the agriculture land fertile through siltation and thereby, shapes the life and economy of the areas. In addition, other environmental factors such as riverbank erosion, drought in dry season, salinity intrusion as a result of backwater effect, dwindling ground water level have been contributing to augment the vulnerability of the regions. These have been further complicated by the instability of the property rights associated with continuous erosion and accretion of land by the riverine systems and consequential conflicts over ownership, capture and tenure management between the powerful and the poor.

This chapter aims to show the periodic average changes in living standard of the poor in hard to reach areas. Main focus will be on the food security of the respondents, their food habit and expenditure for food; health condition and living standard. By the monthly survey, information has been collected on five fundamental rights of human being (e.g. food, cloth, housing, education and health). After that, status of livelihood has been expressed on a quarterly basis, based upon the data collected from the monthly survey

¹ A total sample of 300 households, divided equally from each of the three different rural areas of Shariatpur, Gaibandha and Sirajgonj districts has been selected to monitor the state of livelihood by using a pre-designed questionnaire. The households have been selected using stratified sampling technique considering their position in compatible with the orthodox poverty line (World Bank poverty line criteria of daily income is less than USD 1.25) to maintain comparability with the national statistics.

started on April, 2011. The periodic changes has been observed in their livelihood compared to the national benchmarks, contained in national statistics such as the household income and expenditure surveys or with the defined levels related to poverty.

2 FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOOD STATUS

There exist no unique livelihood approaches to ensure food security. Sustainable livelihood approaches are needed to ensure food security. Many risks in livelihood approaches are located in the selected rural areas of this survey because of high geographical and natural vulnerability. For natural drawbacks such as- flood, drought, riverbank erosion, salinity problem and tidal inundation food security is not ensured in these areas all over the year. The respondents of the survey need some supporting interventions to ensure food security all over the year like food aid in time of disaster or innovative income generating activities which will increase their purchasing power of food.

Ability of people to acquire food depends upon their exchange entitlement. Poor people achieve their exchange entitlement mainly from production (crops and livestock) and own-labour (wages labour and professions) based entitlements. Poor people could not ensure their food security when they loss these entitlements-loss of crops, livestock, jobs and fall in wages. Mainly in times of shocks, hardcore people loss their ability to acquire enough food. Shocks are of two types external and internal. External shocks are drought, market failure, riverbank erosion, conflict and forced migration. Capacity of people to cope with these external shocks is related to the internal shocks. In times of external shocks, ability of people to cope up can be increased by some direct and indirect financial or non-financial aids from outside. These supports can improve the livelihood approaches so that hardcore state of livelihood of the people and food security will improve (Young et al., 2011).

2.1 Consumption of Food

Food basket of the respondents are mainly filled by rice and other cereals compared to other food items like pulse, fish, meat, eggs, milk, edible oil, fruits and vegetables. The concerning fact is that only the intake of carbohydrate cannot ensure food security for them as intake of protein, fat and vitamins is comparatively lower than that of the national rural average. As the respondents of the surveyed areas are not getting balanced diet, malnutrition is high in these areas which is reducing the capability of work and damaging long-term livelihood.

Rice and vegetables are the main food items for the poor people in rural areas. The consumption pattern of other essential food items like pulse, fish, meat, milk, edible oil, fruits are very low in all the surveyed areas. The survey has grouped different food items into four classes like carbohydrates, protein, fat and vitamins. The intake of food items has been measured in gram and calorie per person per day (Table 1). According to the HIES, ≤ 2122 kcal, ≤ 1805 kcal and ≤ 1600 kcal per capita per day are considered for absolute, hardcore and ultra poverty respectively.

As rice is the main food of the respondents the amount of taking carbohydrates is higher than other food elements. Carbohydrates taken by the respondents per day on average are 452.78 gm, 440 gm, 448.22 gm and 446.67 gm respectively for first, second, third and fourth quarters. In all four quarters, this amount is higher than that of national rural average of 426.55 gm. There is no significant change in the amount of taking carbohydrates through quarters. So, it seems that food habit has not changed in the surveyed areas for last one year (Table 1).

Pulse, fish, meat, eggs and milk are the main food items for protein. The respondents of the surveyed areas are found to take very low amount of protein (45.56 gm, 48 gm, 62.58 gm and 53.67 gm per person per day respectively for first, second, third and fourth quarters) and this amount is lower than that of national rural average (62.66 gm per person per day). Although there is no drastic change but the amount of taking protein has increased from first to fourth quarter and the highest is in third quarter (Table 1).

In the surveyed areas, edible oil is the only one food item for fat. Average amount of taking fat has been found on average 16 gm, 13.67 gm, 13.17 gm and 12.33 gm per person per day respectively for first, second, third and fourth quarters. National rural average of taking fat is 14.20 gm per person per day.

Table 1: Food intake status in survey areas (quarter-wise)

Months	Carbohydrates (Rice and other Cereal) in gm		Protein (Pulse, Fish, Meat, Eggs and Milk) in gm		Fat (Edible Oil) in gm		Vitamins (Fruits and Vegetables) in gm		Calorie Intake (kcal Per capita per day)			
	Current Survey	National Rural	Current Survey	National Rural	Current Survey	National Rural	Current Survey	National Rural	Current Survey	Average	National (poor)	National (non-poor)
	First Quarter	452.7		45.5		16		185.3		2137		
Second Quarter	440.0		48.0		13.6		211.3		2075			
Third Quarter	448.2	426.5	62.5	62.6	13.1	14.2	173.1	241.3	2126	2112.58	2084.64	2344.6
Fourth Quarter	446.6		53.6		12.3		235.8		2112			
Quarter	7		7		3		3					

Source: Unnayan Onneshan Livelihood Survey 2011-12, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2012

Fruits and vegetables are the sources of vitamins. Collecting vegetables from homestead gardening has increased the amount of taking vitamins in the surveyed areas from first to fourth quarter (185.33 gm, 211.33 gm, 173.11 gm and 235.83 gm per person per day respectively for first, second, third and fourth quarters), but it is the lowest in third quarter. National rural average of taking vitamins is 241.39 gm per person per day which is higher than that of the surveyed areas.

2.2 Food Poverty

The overall rural scenario of the country is almost similar in terms of food consumption. The surveyed areas have the same food intake scenario, however, it shatters while the areas are being hit by natural disasters and food production is hindered. The people do not maintain a sustainable livelihood as they go through food insecurity mainly due to the climatic hazards and the adverse impacts of the climate change.

In terms of food, the person who takes less than 2084.64 kcal per day is referred as poor and who takes more than or equal to 2344.6 kcal per day is referred as non-poor. In this year round survey, the poverty level has been measured by calorie intake per person per day. The respondents at the surveyed areas were upper to the food poverty line (average calorie intake was 2137 kcal per person per day) in comparison with the national boundary of food poverty (2084.64 kcal per person per day) during April-June (First quarter). However, in the second quarter the respondents of the surveyed areas were slightly lower to the food poverty line (average calorie intake was 2075 kcal per person per day) in comparison to the national boundary. In addition, both in third and fourth quarter, the respondents of the surveyed areas were upper to the food poverty line (average calorie intake were 2126 kcal and 2112.33 kcal respectively for third and fourth quarters per person per day) compared to the national findings. According to national finding, none of the respondents of these hard to reach areas are non-poor in terms of food consumption.

On the other hand, according to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), ≤ 2122 kcal, ≤ 1805 kcal and ≤ 1600 kcal per capita per day are considered for absolute, hardcore and ultra poverty respectively. On average, in the second quarter, the respondents of the surveyed areas were found as hardcore poor. In the second quarter (July-September, 2011) during the flood period, food scarcity was located compared to other period as to make lower calorie intake in that quarter.

2.3 Expenditure on Food

Expenditure on food in the surveyed areas remains low with the time (national value is higher) even when the cost is supposed to increase over the time due to food inflation. However, the respondents adjusted food inflation with their effort of growing own food through exploitation of labour or through reduction in other consumptions.

The year round survey considers six components of expenditure required for subsistence living. The overall expenditure in survey areas has fluctuated over the quarters; but was the highest in first quarter which decreased at time of comparison with the first and fourth quarter what is 74.09 and 52.5 percent of total income respectively (Table 2).

This survey also shows that the total expenditure for the poor is largely influenced by three categories of expenditure mainly, e.g. food, cloth and SME investment. However, lower expenditure through quarters on food is found significantly in the surveyed areas as most of the respondents are getting food from their own homestead gardening and

livestock farming. SME investment was the highest in first quarter compared to other quarters (15.84 percent, 2.91 percent, 6.35 percent and 6 percent respectively for first, second, third and fourth quarter). The reason behind this is that after investing first time, most of the investors are turned out to the regenerative investor and profit holder in their business over the quarters. For this supplementary income in every household, percentage of expenditure of total income has been reduced through these four quarters. The trend of the percentage of expenditure of total income through four quarters is shown here (Table 2).

Table 2: Quarterly review of different expenditure groups (location-wise)

Location	Food	Cloth	Education	Health	Housing	Misc.	Investment in business	Total	Compared in against of 100 percent income
First Quarter	35.75	8.32	6.16	4.71	3.07	0.23	15.84	74.09	25.91(+)
Second Quarter	33.54	10.2	3.49	4.69	0.58	1.38	2.91	56.8	43.2
Third Quarter	34.03	8.49	3.56	3.75	0.48	0.7	6.35	57.36	42.64
Fourth Quarter	28.34	9.68	3.03	3.46	1.39	0.6	6	52.5	47.5(+)
National	58.74	5.12	4.18	4.05	7.27	12.61	-	91.97	8.03 (+)

Source: Unnayan Onneshan Livelihood Survey 2011-12, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2012

From the year round survey, it has been found that the respondents spend near about one-third of their income only for food in all the four quarters. In the first quarter, the respondents spend 35.75 percent of their income only for food and this is the highest expenditure in all quarters (Table 2). The percentage of expenditure for food have reduced through quarters (33.54 percent, 34.03 percent and 28.34 percent respectively for second, third and fourth quarter). The reasons behind the reduction in food expenditure are increasing production of vegetables from homestead gardening and increase in the level of income (Table 4).

As the respondents are poor, they spend most of their income only for food, and spend very small portion of their income for other capacity building activities like education and health. The respondents spend only 6.16 percent of their income for education in the first quarter, in addition, this percentage has reduced in the next quarters (3.49 percent, 3.56 percent and 3.03 percent respectively for second, third and fourth quarter). Similarly, the respondents spend very small portion of their income for health or medical expenses (4.71 percent, 4.69 percent, 3.75 percent and 3.46 percent respectively for first, second, third and fourth quarter). The respondents are not poor according to calorie intake but their working capacity is not increasing for more valuable work.

According to HIES, 2010 rural people expand more than half (58.74 percent) of their total income only for food, but from this survey it has been found that in all four quarters the respondents of these areas spend near about one-third of their income for food (Table 2). The reason behind this is that the respondents of these areas are collecting a portion of their food from own produced food grains and homestead gardening by engaging their own labour rather than engaging in other income generating activities. In all four

quarters, (8.32 percent, 10.2 percent, 8.49 percent and 9.68 percent respectively for first, second, third and fourth quarter) the percentage of expenditure for cloth of the respondents were higher than national findings (5.12 percent). Although they are spending less for their food, they can spend more for their cloth.

In the first quarter, percentage of expenditure for education (6.16 percent) was higher than the national finding (4.18 percent). However, in the second, third and fourth quarters it was (respectively for 3.49 percent, 3.56 percent and 3.03 percent) lower than the national findings. Percentage of housing and miscellaneous expenditure in all the quarters is lower than that of national finding (Table 2). It has been found that the respondents are spending less than their income and they are using the extra income for regenerative investment for which they have had a rising income level.

3 HEALTH

3.1 Health Status

As the respondents are not poor regarding taking food (calorie intake) and it is natural that their health condition will be better. Surprisingly, the occurrence of illness is frequent instead because of lack of awareness and non-hygienic sanitary system.

Table 3: Quarterly review of health status

Longitudinal Observations	Illness of Male (Percentage of people)	Illness of Female (Percentage of people)	Illness of Child (0-5 yrs), Percentage of Child	Age vulnerability of Illness (Range of Age)	Type of Treatment (Percentage of Allopathic Patient)
April-June, 2011	38.29	61.71	19.67	0-5	37.11
July-September, 2011	25.82	74.18	6.11	15-40	34.89
October-December, 2011	33.09	66.92	7	15-40	35.56
January-March, 2012	28.38	71.63	6.67	15-40	34.89

Source: Unnayan Onneshan Livelihood Survey 2011-12

The percentage of illness of female is higher than the percentage of illness of male in all four quarters (Table 3). The reason behind this is that usually on average, food taking situation is better for male than female in the rural areas which indicates a worse physical condition of women heading towards less immunity power as well as higher illness condition. In the time of pregnancy, women face more complication as most of them don't go to hospital depending on traditional local physician. Non-hygienic and traditional instruments are preferred by them. For this reason, during and after pregnancy women are passing threatening life in these areas along with the highest possibility of illness in this period. Early marriage of women is the cause of illness. For early marriage and early pregnancy they are facing more complications and giving premature and unhealthy babies.

In the first quarter, 19.67 percent of the child were ill which reduces in next quarters (6.11 percent, 7 percent and 6.67 percent respectively for the second, third and fourth quarter). As vaccination is provided by government without any cost, the illness of the children is comparatively lower. Actually, it has been found that in the second, third and fourth quarters 15-40 years old people are getting more ill as in this age, most of the women are getting ill for pregnancy and other complications.

Near about one third of the respondents (37.11 percent, 34.89 percent, 35.56 percent and 34.89 percent respectively for the first, second, third and fourth quarters) are taking allopathic treatment and others are dependent on traditional local treatment.

3.2 Medical Expenses

A little difference in expenditure for medical expenses (health) has been found from the survey. In the first and second quarters (respectively 4.71 percent and 4.69 percent) it was slightly higher and in the third and fourth quarter (respectively 3.75 percent and 3.46 percent) it was found slightly lower than the national finding (4.05 percent). The lower expenditure for health care does not mean the better health condition of the respondents or a sound health status rather it indicates their insufficient money for medical expenses.

4 LIVING CONDITION

4.1 Income Level

A significant change has been found in the level of income of the respondents through these four quarters. In the first quarter, 60.89 percent of the respondents' incomes were less than BDT 2000, which means that most of the people in the survey areas had their income below USD 1 per person per day (income poverty line suggested by World Bank). However, by gradual reduction in fourth quarter, it has become only 35.89 percent (53.33 percent and 47 percent respectively in second and third quarter). In addition, in the first quarter 21.78 percent of the respondents' incomes were between BDT 2000-3000, which means that their incomes were below USD 1.25 per person per day whereas by gradual increase in the fourth quarter it has become 37.72 percent (26.22 percent and 35.89 percent respectively in second and third quarter).

Table 4: Observation of income level among four quarters

Income Range (BDT)	BDT >2000	BDT 2000-3000	BDT 3000-4000	BDT 4000+
First Quarter	60.89	21.78	17.33	0
Second Quarter	53.33	26.22	0.45	0
Third Quarter	47	35.89	12.33	4.56
Fourth Quarter	35.89	37.72	19.17	7.28

Source: Unnayan Onneshan Livelihood Survey 2011-12

The percentage of respondents with the level of income BDT 3000-4000 was 17.33 percent in the first quarter and it has increased in the second quarter to 20.45 percent and again it has reduced in third quarter at 12.33 percent. Moreover, it has increased in the fourth quarter to 19.17 percent. In the first quarter, none of the incomes of the respondents were above BDT 4000 but in the fourth quarter, on average 7.28 percent respondents have their income above BDT 4000 followed by 4.56 percent in the this quarter.

On average, a rising level of income of the respondents has been observed. An increase in the involvement of the respondents (in other off-farm economic activities by reducing disguised unemployment in agriculture) is also responsible for the increase in the income level. In the third quarter (winter season), availability of winter vegetables and their good selling generated a higher income in the surveyed areas. On the other hand, the business investment of the respondents is higher in the third quarter than the second quarter and its impacts on overall income are investigated as a supportive mechanism to increase the gross income level in the surveyed areas.

4.2 Housing

Most of the respondents have not their own house. They usually rent land and build house personally and they have to pay for the land yearly BDT 2000 to 3000. The respondents usually build their house by straw, hogla etc. In addition, the families with comparatively higher level of income build their house by tin.

4.3 Environmental Condition

The respondents from the survey are living in the fresh environment. In case of sanitation, drinking water and waste management, the situation of the respondents is not well. All the households are using hanging latrine and the number of toilet is one or two in every village. In case of distance between toilets and sources of drinking water, it is found that a little distance is there between the toilets and sources of drinking water. As it is a *char* land, in the rainy season this situation becomes the worst because of flood water. Due to the lack of both awareness and technical knowledge, waste management system is very poor in the rural areas. From the survey, it is revealed that almost all the households of the right holders throw their waste in open places. This is a matter of concern that there is no household who cleans garbage daily and converts garbage into organic fertiliser.

4.4 Social Status

Based on the income situation suggested by the World Bank, the survey reveals that the respondent whose income is USD 1 per person per day belongs to the lower poverty and the respondent whose income is USD 1.25 per person per day belongs to the upper poverty. Quarter-wise comparison of the percentage of the respondents living below the poverty line is shown here (Table 5).

Table 5: Percentage of respondents living below the poverty line

World Bank Poverty Line	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter	National
Upper Poverty	82.67	79.55	82.89	73.66	35.2
Lower Poverty	60.89	53.33	47	35.89	21.1

Source: Unnayan Onneshan Livelihood Survey 2011-12, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2012

It has been found from the survey that the percentage of the respondents who belong to lower poverty has reduced through first to fourth quarter (60.89 percent, 53.33 percent, 47 percent and 35.89 percent respectively for the first, second, third and fourth quarters). According to HIES, it has shown that the percentage of the rural people who belong to lower poverty is only 21.1 percent. Although the rate of lower poverty is reducing, still the rate of lower poverty of the selected areas is higher than that of HIES findings.

Again, it has been found from the survey that the percentage of the respondents who belong to upper poverty has reduced from first (82.67 percent) to fourth (73.66 percent) quarter. In second quarter, the upper poverty rate has reduced from first quarter at 79.55 percent but increased in the third quarter to 82.89 percent. The upper poverty rate was the lowest in the fourth quarter but in all quarters the upper poverty rate of these selected areas was much higher than that of HIES finding.

Over all, in the surveyed areas the percentage of ultra poor is decreasing. This is because; the respondents are becoming more conscious and want to improve their standard of living. Consequently, they are trying to save a small portion of their income as community basis (by making community saving fund like ‘*Samity*’) and using this saving for regenerative business investment.

5 CONCLUSION

Food security in most of the rural households in the country is at stake due to vulnerability that mainly occurs with the hit by any climatic hazards and adverse impact of climate change. Though the yield of crops has increased in recent years mainly because of the use of high yielding varieties, chemical fertiliser and pesticides, people of the surveyed areas are not food secured yet.

Access of food sometimes become difficult during the lean period or after the following days of any natural disasters as the government could not take any fruitful measure yet to manage the market price that is speculated by the businessmen. As a consequence, scarcity of food is being witnessed in many forms. Moreover, higher inflationary pressure on food makes it difficult for the poor to afford the required amount of food in terms of quality and quantity which ultimately lags behind proper utilisation.

Food insecurity causes irretrievable damage to livelihoods. The expenditure on food rises leaving behind other expenses that are necessary for maintaining a sustainable livelihood at household level. Moreover, scarcity of food and food inflation infuse the possibility of not having a balanced diet that leads to malnutrition and other health disorders. In

addition, the state of being food insecure directly contributes to poverty and impairs livelihoods in the long term.

Food Security is not ensured for the hardcore people all over the year. During the natural disasters, they do not have exchange entitlement for food. The ultimate outcome is vulnerable livelihood at household level that would hold back the pace of reduction of poverty. Financial or non-financial supports from outside could increase their entitlements in time of disasters.

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Annex

Case Story 1

Mrs. Parul Khatun is a 23 years old married women living in a village namely Bishurigasa. Bishurigasa is located at Khasrazbari Union in Kazipur sub-district in Sirajgonj. Her husband is Md. Kader. She has five members in her family- her husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law and a son of two years old. Her husband is a day labourer. They don't have their own land. They have rented a land to build a house. They have to pay BDT 2000 per year for the land. Last year, they built a house.

Parul Khatun is a housewife. One year earlier, she has been selected by a NGO namely GKS for *Blanket Making Project* because of severe poverty and her previous experience of sewing. Primary raw materials and a sewing machine were given to her from the NGO. Then, she started making blanket and selling those to market. Now, she can contribute in her family income. After engaging in blanket making project, she is able to help her husband financially to build their house.

One year earlier, her financial condition of her family was so poor that her husband did not get the opportunity of work as well as she also had no income. They did not have enough purchasing power for food for three times of a day. Currently, Mrs. Parul Khatun is contributing in family income and her working opportunity of her husband has also increased to live in a better position. For their increased income, their purchasing power for food has also increased. In addition, Mrs. Parul Khatun started homestead vegetable gardening which has created availability of food for her family. Now, the family has access to food three times in a day. So, here, it is found that a little aid of livelihood approach from outside has made a better family.



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