

## Report Gender Assessment EU - Switch Asia Project



### Improving consumer awareness and access to certified safe tomato and mango products in Bangladesh



Dhaka, October 2018

<b>Contents</b>	<b>page</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>	4
<b>Foreword and Acknowledgements</b>	5
<b>Summary</b>	6
<b>Introduction: the project</b>	10
<b>Theoretical background</b>	11
Gender, work and land rights in agriculture	11
Gender and consumption of foods	12
Empowerment approach	13
<b>Objectives of the Gender Assessment</b>	13
<b>Methodology</b>	14
Validity of information collected	15
Approach	17
<b>Background and Review of documents</b>	18
The context within Bangladesh	18
Gender content in the project documents and implementation of SNV-SWITCH	19
<b>Findings</b>	20
FGDs and respondents	20
Land Rights, Land Ownership and Economic Position	21
Gender division of tasks	22
Capacity Building	26
Factories	27
Consumers	28
Value Chain and Gender	31
Some other comments of farmers	31
Impact of the Project	32
About the Objectives of the Project	32
<b>Analysis from an Empowerment Approach</b>	34
Economic empowerment	34
Political empowerment	35
Socio-cultural empowerment	36
Physical empowerment	36
Interrelation between the four elements	37
<b>Recommendations</b>	38
<b>Gender Action Plan (to be developed with SNV team)</b>	41
<b>References</b>	41
<b>ANNEX 1: Empowerment Approach</b>	42
<b>ANNEX 2: Programme of Field work</b>	43
<b>ANNEX 3: Checklists and maps</b>	44
1. Checklist for Interviews (Inquiries) with women farmers	44
2. Checklist for Union Chairmen and Key Informants	46
3. Checklist for Interviews (Inquiries) with men farmers	46
4. Checklist Focus Group Discussions	48
5. Checklist for Consumers	50
6. Maps Rajshahi and Natore	50

<b>ANNEX 4: Cases of women and men farmer members of the Safe Mango and Tomato Producer groups, and some non-member farmers and labourers</b>	<b>53</b>
1. Koicharpara (2 men and 4 women)	55
2. Bidirpur, and surroundings (1 man and 5 women)	63
3. Aauray (2 women and one couple)	70
4. Biharipara (3 men and 10 women)	73
<b>ANNEX 5: Focus Group Discussions</b>	<b>83</b>
1. Koicharpara, Mango Farmers, mixed group	83
2. Bidirpur, Tomato Farmers, male group	87
3. Aauray, Tomato Farmers, male group	89
4. Shonardighi, Tomato Farmers, female group	92
5. Biharipara, Mango Farmers, mixed group	94
<b>ANNEX 6: Key Informant Interviews</b>	<b>96</b>
1. Koicharpara, Sub-Assistant Agricultural Officer and Ward Member of Koicharpara Union Parishad (2)	96
2. Bidirpur, Santhal woman labourer (1)	98
3. Aauray, Ward member of Aauray Union Parishad (1)	101
4. Sonardighi and surroundings, 3 Santhal and 1 Oraon woman labourers, and 1 Oraon woman farmer (5)	102
5. Biharipara, Teacher Biology in Baneshar, Rajshahi (1)	107
<b>ANNEX 7: Factory staff Interviews</b>	<b>108</b>
1. KISHWAN Agro Processing Factory (2 men 2 women and a group of women)	109
2. PRAN Agro Processing Factory (6 women, and a group of men of the management staff)	115
<b>ANNEX 8: Consumer cases</b>	<b>124</b>
22 cases of 28 interviews	124
<b>ANNEX 9: Indigenous farmers, background</b>	<b>138</b>
Oraon	138
Santhal	139
<b>ANNEX 10: Land units' calculations</b>	<b>140</b>

<b>Tabels</b>	<b>page</b>
1 Data collection schedule	15
2 Original Field work Plan	17
3 Field work conducted	17
4 Gender Division of work in Mango farming, based on information of FGDs in Koicharpara and Biharipara, both in Natore	23
5 Other work of women and men, apart from and next to tomato and mango cultivation	24
6 Gender Division of work in Tomato farming, based on information of FGDs in Bidirpur, Shonardighi in Rajshahi, and Aauray, in Natore	24
7 Comparison between Gender Assessment and Baseline Survey Consumers	30
8 Impact of the project on empowerment of different categories of people	38
9 The differences between Muslim women labourers and Adivasi women labourers	66-67

## Abbreviations

AO	Agricultural Officer
DAE	Department of Agriculture Expension
DTW	Deep Tube Well
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GHP	Good Handling Practices
GMP	Good Manufacturing Practices
GWA	Gender and Water Alliance
GWA-B	Gender and Water Alliance - Bangladesh
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
KII	Key Informant Interview
SAAO	Sub-assistant Agriculture Officer
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
UP	Union Parishad (Local Government)

The Natore and Rajshahi SNV project teams and the GWA Gender Assessment team, with Runia as photographer.



## Foreword and Acknowledgements

The Gender Assessment was conducted by the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) on the invitation of SNV – the Netherlands Development Organisation. It is based on a literature review of project documents, meetings with SNV staff, and qualitative field research conducted in 5 villages and 2 factories in Rajshahi and Natore districts in northern Bangladesh.

We would like to thank SNV staff in Dhaka and at field location, whose cooperation and suggestions greatly helped us during the study, and especially the field research: Mr Jason Belanger, the Country Director SNV in Bangladesh for his support and encouragement throughout the study and report writing period; Mr Mahbub Ullah and his team, for planning an excellent itinerary for us; Saidur Rahman, SNV District Coordinator, who organised a varied programme for us, to be able to learn as much as possible in a short time; and his colleagues, Bidyut Kumar, Md. Al-Amin, Samir Roy, Abdur Rahman, S.M. Jahangir Alam, Md. Makhpesus Rahman, Md. Abdul Mannan, Md. Al-Amin and Md. Mofiz Uddin, who were all very helpful in the field.

We would also like to acknowledge the valuable information provided by Professor Kamal Pasha, who specialises in research in women's work in agriculture at the Rajshahi University. His research validates an important conclusion of this report: women in Bangladesh do more work than men in the cultivation and post-harvest activities of most crops.

Last, but definitely not the least, we would like to thank all the respondents, key informants, consumers and factory staff for giving up their valuable time to participate in the interviews and group discussions. Especially to the women and men members of all the farmers' groups, for patiently and thoughtfully responding to our many questions, and letting us ask whatever we wanted.

Note: The GWA team for this study consists of: Joke Muylwijk, Agrarian Engineer and Sociologist; Runia Mowla, Gender and Agriculture Specialist; Mahidul Islam, Anthropologist; and Khadiza Akter, Gender Specialist and Programme Officer. Anamika Amani has edited nearly all the texts.

## Summary

### Background and rationale for the study

Gender equity is crucial to the sustainable development of all sectors of the economy. Agriculture is a core sector in the economy of Bangladesh, contributing almost 20 percent to the national GDP and employing more than 60 percent of the population<sup>1</sup>, a large proportion of whom are women. However, women's contribution to agriculture in Bangladesh remains largely unreported and under reported in official statistics and they are persistently left out of many agricultural interventions to improve farmers' livelihoods and increase productivity. To be effective, efficient and sustainable, all agriculture-related projects need to take gender relations into account, and how these influence women and men's access to resources for production, inputs, skill training and markets.

The regional SWITCH-Asia programme, funded by the European Commission, promotes the adoption of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in Asia and Europe. In Bangladesh, the programme focuses on improving consumer awareness and access to certified safe tomato and mango products.

Media reports broadcasting results of tests showing unacceptably high level of pesticides residues and chemicals in locally produced fruit and vegetable products have served to undermine the trust of many Bangladeshi consumers in the safety of these products.

Since 2016 SNV- Bangladesh (Netherlands Development Organisation) has been implementing the four year EU SWITCH-Asia project in Rajshahi, Natore and Dhaka districts of Bangladesh. The project targets 10000 farmers, who will learn how to implement Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) to produce safe fruit, and 12 million consumers in Dhaka district, who will be made aware of safe food products. It is expected that, by the end of the programme, at least 50% of the domestically processed tomato and mango products that are marketed and consumed in Bangladesh will be certified and safe for consumption by the local population.

The programme has five result areas: Consumer Awareness; Food Safety Standards; Capacity Building; Monitoring and; Coordination. All these areas have gender aspects which need to be considered in project planning, implementation and evaluation to ensure that the consumer awareness-raising, capacity building and monitoring activities in the programme are gender responsive.

At the end of 2017, halfway through the project, an internal project review noted that gender is not mainstreamed in the project, and that the project beneficiaries are mostly men. A Gender Assessment was commissioned to be carried out by the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) to find out the reasons behind this. The EU programme manager further found gaps in the project staff's understanding of gender equality issues, and it was suggested that a Gender workshop be conducted by GWA, for the staff and field team.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Asia-and-the-Pacific/Bangladesh-AGRICULTURE.html>

For the Gender assessment, GWA<sup>2</sup> implemented a field study from 16-20 September 2018, engaging women tomato and mango farmers in focus group discussions (FGD) and individual interviews, to shed light on the reasons why so few of them are involved in the project.

The objectives of the Gender Assessment were:

- to identify the gender aspects of the project activities, including selection of farmers, and their training;
- to collect information from various stakeholders such as farmers, key informants (women and men);
- to learn the impact of the project on empowerment of different categories of women and men;
- to learn and write about the processed food-related choices of consumers of different gender and background;

by open inquiries, interviews, Focus Group Discussions and observations.

The main topics that the study addresses include gender and land rights, gendered division of agricultural work, intra-household decision making, consumption preferences and behaviour of different women and men, and gender and empowerment; and the subsequent consequences of these for project actions.

### Methodology

For the field research of this Gender Assessment the focus is on qualitative methods of information gathering. This includes a particular style of in-depth interview called **Inquiry**, which entails an open discussion in which the interviewees are encouraged to speak about what is important for them. The researchers use a checklist instead of a questionnaire to ensure that relevant topics are covered during the interview. The checklists can be viewed in Annex 3. Case studies from the inquiries with women and men farmers and agricultural labourers can be found in Annex 4.

GWA applies an empowerment approach to analyse the qualitative data, with attention for the four interrelating elements of economic, political, socio-cultural, and physical empowerment, in the context of mango and tomato cultivation. A more detailed description of this approach can be found in Annex 1.

Next to individual inquiries, Focus Group Discussions were held with 5 of the project's farmers' groups, the descriptions of which can be found in annex 5. Further inquiries and interviews were held with key informants, factory staff and workers and consumers, the reports of which can be found in annexes 6, 7, and 8, respectively.

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<sup>2</sup> Gender and Water Alliance. The Gender and Water Alliance Bangladesh is the country chapter of the INGO GWA, which is an international network of women and men, working in water development and/or gender. GWA applies a broad meaning of gender, the differences and relations between women and men, as they interact with age, ethnicity, socio-economic position, living environment, etc. We call this Gender and Diversity, or Gender Plus. GWA has about 260 members in Bangladesh. GWA has a small team and works in various projects involving local members in its work.

The initially planned methodology was adapted to the field situation and to the plans made by SNV staff. While the original intention was to have Focus Group Discussions with general groups of member and non-member villagers, selection of these groups by SNV staff meant that we had the discussions with the Farmers Groups initiated by the project. The numbers of women and men in the FGDs thus depended on the membership of the Mango and Tomato Producer Groups. To have the FGDs with group members instead of randomly selected villagers (women or men) had advantages, because all knew a lot about the project and about the questions we asked. However, a random selection of FGD participants would have been better for objectivity. Instead for control purposes, it was made sure to include in the sample of Inquiries, individual interviews with women and men who are not members of the project's farmer groups.

An added advantage of including the Farmers Groups in our sample was that it increased the number of total respondents in the FGDs as well as individual interviews, so opinions of more people are included in the findings. About 106 men and 57 women participated in the FGDs, instead of the 48 men and 48 women from the original plan, the number of individual interviews was 75 instead of the planned 56, and we interviewed 14 Key Informants instead of 4.

### Findings

The study finds that lack of land ownership by women is a key reason for their low participation in the Farmer Groups initiated by the project, and the related capacity building activities for safe mango and tomato cultivation. Land rights and ownership is an important criterium to be involved in the EU-SWITCH-Asia project. Most of the members and trainees were medium landowners (men), others were sharecroppers or leased land. Very few women own land independently, in their own name. In the few cases where women inherit from their fathers after their death, they are usually too old to start farming themselves. In our sample, however, we did find some women who successfully cultivated mangoes on their own small area of land. Quite exceptionally, one woman belonging to the Oraon minority, managed to buy some land from savings accumulated from her work as agricultural labourer.

To learn from the farmers' groups about the gendered division of tasks in mango and tomato cultivation, the male farmers were asked about the work their women folk do and the women farmers asked about the work of the men and the labourers. The study found that especially in the first and the last phases of the production process of mango and tomato, women do the major share of the agricultural work. Men farmers prepare the land, do part of the work in the field, take care of selling the product, either at the farm itself, or in the market. Spraying the crops with pesticides is mostly done by male labourers, while cleaning of spraying equipment is done by women at home or by the labourers. Farmers often hire male labourers (and some Santhal women labourers) to help with land preparation and harvesting during peak work periods for mango and tomato. Women's work includes managing the tomato nursery, preparing food for the farm labourers, sorting, grading, cleaning the harvested fruit, and packaging it for the market. Next to their agricultural work women are also responsible for all the household work, fetching water, cleaning, cooking, etc.



The study identified a major factor that undermines the effectiveness of the capacity building interventions of the project: that by excluding wives of farmers and landless labourers from the Farmer Groups, training is not reaching those persons who do the actual work at farm level. For example, if pesticide spraying is mostly done by labourers, they need to be involved in trainings on the subject. Equally, if management of plant nurseries and grading is nearly always done by women, then they need to be present in the training about these subjects. Conversely, it is of little use to impart training to men land owners who are not actually involved in farming and have a full-time job outside agriculture. All the agricultural work is then done by their wives and labourers.

The two agro-processing factories visited as part of the Gender assessment were found to be very hygienic, modern and well-managed. From a gender perspective we noticed two major topics. One is that lots of women in the region have work in these factories, where otherwise there are not many employment opportunities, and nearly all of the work is what ILO denotes as decent work. Conditions are quite good. The other point is related to low transparency in labelling of products from the factories, from which consumers are not able to make informed choices about the products they buy. The factories follow the government rules for labelling, but percentages of ingredients are apparently not obligatory, because these are not printed on the packages. Consumers are thus not in a position to know how much of natural fruit content and chemical preservatives are present in the processed mango and tomato products they buy for household use by their families. This poses a big obstacle to the objective of the project to make consumers aware of their consumption and also trust the local Bangladeshi products. While most of the findings from the individual interviews with consumers tally with the results of the Baseline Survey, some extra information was revealed through the qualitative methodology. Many respondents appeared to be rather unaware of food safety of processed tomato and mango products, and how to assess the quality of products. Those who do read product labelling mainly do so to read the expiry date and know if the product is halal.

The report uses the empowerment framework for analysis to sum up the findings on the project's influence on the level of empowerment of different categories of stakeholders. These findings are summarised in a table, which clearly shows that the male farmers group members empower themselves most through the project activities, the women members somewhat less, whilst the non-member farmers and labourers are least empowered, and even disempowered by project activities. The impact of the project on the consumers is rather indirect, and not yet visible.

The report ends with recommendations to make the project more gender-responsive at different levels, from project management strategy to staff recruitment and skills development, selection of farmers, capacity building activities of the project, and finally, suggestions from respondents on how to make the project more beneficial for all stakeholders, women, ethnic minorities and landless labourers.

The first concrete follow-up activity to this Gender Assessment will be a Capacity Building Workshop for the project staff, and staff of partner organisations, to be conducted in November 2018.

## Introduction: the project

The regional SWITCH-Asia programme, funded by the European Commission, promotes the adoption of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in Asia and Europe. In Bangladesh, the programme focuses on improving consumer awareness and access to certified safe tomato and mango products. Consumers all over the world have the right to expect the food they eat to be safe and suitable for consumption. Food safety in the Bangladesh fruit and vegetable sector, however, is an area of concern. For example, tomatoes and mangoes – the two major horticultural crops in the country, have been found to be contaminated with pesticides used in farming. In addition, practices of alteration and adding harmful colouring ingredients or preservatives were found in the processing sectors. As a result, many consumers think that locally produced fruit and vegetable products are not safe for consumption.

The EU SWITCH-Asia II programme is designed to work with the respective stakeholders in different stages of the mango and tomato supply chain in Bangladesh. It focuses on successful engagement with 5,000 smallholder mango farmers, 5,000 tomato farmers, and major agro-food processing companies to bring substantial change to the production of tomato and mango processed food, i.e. juices, sauces, jams, jellies, pickles etc. In addition, the programme also targets the over 12 million consumers in Dhaka district, and other national associations and public agencies that are active in the horticulture sub-sector of the country.

SNV is the main implementing agency of this four-year programme that runs from January 2016 to December 2019, under the common interest and mandate of SCP. It covers the two districts of Natore and Rajshahi in North Bangladesh, and sixteen sub-districts under them. It is expected that, by the end of the programme, at least 50% of the domestically processed tomato and mango products that are marketed and consumed in Bangladesh will be certified and safe for consumption (source: SNV website)

Halfway through the programme, an internal evaluation exercise found that the project proposal did not mention gender and that the project lacked gender indicators. While women had been counted as respondents in the programme's 2016 Baseline Study (34% of the sample), for the 2017 Consumers Survey (33% of the sample), and as trainees in the ToTs for factory staff in Good Handling Practices (GHP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) in equal numbers as men; very few of them were recognized or involved as farmers in the Producer Groups for training on safe farming practices (only 523 of 10.000 farmers). Moreover, the EU Programme Manager (during his Oct. 2017 project visit) noted gaps in the project staff's understanding of gender equality issues, (Source: *EU-SWITCH Asia 2017 Lessons Learned* document)

The programme has five result areas: Consumer Awareness; Food Safety Standards; Capacity Building; Monitoring and; Coordination. All these areas have gender aspects which need to be considered in project planning, implementation and evaluation to ensure that the consumer awareness-raising, capacity building and monitoring activities in the programme are gender responsive.

The Gender and Water Alliance<sup>3</sup> was asked to implement a field study engaging women tomato and mango farmers in focus group discussions (FGD) and individual interviews, to shed light on the reasons why so few of them are involved in the project. Major topics that the study addresses include how gender influences land rights, division of work, intra-household decision making, consumption preferences and empowerment; and the subsequent consequences of these for project actions. Finally, the study proposes recommendations to address gender equality in the various programme result areas.

## Theoretical background

For the purpose of this study, ‘gender’ is used in the broadest sense, encompassing differential power relations not only between women and men, but also amongst women and amongst men, and considering how ethnicity, age, religion, rural-urban context, level of education, socio-economic position, different abilities (handicaps), etc. influence empowerment. We use the terms Gender Plus, or Gender and Diversity, or Gender and Inclusion to denote this approach.

The term ‘agriculture’ is also used in the broadest sense, to denote crop cultivation, animal husbandry and dairy, rearing of poultry and small farm-yard animals, horticulture, forestry, aquaculture, etc.

### Gender, work and land rights in agriculture

In Bangladesh, as in the rest of the world, women involved in agriculture and post-harvest activities constitute between 40 to 80% of the total agricultural labour force. In small farms, women often do the lion’s share of the agricultural work, because their husbands and other male family members migrate elsewhere for paid employment. Also in larger farms women make an important contribution to on and off-farm activities, including as seasonal labourers. However, most of *women’s work in agriculture is not formally recognised* and often taken as an “extension” of their household work, in sharp contrast to men who are formally recognised as farmers for the

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<sup>3</sup> [Gender and Water Alliance](#)

The Gender and Water Alliance Bangladesh is the country chapter of the INGO GWA, which is an international network of women and men, working in water development and/or gender. GWA-B has implemented a large project of the Embassy of the Netherlands (EKN), in which technical projects, funded by EKN, were supported with mainstreaming gender and diversity, by capacitating the technical and managerial staff in doing so themselves, rather than doing the gender work for them.

GWA applies a broad meaning of gender, the differences and relations between women and men, as they interact with age, ethnicity, socio-economic position, living environment, etc. We call this Gender and Diversity, or Gender Plus. Also, all water uses are within our mandate. GWA applies an IWRM approach, including Agriculture and WASH, with links to climate change and the environment.

GWA has about 260 members in Bangladesh, some individuals, and mostly NGOs and District level CSOs. The majority is men. (Internationally the ratio women: men is 55 : 45, In Bangladesh 38% women and 62% men). GWA has a small team and works in various projects involving local members in its work.

same work or even when they are not actually farming<sup>4</sup>. In a *supply chain approach*, it is important to count the hours of all labour that contributes to the value added to the product. When women's work is not counted the product ends up in the market with a price far too low, leading to the exploitation of small agricultural producers that typically rely on family labour.

In Bangladesh *there is a strict gendered division of work* in all sectors, including in agriculture and horticulture, which becomes more flexible when men move away from home to find work elsewhere. Both sexes have specific tasks in the production, post-harvest and processing of food crops. However, when men emigrate temporarily or permanently, women in the family are often left to do the work that is typically done by men in addition to their own tasks. Women can do all work that men do, but few men are proud to show off a working wife to their community or neighbourhood, so it is kept hidden from the public eye as much as possible.

As most land entitlements are in the name of men, they are the ones formally recognised as farmers, and consequently involved as beneficiaries in agricultural projects and capacity building trainings in farming. They often receive training on tasks that are done by their wives, which they do not have much insight on, and therefore ignore or neglect. For the effectiveness of the training and the sustainability and efficiency of agricultural interventions, it is important to build the capacity of those who have the actual knowledge of, and experience in specific activities.

Integrating a gender approach in the SWITCH project is necessary to make the as yet 'unseen' work of women, men and children visible – their specific tasks, hours worked –and counted in the value chain of processed mango and tomato products. It is also necessary to ensure that capacity building, monitoring and consumer awareness raising activities are gender responsive. Considering the ambitious targets of the project (50% of all production of mango and tomato in Bangladesh is certified and safe) it is urgent to include all farmers, both women and men, and not leave half of them out of the project activities.<sup>5</sup>

### **Gender and consumption of foods**

In Bangladesh, as elsewhere, cooking is mainly the task of women. However, because many women are not allowed to go out in public spaces such as markets on their own, shopping for groceries becomes the task of men. However, though men do the actual shopping of groceries, they are often instructed by their wives on what to buy. It is therefore important to involve more women than men in surveys about consumers' preferences on processed tomato and mango products. This study has found some facts and evidence of this.

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<sup>4</sup> Agricultural land owners are often 'non-resident' farmers who lease out their land to sharecroppers and get the main income out of agriculture.

<sup>5</sup> Issues as this one, which may have a direct impact on the project's strategy, are dealt with in the findings and recommendations.

## Empowerment approach

This study applies an empowerment approach with the following 4 interrelated elements, in the context of mango and tomato cultivation:

1. Economic empowerment (costs, income, payment for work, division of work);
2. Political empowerment (taking part in decision-making, membership of production groups);
3. Socio-cultural empowerment (status and self-image)
4. Physical empowerment (division of work, drudgery work, work with dangerous chemicals).

## Objectives of the Gender Assessment

- To have a first-hand view of how SNV implements EU SWITCH-Asia activities in the field, with special attention for gender aspects.
- In-depth information about the involvement of particular stakeholder groups such as women farmers, wives of men farmers, men farmers, village farmers' groups, office holders in the Union Parishad (UP) and other local government agencies, if involved in the project.
- To learn how SNV integrates gender into its trainings, beneficiary selection and further activities.
- To learn how the project impacts the lives and thinking of different categories of women, men, boys and girls, their sense of being empowered, and how they discuss this.
- To conduct open-ended inquiries and Focus Group Discussions with men, women, boys, and girls who are involved in the project, as well as those who are not, using an empowerment perspective.
- To learn about the choices made by urban men and women consumers, regarding shopping of food stuffs, and why they make them.

Questions for which an answer is sought:

- Land rights of men and women: how does it influence the selection of farmers for the project's farmer groups? Is it necessary that the formal owner of the land is the selected farmer? Can both husband and wife not be selected? How is this for tomato cultivation? And how is it for mango cultivation?
- Division of work: which tasks are done by men and which by women? How many hours per day/ week/ season, year do each of these tasks take? Are these hours included in the calculation of the end value of the product in the value chain? How is this for tomatoes? And how is it for mangoes?
- Capacity Building: do those people who perform a certain task, receive the relevant training for it? How are the trainees selected?
- Project influence on beneficiaries: How does the project affect women and men, and their family members?
- Beneficiary concerns: Which are the important issues that the different categories of beneficiaries and interviewees raise? Positive and negative points. Suggestions for improving the project?
- Consumer behaviour: Who makes decisions regarding buying groceries, especially processed mango and tomato products, women or men, and why do they make them?

## Methodology

For the field research of this Gender Assessment the focus is on qualitative methods of information gathering. This includes a particular style of in-depth interview called **Inquiry**, which entails an open discussion in which the interviewees are encouraged to speak about what is important for them. The researchers have a checklist with issues or questions, but these are only referred to, to encourage the informant to speak, if needed. The information of inquiries is not suitable for quantification, but gives thorough understanding of how the target group and other stakeholders feel about the project. Important issues, which are not foreseen and thus not included in the checklist, come to the fore. In quantitative surveys, the answers are pre-formulated, for the respondents to choose from, which could make respondents answer in a way they would never have thought of themselves. In inquiries interviewees are asked to formulate their own issues in their own words. Of all inquiry interviews cases are written<sup>6</sup>. Often we write some literal quotes. Of course the number of interviewees in the case of inquiries is much less than for surveys.

The findings from the inquiries have been analysed using an empowerment perspective and actor-oriented approach. Within this perspective empowerment is seen as a necessary condition for sustained and overall development of individuals, their livelihoods and their environment, which results from gradual social, physical, economic, and political empowerment.

Selection of study location: In coordination with the SNV field team, GWA-B made a purposive selection of four villages: two in Rajshahi, two in Natore. The selection included different categories of villages, half practising tomato and half practicing mango cultivation. During the fieldwork we selected one more village. Some villages were hard to reach and had not received project related visitors before. The sample also included at least one factory for mango processing and one for tomato processing. The finalisation of the sites for field research was done by SNV staff in consultation with GWA-B staff.

Timing: The timing of our field data collection was after the harvest of the mangoes and before the start of the tomato season<sup>7</sup>. The advantage of this was that all farmers had ample time to sit with us and engage in discussions on topics they found important, or which we asked about. For them this was an occasion of reflection on their work and their participation in the project. The disadvantage was that we could not actually observe the women and men involved in their specific tasks in cultivation and post-harvest of the crops. This limited our possibility to cross-check the information from the inquiries and FGDs.

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<sup>6</sup> See the many cases in the annexes. To make the report not too long, some cases are not included, when information was similar. They will be made available on request.

<sup>7</sup> During our visit the farmers, women and men, were not working in tomato and mango cultivation, so we could not make pictures of the division of work.

Most individual interviews (inquiries) were conducted during and after the Group Discussions. This was efficient, but had as disadvantage that we saw the house and fields of less than half of the interviewees. During the fieldwork in September we were unable to get enough time to visit the villages of indigenous minorities. However, in November, when we did have an opportunity, we managed to interview 8 Santhal and Oraon women farmers or agricultural labourers.

Stakeholders consulted: different levels of SNV field staff; women and men farmers: members of groups that were organised by the project; workers in the fruit processing factories; and a number of women and men who are not involved in the project, but could have been selected. In addition, some teachers, Upazila and Union Parishad members were interviewed as Key Informants. Finally some unplanned stakeholders were interviewed such as Adivasi women who were visited in their villages, and interviewed as Key informants.

### Validity of information collected

Of the five groups involved in the FGDs, two were well established (Koicharpara and Biharipara), whilst one group was new, just a month old, with 8 Oraon women who had become members just a day prior to the FGD. This was the women’s group in Shonardighi, which seemed to be organized at the time of the Gender Assessment. In the mixed groups some of the women members were the wives of the male members.

The total information gathered from the interviewees and the group members appears to be sufficiently valid, even though, in case of selection of other groups in other locations, it could have been slightly different. The information gathered from the well-established groups, which are existing longer, have already had all the training, and who have completed a production cycle in the project, was not different from that of the newer and less trained groups. This is because the Gender Assessment elicited in-depth qualitative information on gender relations in agriculture, and on empowerment, and was not aimed to evaluate the performance of groups, or of the project as such.

**Table 1. Data collection schedule**

	Planned schedule	Implemented schedule
a	The GWA staff selects the team for this Gender Assessment and prepares them for the field work.	The GWA staff was selected and prepared.
b	The GWA team-members read some documents of the EU SWITCH project, such as the reports that were made available by SNV.	The GWA team-members read the documents provided by SNV staff.
c	Meeting with EU-SWITCH team in Rajshahi. Gender issues will be briefly mentioned and the opinion of the team members is asked.	Meeting with the EU-SWITCH SNV teams of Rajshahi and of Natore took place the first afternoon. Gender issues in the project, the empowerment approach and the schedule for field work are briefly discussed. The programme was adapted where needed: for example, a few more meetings were included.

d	<p>Structured group discussions (Focus group discussions, FGD) with various stakeholders in 4 SNV SWITCH villages (with logistical support of SNV staff). In each village there will be two FGDs, one for men and one for women. The number of participants is about 12. The total number of FGDs is 8, so 96 participants are planned.</p>	<p>Structured group discussions were conducted in 5 villages. The Farmers Groups were the Focus Groups. A total of 5 FGDs were conducted - two with mixed male-female groups, two only with male members, and one with a new group consisting of only women. The total number of group participants was 163. In general, FGDs with only women are giving women more chance to talk openly, but in this case, in the mixed groups, we found the women very vocal.</p>
e	<p>One-to-one, open inquiries with different men and women in four villages (without facilitation by SNV project staff). The plan is to interview 4 women and 3 men in each of the villages extensively, following the methodology of inquiries: open questions, in which the interviewee can discuss the issues which are important for her or him. There is no questionnaire, but a checklist to make sure that all relevant topics are discussed. In these interviews the researcher always asks “Why?”, thus creating space for insight beyond the ‘given’, ‘normal’ situation<sup>8</sup>. A total of 28 interviews are planned. Notes and pictures will be made. Case studies are written of a selection of the inquiries.</p>	<p>One-to-one, open inquiries with 9 men and 22 women farmers and labourers were conducted in the four villages. Notes as well as pictures have been made of all these interviews, and cases written up. See <b>ANNEX 4</b>.</p>
f	<p>About 20 consumer interviewees, 10 women and 10 men, in Dhaka about consumers priorities, decision making regarding shopping for food stuff such as tomato and mango products. The interviewees are selected from different levels of people, poor, middle class and those who are better off. Women and men are different consumers.</p>	<p>With the Inquiries methodology, 28 respondents, 15 women consumers and 13 men consumers, in Dhaka and Rajshahi were asked about their priorities, and decision-making process when shopping for processed tomato and mango products. The respondents were selected from different classes of people - poor, middle class and those who are better off. Shops were visited in different parts of Dhaka, some in peri-urban areas. The number of interviews is large enough for eliciting valid qualitative information, and to have an impression of consumers’ priorities, awareness and opinions, but not to use for quantitative information.</p>

<sup>8</sup> It is a different option to send students to villages with questionnaires, but the information then will be shallow. We sent experienced researchers who have learnt to listen to the respondents and ask and ask again, till it is clear what the interviewee really means.



**Table 2. Original Field work Plan**

district	Upazila	Village	# FGD, women, men	# women	# men	Women in factories	Men in factories	Consumers, w/m	KII	Total
<b>Inquiries, interviews</b>										
Rajshahi		a	2 = 24	4	3	2	2		1	34
		b	2 = 24	4	3				1	34
Natore		c	2 = 24	4	3	2	2		1	34
		d	2 = 24	4	3				1	34
Dhaka								20		20
<b>Total</b>		4	8 = 96	16	12	4	4	20	4	156

**Table 3. Field work conducted:**

district	Upazilla	Village	# FGD, women, men	# women	# men	Women in factories	Men in factories	Consumers, w/m	KII	Total
<b>Inquiries, interviews</b>										
Rajshahi	Puthia	Biharipara	1 FGD 5 women and 25 men	10	4	2	3		1	50
	Godagari	Bidirpur	1 FGD 30 men	5	1				2	38
	Godagari	Shonardighi	1 FGD 42 women						6	48
Natore	Bagatipara	Koicharpara	1 FGD 10 women 20 men	4	3				3	40
	Natore Sadar	Auray	1 FGD 31 men	3	1	5	3		2	45
Dhaka								28		28
<b>Total</b>		5	5 FGD = 163: 57 women, 106 men	22	9	7	6	28 (15 women and 13 men)	14	249

Summarising, the planned methodology was adapted to the field situation and to the plans made by SNV. Focus Group Discussions ended up being with the Farmers' Groups of the Safe Tomato Producer Group or the Safe Mango Producer Group rather than with general groups of member and non-member villagers. The numbers of women and men in the FGDs thus depended on the membership of the Mango and Tomato Producer Groups. To have the FGDs with group members instead of randomly selected villagers (women or men) had advantages, because all knew a lot about the project and about the questions we asked. However, ad random selection of FGD participants would have been better for objectivity. Instead for control purposes, it was made sure to include in the sample of Inquiries, individual interviews with women and men who are not members of the project's farmer groups.

The Focus Groups were larger than planned, and took longer time, so opinions of more people are included in the findings: about 106 men and 57 women, instead of the 48 men and 48 women from the original plan. The number of individual interviews was 72 instead of the planned 56, and we interviewed 14 Key Informants instead of 4.

### Approach

The planned empowerment approach appeared applicable to the context of the project and prevailing gender relations. See the section Analysis from an Empowerment Approach and **ANNEX 1**, for more detailed description.

## Background and Review of documents

### The context within Bangladesh

Both Rajshahi and Natore are well-developed and relatively well-off districts of Bangladesh. Major problems in the country, such as salinity, arsenic, floods and even droughts are not as



acute in this area. People don't lose their land to the rivers, don't have to live on chars in insecurity, need no cyclone shelters, and need not walk many miles to find drinking water. Even farmers with a small holding, are relatively well-to-do. Complaining about one's situation is not the custom in Rajshahi and Natore. They are very hard-working people, and farmers try to get the most out of their land.

Both men and women work hard in agriculture. Women's household work is a daily returning chore of many hours, which does not lessen in the peak months' of mango and tomato production. Though, officially, agriculture is seen as men's work, women contribute the same or even more hours, in most cases of tomato and mango farming. For women not to be recognized as farmers is not only an injustice towards them, but also leads to unsustainable project interventions and inefficient national policies in agriculture.

Landholding size does not have much influence on the amount of work women and men do. The land is owned mostly by men, and some women also have small parcels of land in their name. Sometimes land can be leased or sharecropped.



Mangoes and tomatoes are very different crops. Mangoes are trees which are planted for a life-time, whilst tomatoes have a life-span of a few months. The common feature of the crops is that all the fruits ripen in a very short period, during which the supply is high and the price is low. Any form of preservation is welcome and also needed to give farmers more options to sell when the prices are in their advantage. The current methods of preserving are few and more suitable for the lower quality varieties or fruits. Factories produce tomato sauce and mango drink with the pulp produced in one or two months of the year.



All products of the factories we visited contain the preservative sodium benzoate, known to be a health risk when consumed regularly. Products such as mango drink are used frequently by children, who take a package to school daily, as part of their lunch. This makes it even more critical to ensure the safety of such food products. The objectives of the EU SWITCH-Asia project are very important in this sense.

### **Gender content in the project documents and implementation of SNV-SWITCH**

The GWA team had access to the Narrative Report of 2017, the EU-SWITCH Asia 2017 Lessons Learned and to the Baseline Survey of 2016.

- In the log frame, there are no gender indicators for any of the outcomes.
- In the project documentation the only sex-disaggregated data that is available, is about the number of women and men farmer members of the groups, and the number of women trained in the factories for GMP. Other sex-disaggregated data are not mentioned.
- The Baseline Survey report mentions the number of women and men respondents, but differences between them are not included in the analysis.
- The gendered division of work between men and women in the mango and tomato cultivation, the differences in their access to resources and in decision-making power, are not included as indicators to measure how the project influences gender equality.
- The SNV staff teams in both Rajshahi and Natore are all-male and had no training on gender issues in agriculture.



## Findings

The answers to SNV's questions in this Gender Assessment are elaborated in the following paragraphs.

### FGDs and respondents

In the Farmer Group meetings most (if not all) members were present, and keen to participate in the FGDs. Even though the President and Secretary were inclined to answer all the questions, we tried to involve all members. We did this by directly asking members seated in the back, or by asking them to come and sit in the front (if they were elder members), or by asking members to raise their hands. The FGDs took as much time as we wanted and needed, because all were interested in the discussion, and this was the lean time in mango and tomato cultivation when farmers have more spare time. The women members also allowed us lots of time, only a few had to leave to go home and cook. The meeting with the women's group in Shonardighi took place in the late afternoon. These women were also interested in the FGD and did not show signs of wanting to rush home.

In many contexts it is advisable to have separate FGDs for women, who then feel more free to express their opinion than when they are in mixed groups with men, but we found the women in the SNV Safe Producer (mixed) Groups very vocal.



*Bidirpur: the paddy is harvested and drying, which makes the field free to transplant tomatoes*

SNV staff organized that all participants of the members' meetings (FGD) received a box with lunch or nice snacks. Even though the food may have been an incentive to them, the group members appeared to be genuinely interested to participate wholeheartedly in the discussion on gender and gendered division of work.

As a strategy for engaging all participants in the discussion, and to cross check information, we asked the men what work women do in mango cultivation, where each man was allowed to mention one activity. In the same way, we asked the women what the men do. After that we would invite the women members to mention what the men had forgotten, and the men members about what the women had forgotten. This also helped members to have a better understanding of each other's contributions in farming.

The informants' ages varied from 20 to 50 years or above. Most of them were found to have a low level of literacy, with many labourers having never been to primary school, and only a few of the farmer members having completed their secondary school. Of the respondents working in the PRAN and Kishwan factories, also not many had completed their tertiary level education (college). Most of the informants were married. The main occupations of informants were: mango or tomato farmer, home maker, factory management staff and workers, and day labourers. A small number was involved as guard of a mango orchard.

### **Land Rights, Land Ownership and Economic Position**

Even though women play an important role in the management and cultivation of mangoes and tomatoes alongside their household work, very few women are considered to be the owner of the trees or the land they help manage.

Men own most of the agricultural land. In some places we found 100% of land titles in the name of men, whereas in other places women had a small piece of land in their name which they had inherited from their father. The half share that daughters are supposed to inherit according to Muslim law was found in the case of a few elderly women, who were not farming themselves anymore. Most women said that when their parents would pass away, they themselves would be too old to benefit from their inheritance. We were also told that brothers often give less than the half share a sister is supposed to get. Hindu women inherit nothing, and ethnic minorities have different rules of inheritance, not much in the benefit of women, or have lost their land during the war for independence, never to get it back, till present. In Shonardighi a few middle-aged women had inherited the land of their parents. Nearby we found one Oraon woman who, after her parents had lost all land to land-grabbers, had managed to save enough from her work as agricultural labourer, to buy a piece of land for herself, where she now grows tomatoes. It was found that land rights played an important role in determining the socio-economic class of households in our sample, and had a direct correlation to gender-based vulnerability and women's empowerment.

Land ownership also determines the selection of the farmers as group members in the SNV project, as it is said to be one of the key criteria for membership. However, we found that this criterion is not handled strictly, as some women who own no land are members, and some men who are sharecroppers or leasing all or part of their land, are also members. Three women are de facto land owners, because their husbands are abroad for their work. They are members in name of their husbands, but make most decisions about the cultivation independently.

It is important that the condition regarding land ownership is applied flexibly, not just in practice, but also as a rule. In general, the farmers in our research sample were not large landowners. According to our respondents even a small piece of land can maintain a small family comfortably as long as it is productive. We found that large farmers were not doing much of the agricultural work themselves, but appointed day labourers for this - mostly men but also women.

From our interviews with labourers, we found that the scope of earning opportunities for landless day labourers was most limited compared to all other groups, with women and ethnic minorities at the bottom of the group respectively. Ethnic minorities get paid less than the mainstream Bengali labourers, and women of this group get still less. All women are primarily responsible for domestic work, which limits their earning opportunity. They are involved in care for their children and the elderly, as well as in livestock and cattle rearing, poultry, vegetable gardening, and stitching, embroidery, handicrafts, etc.

### Gender division of tasks

We found that division of tasks in mango and tomato farming, between men and women, varied slightly from place to place. Broadly described, men do the farming jobs in the field, while women carry out farming and post-harvest tasks in and around the house. What is very clear is that women do a lot of work in mango and in tomato production. Table 3, 4 and 5 summarize our findings. These matrixes can be used by the SNV field staff in a training session with the groups, to discuss and validate or contradict our percentages, and also to raise awareness on gender-based division of work, and women's contribution in farming.

Group members told us that they had never been asked such questions as the GWA team asked, and they had not realised that their women are so important. As one President of a group said at the end of the session: *“Women work more time in mango cultivation than men do”*. When asked what the mango harvest would be without the work of women, men agreed: *“.....there would not be even one mango”*.

In the group discussions on women and men's work, women's tasks were commonly overlooked. There was a tendency among the men to take the work of women for granted, and not give it much importance. Most women said that they are not involved in decision-making on farming, and have no control over any resources. This makes their position vulnerable, and dependent on their husbands. One group of women we spoke to does all the work in tomato-cultivation except for the tillage and land preparation. These are the Adivasi women (Oraon in Shonardighi and Santhal in Bidirpur)<sup>9</sup>.

From the FGDs and interviews we collected the following information (tables 3, 4 and 5). The percentages in the tables are not to be seen as an exact, but more as an average of our findings comparing the two crops across locations in the two districts. The tables show that women do many tasks in both crops. What is clear from this information is that the project should not bypass the category of people who does most of the work (women), even though these are specific tasks. In those cases, where we have no notes about the percentages, we only write a “v” to convey that women or men do contribute to that particular task. Blue is for men, and pink for women. See also [ANNEX 5](#) for the descriptions of the FGDs with lists of division of tasks.

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<sup>9</sup> See the cases of KII in [ANNEX 6](#) and the information related to the Adivasi groups in the study and project area in [ANNEX 9](#).

**Table 4<sup>10</sup>. Gender Division of work in Mango farming, based on information of FGDs in Koicharpara and Biharipara, both in Natore**

Tasks	By men farmers %	By women farmers %	By men labourers %	By women labourers %
First tillage of the land, often long ago	5		95	
Tillage, ploughing, land preparation: Under the mango trees other crops are grown such as turmeric, or grass for animals	10		90	
Nursery of seeds, grafting saplings	20	80		
Planting trees (once in many years)	90	10		
Pruning trees	10		90	
Taking pruned branches and dead leaves to the house	√	√	√	√
Keeping records for SNV	50	50		
Preparing compost of manure, plant residues, ash and food scraps	10	90		
Collecting fertilizer and pesticides from the market	100			
Applying manure and/or fertilizer in the orchard	70		30	
Cooking food for labourers, handing it out, cleaning everything afterwards		100		
Spraying: collection of water to prepare the mixture		100		
Spraying pesticides	5		95	
Cleaning pesticide tanks and machine	10	60	20	10
Checking the trees and seeing if irrigation is needed	50	50		
Irrigating by watering can (pitcher) from pond		100		
Irrigating by pump from DTW	50		50	
Guarding	40	30	20	10
Harvesting of fruits	40	20	40	
Bringing the fruits to the house	50		50	
Grading and sorting		90		10
Removing gum or pectin		90		10
Putting paper in crates and labeling them		90		10
Packing the mangoes		90		10
Cleaning of all surroundings, yard and tools		90		10

<sup>10</sup> The percentages are rough estimates, based on the FGDs and the interviews. Because no actual work was going on during the time of the study we have not seen the work actually being done. In cases of richer farmers, more work is done by the labourers, and those who are poor do most work themselves. Here we have written averages. Of course the readers are allowed to disagree. Nevertheless, we are convinced that overall this gives a true picture, be it not exact.

Tasks	By men farmers %	By women farmers %	By men labourers %	By women labourers %
Selling mangoes to vendor, or in the market, or even far away	100			
Guarding the money, before it is spent	50	50		

**Table 5: Other work of women and men, apart from and next to tomato and mango cultivation**

Tasks	By men	By women
Feeding of cattle, rearing poultry		100
Preparing food for the family		100
Collecting water for drinking, for cleaning, bathing, animals, toilet use and other domestic chores	10	90
Caring for the family, the children and the elderly		100
Cleaning house and yard, washing clothes, maintain the hygiene of the family		100
Helping children with their homework		100
Working in other crops: paddy, processing of the harvest, vegetables, and various other crops		100
Doing all agricultural and related work that are tasks of men, in case the men are abroad or in the city for work		100
Helping women in the household when they are ill	10	
Sitting in the tea stall to hear the news	100	
Decision-making about land, sharecropping, buying selling land, long-term use of land	90	10
Decision-making about marketing and the proceeds of the work, interacting with traders	100	

**Table 6. Gender Division of work in Tomato farming, based on information of FGDs in Bidirpur, Shonardighi in Rajshahi, and Aauray, in Natore**

Tasks	By men farmers %	By women farmers %	By men labourers %	By women labourers %
Preparing seedbed, close to the house		80		20
Managing the shading and cover against heavy rain		100		
Fencing of seedbed		80		20
Watering the seedbed carefully and daily		90		10
Weeding of seedbed		90		10
Pulling out the seedlings carefully, one by one		90		10
Preparing the land for transplanting: ploughing by tractor	10		90	
Overseeing the ploughing by tractor	90		10	
Leveling and preparing beds (rows) and gullies by hoe	30		50	20
Bringing the seedlings to the field	30		40	30



Tasks	By men farmers %	By women farmers %	By men labourers %	By women labourers %
Keeping records for SNV	50	50		
Preparing compost (organic of manure, straw, peels, ash and food scraps)		100		
Applying manure compost in the field	70		20	10
Cooking food for labourers, hand it out, clean everything afterwards		100		
Spraying: collection of water to prepare the mixture		80		20
Spraying	50		50	
Cleaning pesticide tanks and machinery	10	40	30	10
Weeding		20	20	60
Irrigating by watering can (pitcher) from pond		30	10	60
Irrigating by pump from DTW	50		50	
Guarding	80		20	
Harvesting of tomatoes	50	10	20	20
Grading and sorting		80		20
Cleaning and make them shine		80		20
Putting paper in crates and label them		80		20
Cleaning of all spaces and tools		80		20
Selling tomatoes to the buyer and the market, sometimes very far	100			
Guarding the money, before it is spent	50	50		



Tomato nursery close to the house, with screen and plastic to protect the seed from sun and rain, Bidirpur

## Capacity Building

Capacity building activities in the project include the training of the farmers groups, the Farmer Field school days, demonstration work in the field, and observation of certain days annually. The gender issues in capacity building, for different categories of stakeholders are listed in this section.

### Farmers:

The male farmer members in the Safe Producer groups constituted 95% of the membership at the start, and has now slightly dropped to 88% due to a small increase in women members<sup>11</sup>. The men love to come to the training, where they enjoy the company of peers, discuss and learn about their work, get opportunities to improve their product and increase their yield, and at the end get a good meal. As group membership entitles one to all these privileges, benefits, and enhanced social status, it is not surprising that the male farmers are not keen to give these up, by letting their wives attend in their place. Instead they prefer to inform their wives about what they have learnt, and consider this to be sufficient for them. When we explained that training is meant for the person who does that particular task, directly, they are not keen to agree. As can be seen in the tables above (on division of work), there are quite a few elements of the process that are nearly only done by women. It would be more effective, efficient, sustainable and equitable to give the training regarding these subjects directly to the women farmers. This is an old and persistent gender issue in agriculture: it just does not work, and is a waste of resources to train those who are not involved in the actual work.

Amongst the male members there were some who told us that they would not like their wives to attend training. Some other men did not say it, but may have thought so. The President of the Koicharpara Group told us that he could not remember what he had been taught about certain aspects of safe production, and could not explain them to his wife when she asked about it, because it related to her work, not his.

Development implies change. This project aims for change: change in production practices and change in consumer awareness and consumption behaviour. However, gender relations need to change as well and male group members should be encouraged to send their wives for training. If some have allowed their wives, others will follow. Moreover, women can play an important role in convincing their husbands in the uptake of GAP, when they are convinced of its benefits. Women also are the prime caretakers of their family's health, involving them in training will also increase the uptake of safe production practices related to pesticide spraying and handling of pesticides. When the benefits of applying a gender approach in farming is discussed in the training, men farmers will begin to understand that encouraging their wives' participation in the training is in their own benefit too. Furthermore, other women farmers, not just wives of the selected farmers, will be interested and benefit from the training.

The same as described for women and men farmers, counts for (relatively) large landowners and labourers. If the larger landowners are members of the groups, and they do no cultivation

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<sup>11</sup> This is verbal information: no reports that we had access to, shows this percentage.

themselves, it would be more efficient and effective if the labourers, who do the actual farm work, are trained instead of the landowners, who have other jobs and means of income.

For the field days, demonstration and other project activities it is equally important to invite all those who are involved in the work.

The Gender Assessment did not directly address the selection of member farmers, as this is more the mandate of an evaluation team. Nevertheless, there are a few issues about the criteria for member selection: most farmers, and especially the women farmers that have been selected, seem to be selected when already empowered. And there is the issue of both husband and wife as members, as is the case in the mixed groups we met.

#### The SNV team:

The teams in Rajshahi and Natore are all male and have had no gender training.<sup>12</sup> The need for this training is urgent, and all staff we met expressed sincere interest in getting gender training as they now understand the need to integrate gender in the project.

Recruiting qualified women in the project management and field staff team would also catalyse efforts to integrate a gender approach in the project.

#### The Agricultural Officers:

The actual agricultural content of the different trainings is decided by the Agricultural Officers (AO) of DAE. They do not appear to be aware about gender aspects of agriculture, such as the gender aspects in mango and tomato cultivation specifically. The project needs to take this into account and include AOs in gender training, relevant to their context of work. We were informed that some women AOs are on board in the implementing areas, who could be selected to do the GAP training. This would be better for discussion and peer learning on gender<sup>13</sup>.

#### **Factories**

In the large PRAN factory, we visited the tomato-sauce production line and found that while many women were employed as factory workers, it was men who serve as the overseers. All the work we saw can be considered as decent work (satisfying ILO standards). In case of sexual or other harassment, the women write their complaint and put it in the Grievance Box, after which the Welfare Officer will deal with the case, and culprits may be dismissed. PRAN has day care facilities for babies. A total of 9000 employees work here. In the smaller factory of Kishwan we were able to see all their processes, in tomato sauce production but also noodles, leechy drink and other products. The GWA team was allowed to talk to whoever we wanted and also to make pictures. Moreover, the staff we interviewed spoke to us freely. The whole setup made a pleasant impression, even though we did find some women involved in less decent work here. For example, those who had to look into a neon light to check if bottles are clean, and those who

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<sup>12</sup> This is planned for November 2018.

<sup>13</sup> During the project and the workshop, we only met male AEOs. We were told that 30% of Agricultural officers are women, following the rules of the government, most of them active at the lowest level.

had their hands in chilli all the time. Also, those workers who fry the noodles have a hard time in the heat. Women constitute the majority of the floor-level workers in this factory, while men do easier work and are in a cooler environment. Despite this, the women workers we spoke to expressed how happy they were to have the employment. We noted that there is no grievance box in this factory, hence no formal channel for complaints regarding sexual harassment, or their redressal. The factory counts a total of 350 employees approximately, 80 % of whom are women.

Salaries in Kishwan are very low, between Tk. 80 to 120 per day, some say, while others say Tk. 5000 per month. Women are viewed as less productive because they have babies and need to balance their work in the factory with their household and care-giving tasks at home.



In both factories most women work on a daily basis, but those who have worked some years with the factory are given a permanent worker contract which entitles them to pregnancy leave with company benefits. Transportation facilities are available for the permanent employees who live in the surrounding villages, and is much appreciated by them.



### Consumers

In 2016, SNV, with the help of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University in Dhaka, carried out a consumer survey to get quantitative data. This survey gives important baseline information, but the approach is different from the qualitative consumer interviews conducted as part of this Gender Assessment. The different methodologies complement each other rather than replace the other. The Baseline survey mentions the number of women and men respondents (34% women) but further don't give information about the difference between response between men and women. Per age group and educational level such information is included. The

questionnaires for the quantitative survey are set up in such a way, that respondents choose from pre-written answers, but this means that some information may be missed because it is not asked. For example, in our interviews a number of respondents mentioned that they would check on packages if the food is halal, but as this answer is not included in the Survey questionnaire, this piece of information is lost.

While the small sample of Consumer respondents interviewed for the Gender Assessment is not sufficient for quantitatively valid data, the detailed information we got from the interviews as compared to the survey generates better understanding of priorities of consumers and the different interests of women and men when choosing processed mango and tomato food products.

Women consumers were found to be more concerned about food safety than men, because they considered themselves to be the manager of food security and food safety of their families. Even though women consumers were not found to be very knowledgeable about safety of processed mango and tomato products, they generally preferred to feed their families safe and good quality home-cooked food.



Most women said they were pushed by their children to buy mango and tomato juices and sauces to use at home, while others (who owned food stalls) bought them to serve to their customers, along with snacks. Middle-aged men and women appeared more conscious and concerned about safe food while young men and women did not bother about what processed food they ate every day, particularly snacks and drinks. The respondents who said they read the labels of the jar or bottles of processed products they bought in shops, *mostly did this to check for a 'halal' sticker<sup>14</sup> and for the date of expiry.*

In general, we found that the interviewed men and women had very little knowledge on processed food and its ingredients. Only two men from our sample of respondents knew which chemical additives in processed food are harmless, and which ones are toxic when consumed regularly. One was a health scientist from Nepal and the other, a professor from Rajshahi University. To raise awareness of consumers on the ill effects of chemical additives in processed food, a lot of campaigning has to be done to counteract the effect of frequent TV commercials portraying mango drinks and tomato sauce as healthy alternatives to eating the fresh fruits. Not all consumers believe this, but too many do.

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<sup>14</sup> We checked some literature on halal food, and found that toxic and carcinogenic preservatives like Sodium or Potassium Benzoate are nevertheless halal because traces of it are said to be found naturally in some plants.

From our interviews we found that men are often responsible for doing the grocery shopping for their household in markets, but their wives and/or mothers instruct them on what to buy. This is important to consider in relation to the objectives of the project i.e. to create awareness on safe mango and tomato processed products among a large percentage of Dhaka consumers by December 2019. It is important to direct campaigns more to married women with children, than to men.

The following table shows a number of consumer characteristics and criteria for buying processed food, disaggregated by sex. This information is compiled from the qualitative sample, as well as earlier SNV Baseline Survey report.

**Table 7: Comparison between Gender Assessment and Baseline Survey**

Consumers' issues	# Women in in-quiries 2018 (14)	# Men in inquiries 2018 (13)	Total woman and men, in % Source: Gender Assessment 2018	Total woman and men, in % Source: baseline survey SNV 2016, %
Aware of food safety issues	11	6	63	40 – 80 *
Finds price important	9	6	63	71
Finds brand important	11	7	69	68
Man is main or second shopper	9	13	81	No data
Woman is main or second shopper	12	4	59	No data
Man makes decisions about shopping	2	7	33	No data
Woman makes decisions about shopping	13	10	85	No data
Reads expiry date	7	4	41	90 **
Reads ingredients	1	2	11	No data
Knows ingredients	1	2	11	No data
Source of info: TV, newspaper	5	6	48	94 **
Source of info: Relatives, friends	7	2	39	87 **
Source of info: specialists, those who have knowledge	2	5	30	91 **

\* Various questions are asked, and different percentages relate to different forms of awareness.

\*\* The large differences between the Baseline Survey and the Gender Assessment in these four issues, relate to the manner of interviewing. For example, if a consumer is asked: “Do you read the expiry date?” the response will be different from when asked: “What do you find important when you buy processed and packed foods?” Also, if respondents can choose from a list of sources of information, the answer will be different from when they are asked: “Where do you get your information from?” The questionnaire of the Survey lists optional answers. The Gender Assessment interview style leaves this question open.

## Value Chain and Gender

Value Chain Analysis is a business management concept that was developed by Michael Porter in his 1985 book<sup>15</sup> to explain the collection of activities performed by a company or business to create value for its customers. Activities that add value at each stage of the supply chain (production, collection, transport, processing, packaging etc.) lead to competitive advantage for businesses involved. Ultimately this should lead to a better finished product for the consumer and create a higher profitability for the producers, companies and businesses throughout the chain. The analysis involves taking a holistic look at the interactions and movements within a sector, and the processes through which raw material inputs are transformed into usable goods. For a value chain approach to lead to sustainable business and product development, it is important that benefits are generated for all the stakeholders involved, from producers to customers.

In this study, however, we found that the tendency of smallholder mango and tomato farmers to not count the cost of family labour (of themselves, their wives and children) used in farming, means that this is not reflected in the market prices of the products. Hence these stay (far) too low to generate profits in the long term, and lead to losses in times of crisis (illness, drought, market crash). Most of the farmer respondents in our study mentioned that they only counted the hired labour and other agricultural input-related as business costs. So in fact, what is seen to be profit by the farmers is the (unpaid) wages due to them and their family members who helped with the farming and post-harvest activities. These labour hours put in by men and women members of the farming household should be noted in the SNV documentation booklet that all farmers fill in over the growing season. This will give the project a better indication of how safe Mango and Tomato production practices influences the costs and profits, compared to the conventional farming practices.

## Some other comments of farmers

- Farmer respondents in our study indicated that they often have to sell their produce in the markets at too low a price due to a glut in the supply from India, just when their crop is ready to sell.
- If they calculate their family labour costs this would leave them with loss rather than profits.
- They think that local storage and refrigeration facilities and links to other larger (foreign) buyers would increase their scope to sell their produce at higher prices.
- These interventions can make the efforts of the project more sustainable.
- Other farmers told us that traders, vendors, buyers, and the agents of PRAN company form a syndicate, which exploits the farmers, even those who are members of the SNV groups.
- Due to the project which involves 10,000 farmers, who now use more labour, the wages increase in the peak season. Then consumers also have to pay more for the mangoes and tomatoes, which they may not be able to afford.
- If the price is higher because the family work is calculated, whilst the competition is strong, the farmers will not be able to get the price they calculate based on the value chain system.

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<sup>15</sup> *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*, By Michael E. Porter (1985).

### Impact of the Project<sup>16</sup>

Overall, the impression we got from the interviews and group discussions with farmers is that the impact of the project is positive. Both men and women farmer members said they are happy with the project. The major problem is said to be the limited market, the low prices, and the lack of bargaining power of the farmers vis a vis the buyers. However, it should be noted that most farmer respondents in our study still have to experience a full season with the SNV project and the factories as buyers.

From a gender perspective it can be said that the high percentage of male members in the safe producer groups, compared to women, gives men more benefits and women less. The aim for gender equality can only be reached by equity measures such as giving more opportunities and benefits to women than to men, and not the opposite. This is the same for well to do farmers versus poor farmers. The project could select smaller farmers and *bargadars* (sharecroppers) instead of the richer landowners, as most of them don't work in agriculture, and have all the work done by labourers.

From a food safety and consumers' perspective, the impact of the project on the strategies of the factories still seems to be limited. All processed products of tomato and mango contain sodium benzoate and too much sugar and salt. The ingredients as listed on the bottles and packages don't mention percentages of the ingredients (see for example the pictures of mango drink in the Background section at the start of this report, and note 5), which according to the Consumers Association Bangladesh is not compulsory by law. From an empowerment perspective, consumers need to be able to make informed choices, but they have limited non-biased information and very few alternatives. In this situation some consumers say it is even better not to know what one eats and drinks, for one's peace of mind. To quote a respondent: *"My ignorance about food safety is a blessing for me, otherwise I would starve to death"*. Consumer awareness-raising campaigns on safe food should focus more on married women with children, as they are the household members who decide what food will be bought for their family.

### About the Objectives of the Project

Most objectives have already been discussed earlier in this report. However, we can add a few more points:

- SNV staff is active and efficient in their field work, even though they don't have sufficient knowledge to integrate gender in their training and other work. The study found that the team has good contacts with the Local Government Agencies and also with the Agricultural Officers. As the Agricultural Officers who give the training to the farmers also have not had gender training, they are not knowledgeable about gender relations in agriculture and the division of work between men and women, which is crucial for the project.

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<sup>16</sup> This Gender Assessment is not an evaluation, so GWA is not in a position to write very much about the impact in general, but mostly from a gender perspective.



- SNV district staff has started to involve more women farmers, and shows a lot of interest in learning more about gender issues. Nevertheless, the actual number of women farmers is still very few (10-12% of total farmer members, is the verbal information) even though many of them<sup>17</sup> would like to produce tomatoes and mangoes using GAP, if they are given an opportunity to participate in the groups and trainings.
- From our interviews and FGDs we observed that the impact of the project is very positive on the lives of the members and their families. In some cases we can speak of steps towards empowerment, and in other cases the members were selected probably because they were relatively more empowered and were socio-economically better off than others. The positive impact is true for the group members, but many more farmers, women and men, are interested who are not involved in the project. This is often the case with a project, and it remains to be seen if the AOs will give other farmers the same training in due time. That would make the projects' impact more sustainable.
- Ultimately, as food safety is the aim of the project, consumers will have to benefit too. Even though we expect they will, it is not at all clear that with the current approach<sup>18</sup> the project will be able to achieve its ambitious target i.e. at least 50% of the domestically processed tomato and mango products that are marketed and consumed in Bangladesh will be certified and safe for consumption and 50% of consumers in Dhaka district are aware of food safety issues related to mangoes and tomatoes. Project managers and Quality managers in the factories talk about using less preservatives in processed products, but don't quantify anything when we ask them.




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<sup>17</sup> The Gender Assessment is qualitative, and the team cannot quantify the number of women who would be available. Our impression is that they are many.

<sup>18</sup> SNV staff mentions the following: the project has taken an integrated approach fostering GAP, GHP and GMP to address food safety aspects of the processed products of tomato and mango. The agro-processing companies, with whom SNV is working, are holding around 90% of the domestic market of the processed products. Therefore, the target of the project can be achieved through these agro-processing companies.

## Analysis from an Empowerment Approach

The empowerment approach which was used in the design of this Gender Assessment, consists of four interrelated elements. In this section our findings and the analysis to assess the effect of the project activities, so far, on women and men are described, listed and given a positive or negative connotation. To add these plusses and minuses is not realistic, because they count for different categories of stakeholders and beneficiaries. A division of categories of people and their forms of empowerment is shown in the table on page 32.

### Economic empowerment (+11-14)

#### Income

- Farmer members of the Safe Producer Groups get a better price for their mangoes and also for the tomatoes, although it is less for the latter. (++)
- Indian traders bring cheap tomatoes over the border, just when tomato farmers in Rajshahi have their produce ready, which lowers their income substantially. (-)
- The agents of the factories involved in the project prefer to buy the mangoes at the end of the season when they are cheap, and they buy the cheapest varieties<sup>19</sup>. (-)
- Because there is a problem with the availability of good seed<sup>20</sup>, the tomatoes are not of the best variety. (-)
- The tomato and mango processing factories employ many women, who appreciate this opportunity for work in the district. At first the parents or husbands are reluctant to let them go to work, but once they are used to it, and see that the daughters and wives are doing fine and also earning some money, they start to appreciate the opportunity too. (+ +)

#### Payment for work

- Women do a large share of the work in both mango and tomato crops. Most women we spoke to, only work in the field during harvesting while some do not visit the fields at all. However a lot of work related to mango and tomato cultivation is done at the homestead, only by women. Women farmers may have more work, but they don't complain about it, since they expect more income for the household. (+)
- Most of the time the income, which comes only once a year for both crops, is spent on repaying debts and inputs for other crops. Women rarely enjoy a personal allowance for their hard work and long hours. (- -)
- More day-labourers, especially women, have employment in tomato cultivation. During the peak season they earn Tk 100 more than in other times. However, women always earn Tk 100 less than men, but sometimes the difference is that they get food (mostly puffed rice), and men don't. For example, in the lean season men earn 300 and women 200 taka per day. Then in the peak season men earn 400 and women 300 per day. Santhal women then get 200 in the peak season. So, to have work is positive but the inequity in wages is very dis-empowering. (+ - -)

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<sup>19</sup> Not every year is the same, and we were told that this low price was related to Ramadan. In other years Ramadan will not be at the end of the peak season.

<sup>20</sup> This we heard a few times, but we have no technical details.

- The work of both men and women farmers is not counted in the value chain, and not recorded in the project documentation. Only what is paid to labourers is counted as labour costs. Group members have no lines for recording their own work and hours in the documentation booklet. (- -)
- We were told that the wages in the factories we visited (PRAN and Kishwan) are very low, much lower for women than for men, and for 3 years they did not receive an increase. (- -)
- For men this project is economically empowering, for most women members also. (+ +) However, many women are left out of the project, losing an opportunity for economic empowerment, which men do get. (-)

#### Decision-making about work and own income

- Some women members are in charge of their family's fields, especially in mango cultivation, and some of them make all the decisions regarding income and spending of the income. (++)
- To decide about own income is different in the case of women farmers than in case of women factory workers. The latter group earn less, and most give it to their father or husband<sup>21</sup>. (-)

#### Education

- Overall, women farmers had low levels of schooling. Nowadays all girls are sent to school, and are much better educated than their mothers. (- +)

#### **Political empowerment (+6-3)**

##### Membership of production groups

- To be a member of a group is a new experience for the farmers. Usually NGOs work for poorer people, however, in this region there are not so many NGOs active as it is relatively better off than other parts of the country. The members feel empowered by taking part in meetings, having a chance to give their opinion, and by being listened to. Women members feel empowered by their membership for the same reasons. (+ + +)

##### Participate in decision-making

- Some women members mentioned it was empowering not only to be a member, but also to notice that one's opinion is valued and considered. (+ +).
- Women and men who are not members of the Safe Producer groups feel excluded, even though they receive some of the technical information. (-).

##### Consumers access to information

- Processed products of mango and tomato have the ingredients listed on the package or bottle. (+)
- The percentages of the ingredients are not listed on the packages, which makes it impossible for consumers to make an informed decision about selecting a product. (-)
- Most information that reaches consumers comes from TV commercials, which do not supply objective information. (-)

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<sup>21</sup> In one of the factories we could not ask many questions, because the overseers (w/m) did not allow us and got panicky when questions were too direct.

## **Socio-cultural empowerment (+5-4)**

### Status

- Group members enjoy an enhanced social status within their community as they are involved with a group and an international organisation, and have been selected out of many to receive training. Also, for women this is a great opportunity, if they are allowed to be members. (+ +).
- Those who are excluded, like landless labourers, wives of farmers, don't enjoy this social status and feel disempowered. (-)
- For the women workers in the factories, the social benefits are empowering for those who have worked longer and are entitled to permanent contracts. (+)

### Self-image

- The fact that women's work in mango and tomato farming has been mainly unrecognised and undervalued at family, community, institutional and policy level is a lack of social empowerment. (- -).
- On the other hand, the group discussions during the gender assessment, brought this fact to light for the first time. Women's work was identified and recognised by the male group members, and made some aspects of gendered division of work discussable, which was empowering for women group members. (+).

### Freedom of movement, mobility

- Women group members are freer to move about than many other women Perhaps this is not a result of the groups but rather a reason for her to be selected. (+ -)

## **Physical empowerment (+6-18)**

### Division of work

- If farmers can't afford hired help, heavy and dirty tasks are done by male labourers. (+ -)
- Tasks which are considered less heavy, but require much effort nonetheless, are often done by women labourers, especially in tomato cultivation. The justification of women not being able to do heavy work like men is used as an excuse to pay women labourers less. (-)

### Drudgery work

- In the cultivation of mangoes and tomatoes, quite some water has to be carried to water the mango trees or tomato seedlings, if no irrigation equipment and well is available at home. Often women are the ones carrying the water for this. Furthermore, women are the ones who bring the water for mixing with pesticides, for spraying. Each spraying requires many buckets, depending on the size of the orchard or field. Fetching water is always heavy and done by women. (-)
- Men carry other heavy loads - fertilizer, manure, crates with products, etc. (+ -)
- Drudgery work is to be found in the factories too, where some women have to check bottles looking into tube lights, or are exposed to large quantities of chilli. (- -)

### Work with dangerous chemicals.

- Spraying is mostly done by labourers, who are not included in trainings about pesticide application. This is disempowering, not only because training ought to reach the person who does the task, but also because of the dangers of the work, which they are not fully aware of. Some farmers give the labourers very little protective gear. (- - -)
- Most men in the groups and women in the individual interviews told us that women clean the tanks and other equipment used for pesticide spraying. During group discussions when the GWA team educated the members on why this should never happen (as women are the ones who handle the food, the babies, the drinking water, etc.) they said, “Yes, we understand now; our women should never be involved in cleaning the tanks”. (+ -)

#### Mobility

- Women group members and factory workers have increased mobility, which is empowering for them. (+ +)
- Not all women farmers have increased mobility, for example, some men don’t allow their wives to come to the field. (- -)
- It is the men’s privilege to go to the market. Those women who are in charge of their fields and products have to sell the yield to vendors, middle men or agents, who pay them less because they have no alternative, as men do. (-)

#### Food Safety

- Women and men are not yet empowered because they lack non-biased information about the food they eat, including processed mango and tomato products. (- -)
- Especially pregnant and lactating women, and small children are vulnerable for the preservatives and chemicals used in agriculture and in the factories and in the processed food items. (- - -)
- The objective is the increased awareness of consumers, which is empowering when reached. (+)

#### **Interrelation between the four elements (+28-39)**

Some of the women members are quite empowered, in all of the four elements. For example one female household head, earns her living even without the remittances of her husband, who is abroad. On the whole, the project has chances for empowering beneficiaries, and even more so if membership was opened to more women farmers. Overall, the labourers do not benefit much, unless the yield would be much bigger than before the project. That information we did not receive, as most farmer members of groups have not yet completed a whole season in the project. The project has the potential for empowering more people in the region, women and men farmers, farm labourers, as well as factory workers by improving their knowledge and capacity through trainings, linking them to new buyers, improving their incomes, and enabling them to enjoy an enhanced social status within their community. The empowerment of consumers still remains to be seen. The level of empowerment is and will be different for different categories of people, depending on their starting situation, their involvement in the project, and the socio-economic and cultural context. We try to show this in the next table. Not all plusses and minuses are directly resulting from the project.

**Table 8. Impact of the project on empowerment of different categories of people**

Category of person	Socio-cultural empowerment	Political empowerment	Economic empowerment	Physical empowerment	Interrelated empowerment
Men farmers, members of the group	++	+++	+++++---	++	+ 13 - 3 = 10
Women farmers, members of the group	++ -	+++	++++ - - -	+++ - - -	+ 12 - 6 = 6
Men farmers, non member of the group	-	--	+-	++	+ 3 - 4 = - 1
Women farmers, non member	-	--	--	- - - -	- 10
Men agric. labourers	-	--	++	- - -	+ 2 - 6 = - 4
Women agric. labourers	-	--	++ -	- -	+ 2 - 6 = - 4
Adivasi women agric. labourers (Santhal)	--	--	+ - -	- - -	+ 1 - 9 = - 8
Santhal men agric. labourers	--	--			- 4
Women factory workers*	+++	+	++ -	+ -	+ 7 - 2 = 5
Men factory workers*	++	+	+++ -	++	+ 8 - 1 = 7
Women consumers middle class **		+		+	+ 2
Men consumers middle class **		+		+	+ 2
Women consumers, working class **		+		+ - -	+ 2 - 2 = 0
Men consumers, working class **		+		+	+ 2

\* This cannot be directly linked to the project.

\*\* This is filled in: thinking about what the project can do for them, and is likely to do.

## Recommendations

Some of the recommendations cannot be implemented anymore because the project has just over one year to go till it ends. Then it is important to work towards a Phase 2, in which gender equality will be a major objective.

### Gender of staff and team:

- The process of involving more women farmers would be catalyzed if some qualified women are recruited to strengthen the presently all-male teams of SNV. To have no women field workers not only sends out a wrong signal for gender equality, it also makes it difficult for male farmers to approve of their wives attending trainings and having increased mobility.

- The Agricultural Extension Department can be asked to involve more women AOs and SAAOs in the project, who also would be helpful in selecting more women farmers as group members<sup>22</sup>.

#### Conditions for membership of farmers groups:

- Conditions for group membership selection could be revised to include those who actually work in the farm, rather than those who own the land. This would open membership to many women and poorer farmers, including bargadars (sharecroppers).
- It could be considered to select couples, instead of just the head of the household.
- Women-only groups could be a way to enable empowerment of women at individual and group level. Such groups could also serve as good examples for others to follow or compete with.
- The Oraon Adivasi women, who undertake the majority of the tasks in tomato cultivation, often as sharecroppers, should be allowed to become group members. Santhal women could be group members too, or form a separate group. Adivasi women are not limited in their mobility. It is recommended to involve more women farmers from ethnic minority groups in the project, if there is scope to have more groups. See [Annex 8](#) for background information on the Oraon and Santhal communities.

#### Capacity Building:

- The SNV staff in Rajshahi and Natore is genuinely interested to learn more about including gender and diversity in their work. For that they need training and support with developing a specific, practical and attainable gender action plan, with follow-up.
- Women farmers and the wives of the (male) farmer members need to be present during training about the tasks they usually perform, which are many. It is very inefficient to train another person, and transfer skills and technology indirectly. See the remark of the Chairman of Koicharpara Group: *“Sometimes she asked what training I received, but I could not explain the details”*.
- Also, labourers who do certain tasks, such as the spraying of pesticides, which is a key activity in the project, may not be reached by the information that they should know. They too should be allowed to attend specific training sessions on these topics, or a separate session needs to be held for them.
- The Agricultural Officers give the training which is facilitated by the SNV staff. It is crucial that the AOs are up to date about Integrated Pest Management (IPM), GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) and the gender aspects of agriculture. They may need training for this.
- Gender and diversity of people could be integrated in all the trainings given by SNV<sup>23</sup>.
- It has been said by respondents that women usually clean the pesticide tanks. Any activity in which hands come into contact with pesticides should not be done by women, and also not by women labourers. Women handle the food, the drinking water, the utensils, the babies

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<sup>22</sup> The two AOs in the workshop convinced us of the fact that 30% of the AOs and/or SAAOs are women. We have not met them during our field work.

<sup>23</sup> GWA can give support by screening training modules, and by training staff.

and children and for all these, pesticides and residues of it, are dangerous. This should be taught in the training.

#### Documentation:

- On the Attendance Sheet one column about the name of father, can be replaced by one column with ‘woman/man’. This is an easy start to make all training documentation sex-disaggregated at least.
- Gender disaggregated data collection is necessary to develop a base-line for monitoring progress on gender equality in the project.
- Indicators can include socio-economic category of households (ultra-poor, poor, non-poor), access to land of women and men, source of livelihood of women and men, education of women and men, farm work of women and men, composition of the family by sex, age, marital status, disability by sex, ethnicity, disease patterns by sex, age and class etc. The programme can then adapt and direct specific gender-responsive interventions to people who need them the most, and involve people for whom the trainings are most relevant.
- The work of the members and of their wives is not included in the project documentation and value chain analysis. Farmers now consider the market price they receive for their produce minus the costs (of inputs and hired labour) as their profit. For a more gender-responsive and sustainable value chain analysis, the farmers should count their and their family’s work and give themselves a shadow-salary, at least as much as the day-labourers get.

#### Project strategy:

- A Gender Action Plan, including gender and inclusion guidelines and an operational strategy, needs to be developed for the project. The project can thus be strengthened from a gender perspective, as well as become more beneficial for member farmers (women and men), labourers, and staff<sup>24</sup>.
- The project document needs gender and inclusion indicators<sup>25</sup>
- The GA team was told in FGD that traders, vendors, buyers, and the agents of PRAN factory, form a syndicate, which exploits the farmers, even those who are members of the SNV groups. Linking the farmers directly to other larger (foreign) buyers would increase their scope to sell their produce at higher prices, and make the project interventions more sustainable<sup>26</sup>.

#### Other recommendations, collected in the field:

- **Cold Storage:** Last year, farmers in Natore had to throw away many tomatoes<sup>27</sup>. Some put carbide and other chemicals to prevent them from rotting. Since the aim of the project is to protect the consumers from such chemicals, it could be looked into if more access to cold storage for farmers can be a solution for a crop like tomatoes or mangoes. Then they could

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<sup>24</sup> This is included in the plan for CB Gender Training related to the Gender Assessment, 2018.

<sup>25</sup> Even at this late stage, these can be developed in the Gender Training workshop, as planned.

<sup>26</sup> This is not within the expertise of GWA.

<sup>27</sup> Whilst even 20 – 30 % of the tomatoes for the companies are imported from China, as pulp.



sell the tomatoes at a later stage when the price is higher, and at the same time use less harmful chemicals. Private investors and local business people can be encouraged to invest in cold storage.

- Other buyers: A number of farmer members requested if SNV could make direct links between farmers' associations and supermarkets.
- More members: Non-member respondents have said that they listen in at trainings and also learn from them. Some have also been present during the FGDs. They would prefer to be a legitimate member.
- More crops: Some farmers wonder, why only mangoes and tomatoes? Other local crops also need Good Agricultural Practices.
- Workers' benefits: Seasonal women factory employees, who are not yet accepted as permanent workers, could be allowed to utilize the free factory transport services as well.
- Define skilled work: Companies are recommended to clearly define what constitutes skilled work and unskilled work. It should not automatically coincide with gender, "*what women do is unskilled, and what men do is skilled*", since this is a discriminatory gender bias.

## Gender Action Plan (to be developed with SNV team)

In the planned Capacity Building Workshop for SNV staff, a Gender Action Plan is to be developed in which participants are instructed in what needs to be done to mainstream gender into the project. It is important that the Gender Action Plan is designed and owned by the workshop participants, and not by the training facilitators who only guide and advise on the plan. The Gender Action Plan in its simplest form includes the following columns/components:

- Area of focus, Problem, issue, challenge
- Objective, aim, quantitative target
- Activities
- Target group
- Indicators
- Action by whom, responsibility
- Support and resources required
- Means of Verification
- Time frame
- Remarks

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## ANNEX 1: Empowerment Approach

### Empowerment, 4 elements

Empowerment is a process of improving one's position, gaining self-confidence for individual development as well as to contribute towards development of others. It refers to increasing the economic, social, political, physical strength of any individual or group. Empowerment is not only of women, but also of men and of children and of minorities and vulnerable groups.

- 1. Economic empowerment:** is about the right to relevant educations and to choose one's subject of schooling. It also deals with the right to work that one enjoys, and the same income for same work for women and men, access to relevant resources, assets, land, money, water, etc. One's work must be recognized. The right to decide about spending benefits and income belongs under economic empowerment. Economic empowerment is important but not enough. The other three forms of empowerment are necessary to turn economic progress into real empowerment.
- 2. Social Empowerment:** is about a positive self-image, and a high social status. How does the society see you, as one of this particular category? Increasing one's positive self-image and overcoming stigma is part of social empowerment. To take part in decision-making, and to make one's voice heard, so that one's voice is making a difference. Also here access to education and to information is important. Freedom of movement and mobility in a safe and secure environment is a condition for social empowerment.
- 3. Political empowerment:** entails the right to organize one selves, for example in Water Management or Farmers' Groups, it also is the right to vote and to be voted for, in general to take part in democratic processes. Decision making power and leadership qualities are important for political empowerment. Also access to information, and above all to live under rule of law: to be able to utilize the institutions that are meant to protect the citizens.
- 4. Physical empowerment:** is of great importance. All economic, social and political empowerment becomes without meaning if physically the basic conditions are not fulfilled. These are amongst others, the right to decide about one's sexuality and about the number of children and spacing between them, family planning methods and use of contraceptives. It also is necessary to have right to proper healthcare, recreation, choice of food, and physical mobility. Most of all access and right to clean water, sanitation facilities are important. The ability to resist violence, the right to safety and security, are steps towards empowerment.

**All the four elements of empowerment are interrelated** and together they indicate the degree of empowerment of an individual or group. So, for example, just being educated (socio-economic empowerment) on its own does not mean a woman is empowered, if her husband does not allow her to work after marriage. Groups and individuals (not only women) who are on the lower side of the hierarchy, empower themselves if they are convinced, and if they are able. Empowerment means to be proud of one's own identity.

## ANNEX 2: Programme of Field work

SNV Netherlands Development Organisation						
SWITCH-Asia II - Improving consumer awareness and access to certified safe tomato and mango products in Bangladesh						
Field visit plan for GWA (Natore and Rajshahi 16-20 September 2018)						
Day	Time		Location		Purposes/Activities	Remarks
	From	To	From	To		
Day 1 Sunday, 16 Sep	9.00	11:30 AM	Rajshahi Airport	Hotel Chez Razzak, Rajshahi	Flight and Travel from airport to hotel	
	12.30	4:00 PM	Hotel Chez Razzak Conference room	Hotel Chez Razzak Conference room	Meeting With TMVC Field Team	Both Rajshahi & Natore staff and 4 of GWA
	5.00 pm	6.00 pm	Large shop for groceries in Rajshahi town		interview with shop owner, assistant and customers about mango and tomato products	Both Rajshahi & Natore staff and 4 of GWA
	evening				Redo programme, make notes	
Day 2 Monday, 17 Sep	8.00	9.30	Rajshahi	Koichar para, Bagatipara, Natore	Travel	car leaves from hotel with GWA team and picks up Saidur and Bidyut on the way
	9.30	10.40	Koichar Para, Bagatipara, Natore	Koichar para, Bagatipara, Natore	Meeting with Key informants, such as Union Chairman or Members, Teacher, Agricultural Officer	
	11:00 AM	1.00	Koichar para, Bagatipara, Natore	Koichar para, Bagatipara, Natore	Meeting with mango farmers groups.	Both male & female , (high quality group)
	1.00	2.00		Koichar para	lunch	
	2.00	4.30		Koichar Para	Individual interviews	
	4.30	5.30	Koichar para, Bagatipara, Natore	Rajshahi	Travel back to Hotel	
	evening				process notes	
Day 3 Tuesday 18 Sep	8.30 am	9.30	Rajshahi Hotel	Kishwan Agro Processing Industry	Travel	
	10:00 AM	12:30 PM	Kishwan Agro Processing Industry, 79 Chadpur, Pirganj, Natore	Kishwan Agro Processing Industry, Chadpur, Pirganj,	Meeting with Processing Industry Workers and Staff	Both Mango & Tomato Processing: at this time only tomato sauce and other not-project related products.
	12.30	1.30			lunch	
	1.30 pm	2:30 PM	restaurant	Bidirpur, Godagari, Rajshahi	Travel	
	2.30	4.00	Bidirpur, Godagari, Rajshahi	Bidirpur, Godagari, Rajshahi	Meeting with tomato farmers group	Only male farmers
	4.00	5.00	Bidirpur, Godagari, Rajshahi	Bidirpur, Godagari, Rajshahi	Individual interviews	
	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	Bidirpur, Godagari, Rajshahi	Rajshahi, Hotel	Travel to Hotel	
evening				process notes and team meeting		
Day 4 Wednesday 19 Sep	7.30	9.00	Rajshahi Hotel	Pran Factory	Travel	
	9.00	10.30	Pran factory	Pran Factory	Visit Pran factory, Meeting workers and staff	See tomato-sauce-line and pre-selected employees.
	10.30	11.00	Pran factory	Aauray, Natore Sadar, Natore	travel	
	11:00 AM	13.00	Aauray, Natore Sadar, Natore	Aauray, Natore Sadar, Natore	Meeting with tomato farmers group	Only male farmers
	13.00	14.00	Aauray, Natore Sadar, Natore		Individual interviews	
	2.00	3.00	Aauray, Natore Sadar, Natore	Aauray, Natore Sadar, Natore	lunch	
	3.00	5.00	Aauray, Natore Sadar, Natore	Shonadigi Women Famers' Group	Travel to Shonadigi	
	5.00	6.00	Shonadigi Women farmers' group	Shonadigi Women Famers' Group	Meeting with tomato farmers group	Nearly all women farmers, tomato growers group, including Oroan women farmers
	6.00	7.30 p.m.	Shonadigi, near to Bidirpur	Hotel in Rajshahi	travel	
evening				process notes and write draft debriefing note		
Day 5 Thursday, 20 Sep	9:00 AM	9:40 AM	Rajshahi Hotel	Bihari Para, Puthia, Rajshahi	Travel	
	9:40 AM	1.00	Bihari Para, Puthia, Rajshahi	Bihari Para, Puthia, Rajshahi	Meeting with mango farmers group	Both Male & Female farmers
	1.00	1.30	Bihari Para, Puthia, Rajshahi	Bihari Para, Puthia, Rajshahi	lunch	
	1.30	2.30	Bihari Para, Puthia, Rajshahi	Rajshahi	Travel to SNV Office in Rajshahi	
	2.00	3.00	SNV office	SNV office	Debriefing	With team of Natore (The Rajshahi team is busy with training for tomato seedbeds)
	3.00	5.30			Travel to Airport, and fly to Dhaka with Nova-air at 4.45 pm	

total

## ANNEX 3: Checklists and Maps

- 1: Checklist for Interviews (Inquiries) with women farmers
- 2: Checklist for Interviews (Inquiries) with men farmers
- 3: Checklist Focus Group Discussions
- 4: Checklist for Consumers
- 5: Maps Rajshahi and Natore

### 1. Checklist for Interviews (Inquiries) with women farmers

**Write place and time and names of those who are present. Also observations!**

#### 1. Land rights

Land owned by the family or household

- i) Land is registered on whose name? Husband? Father?
- ii) Do you own any land? Or do you have your own pond?
- iii) What does your family (household) look like: children, elders, siblings?
- iv) Any women you know around here, who have their own land? With proper title-deed?
- v) Do these women work on that land themselves?
- vi) Are you member of a Farmers' Group?
- vii) If the land is owned by a man, does he work on the land himself? Do you consider yourself poor, medium or rich.  
We can explain poor: you work on other people's land or in their house  
Medium: you work on your own land or in your own house  
Rich: Other people work for you, on your land or in your house.
- viii) How much land you own: land size and tenure? Your household owns?
- ix) Will you inherit land? Or did you inherit land?  
What happened to that land? Where is it? How far away from where you live?  
Do you know which piece of land is actually yours?

#### 2. Agriculture

Crops and farming system

- i) Does your household own mango trees and orchard?
- ii) Does your household cultivate tomatoes?
- iii) What other crops you grow?
- iv) Do you have livestock too?
- v) Who is responsible for each of the sectors?
- vi) Who makes the decisions about farming methods?
- vii) How are pests controlled? Are pesticides used?  
Who does the actual spraying? Your husband, you, or labourers?
- viii) Do you have access to knowledge and training for the tasks you are doing?
- ix) Does your husband have access to information, knowledge and training?
- x) Any specific problems in the farming system?

#### 3. Work

Gender division of work in Mango cultivation

- i) Which tasks does your husband do?
- ii) Which tasks are done by labourers?
- iii) Which tasks you do?
- iv) How many hours per day, per month, per season?
- v) Which other tasks you have?
- vi) Who makes decisions about the work?
- vii) Any specific problems?

Gender division of work in Tomato cultivation

- i) Which tasks does your husband do?
- ii) Which tasks are done by labourers?
- iii) Which tasks you do?
- iv) How many hours per day, per month, per season?
- v) Which other tasks you have?
- vi) Who makes decisions about the work?
- vii) Any specific problems?

Other work

- i) Do you have a paid job? If yes, for how many hours per week, months of the year? What sort of work?
- ii) Would you like to do more work in mango and/or tomato cultivation?
- iii) How many hours per day is for cooking, care for children and family, fetching water, cleaning, etc.

**4. Water and drought**

The availability of water for domestic purposes, drinking, sanitation, and for your crops

- i) Your district is known for drought during a large part of the year. How does it influence your domestic work?
- ii) How is your productive work influenced? Agriculture, livestock, etc.
- iii) How are the mango's and/or tomatoes getting their water? For example the tomatoes, they will need irrigation. How is that taken care of?
- iv) Who is responsible for watering the tomatoes?

**5. Empowerment and its four elements (economic, social, political, and physical)**

a) Economic empowerment

- i) Right to choose one's education (priority of education of male children over female?)
- ii) Same income for same work: in mango and tomato cultivation: is your work recognised and paid for? Or given a shadow price?
- iii) Women's control over own/HH income vs men (to spend, to save, to invest)
- iv) Right to work that one enjoys (low percentage of time spent in drudgery work)
- v) Right to water (ease of access, reliability, safety, sufficient amounts)
- vi) Access to relevant resources of production (land, ponds, livestock, equipment, credit, training, information, farm inputs, improved technology)
- vii) Do women, men have their own bank accounts, mobile phones, smart phones, farmer card, food ration card?

b) Mobility of women (to sell products in markets, to move freely outside the homestead)

Social Empowerment:

- i) Self-image of women/ men (of different age, class, ethnic group). How do you see yourself? How do others see you?
- ii) Social status (are you member of a CBO, savings group, TUG, WMG? Are you working as volunteer? Are you an entrepreneur?)
- iii) Is your voice heard? And does your opinion matter? (for e.g. as group member? Or to discuss decisions about agriculture, and the work of yourself/others?)
- iv) Did you have an opportunity to attend school? For how many years? How does that compare to male counterparts?

c) Political Empowerment

- i) The right to organize one self
- ii) the right to vote and to be voted, to take active part in CBO and other groups
- iii) Participation in ward-level, union-level, and UZ level politics and institutions

d) Ability to effectively participate in decision-making to influence development efforts (be member in institutions set up as part of project), be active in the project.

Physical Empowerment

- i) Is the work very heavy: drudgery work?
- ii) Access to safe and adequate sanitation (OD? Hanging toilet? private sanitary latrine, bathing chamber?) Safe toilet in the work place (orchard, vegetable patch, factory)
- iii) Access to proper healthcare (satisfaction of women and men with these services)

- iv) Ability to resist domestic violence (ask indirectly on this at the start, for e.g. ‘Does domestic violence happen in your neighbourhood? And what do you do when this happens – is it settled by a group (who?) or left to be managed personally by the husband-wife?’)
- v) Situation of physical harassment of women in public areas or at work. Are women safe in the working environment? For example, in the factories and in the orchards.
- vi) Specific problems faced by widows, WHH, old women, disabled, adolescents (safety, security, harassment, mobility)?

## 2. Checklist for Union Chairmen and Key informants

**Write place and time and names of those who are present. Also observations!**

### Questions for Upazila (UZ) and/or Union Parishad (UP) Chairman/ Key Informant

1. In your Upazila or Union, is the cultivation of mangos or tomatoes important?
2. Is this an activity for the better-off farmers?
3. Your area is known for drought during many months of the year. It seems that there is enough water (groundwater) for irrigation, whilst the dugwells for the households are dry. What can you do?
4. Do you know the tasks of women (wives) in these sectors?
5. How are poor women and men involved, as far as you know?
6. Are UZ/UP members empowered in how they are able to spend the budget allocated to them? How are priorities in budgeting (for WASH, DRR, VGF) decided by them?
7. How many women members are there in UZ/UP? And in the different committees? Do they hold any official positions? Do they contribute to decision-making in their committees, and priorities of women they represent?
8. What kind of data is collected at UZ/UP level (by the different committees)? Do you know, for example, how many women land holders there are in your Union/ Upazilla? And how many men? Are some landholding registered by husband and wife? List them please.
9. How is the WASH situation in your Union, Upazilla?
10. What is your experience with reporting of incidence of child marriages, domestic violence? Do women and men come forward for this? And how do they respond in these cases?
11. Do the UZ/UP or the committees collaborate with other agencies (NGOs, CBOs). If so, which? And how?
12. ...
13. ...
14. ...
15. ...

## 3. Checklist for Interviews (Inquiries) with men farmers

### Checklist of Issues for Men Inquiries SNV SWITCH project

#### 4. Land rights

##### Land owned by the family or household

- i) Land is registered on whose name? Husband? Father?
- ii) Does your wife own any land? Or does she have her own pond?
- iii) What does your family (household) look like: children, elders, siblings?
- iv) Any women you know around here, who have their own land? Do these women work on that land themselves?
- v) If the land is owned by you, do you work on the land yourself? Do you consider yourself poor, medium or rich.  
  - We can explain poor: you work on other people’s land or in their house
  - Medium: you work on your own land or in your own house
  - Rich: Other people work for you, on your land or in your house.
- vi) How much land you own: land size and tenure? Your household owns?

- vii) Are you member of a Farmers' Group?
- viii) Will your daughter and son inherit your land? Will they get an equal share?

## 5. Agriculture

### Crops and farming system

- i) Does your household own mango trees and orchard?
- ii) Does your household cultivate tomatoes?
- iii) What other crops you grow?
- iv) Do you have livestock too?
- v) Who is responsible for each of the sectors?
- vi) Who makes the decisions about farming methods?
- vii) How are pests controlled? Are pesticides used?  
Who does the actual spraying? You, your wife, or labourers?
- viii) Do you have access to knowledge and training for the tasks you are doing?
- ix) Does your wife have access to information, knowledge and training for the tasks she does?
- x) Any specific problems in the farming system?

## 6. Work

### Gender division of work in Mango cultivation

- i) Which tasks do you do?
- ii) Which tasks are done by labourers?
- iii) Which tasks your wife does?
- iv) How many hours per day, per month, per season she works, and how many do you work?
- v) Which other tasks you have?
- vi) Who makes decisions about the work?
- vii) Any specific problems?

### Gender division of work in Tomato cultivation

- i) Which tasks do you do?
- ii) Which tasks are done by labourers?
- iii) Which tasks your wife does?
- iv) How many hours per day, per month, per season she works, and how many do you work?
- v) Which other tasks you have?
- vi) Who makes decisions about the work?
- vii) Any specific problems?

### Other work

- i) Do you have a paid job? If yes, for how many hours per week, months of the year? which work?
- ii) And your wife? Does she work outside the yard? Can she go wherever she likes or needs to go?
- iii) Would you like to do more work in mango and/or tomato cultivation?
- iv) How many hours per day you spend on shopping, cooking, care for children and family, fetching water, cleaning, etc.

## 7. Water and drought

### The availability of water for domestic purposes, drinking, sanitation, and for your crops

- i) Your district is known for drought during a large part of the year. How does it influence your agricultural work? Agriculture, livestock, etc.
- ii) How is the domestic work of your household influenced?
- iii) How are the mango's and/or tomatoes getting their water? For example, the tomatoes, they will need irrigation. How is that taken care of?
- iv) Who is responsible for watering the tomatoes?

## 5. Empowerment and its four elements (economic, social, political, and physical) Empowerment is also for men, girls and boys, for disabled men and women, for elderly women and men.

### e) Economic empowerment

- i) Right to choose one's education (priority of education of male children over female?)
- ii) Same income for same work: in mango and tomato cultivation: is your work recognised and paid for? Or given a shadow price?

- iii) Women's control over own/HH income vs men (to spend, to save, to invest)
  - iv) Right to work that one enjoys (low percentage of time spent in drudgery work)
  - v) Right to water (ease of access, reliability, safety, sufficient amounts)
  - vi) Access to relevant resources of production (land, ponds, livestock, equipment, credit, training, information, farm inputs, improved technology)
  - vii) Do women, men have their own bank accounts, mobile phones, smart phones, farmer card, food ration card?
- f) Mobility of women (to sell products in markets, to move freely outside the homestead)
- Social Empowerment:
- i) Self-image of women/ men (of different age, class, ethnic group). How do you see yourself? How do others see you?
  - ii) Social status (are you member of a CBO, savings group, TUG, WMG? Are you working as volunteer? Are you an entrepreneur?)
  - iii) Is your voice heard? And does your opinion matter? (for e.g. as group member? Or to discuss decisions about agriculture, and the work of yourself/others?)
  - iv) Did you have an opportunity to attend school? For how many years? How does that compare to male counterparts?
- g) Political Empowerment
- i) The right to organize one self
  - ii) the right to vote and to be voted, to take active part in CBO and other groups
  - iii) Participation in ward-level, union-level, and UZ level politics and institutions
- h) Ability to effectively participate in decision-making to influence development efforts (be member in institutions set up as part of project), be active in the project.
- Physical Empowerment
- i) Is the work very heavy: drudgery work?
  - ii) Access to safe and adequate sanitation (OD? Hanging toilet? private sanitary latrine, bathing chamber?) Safe sanitation in the work environment (orchard, vegetable patch, factory)
  - iii) Access to proper healthcare (satisfaction of women and men with these services)
  - iv) Ability to resist domestic violence (ask indirectly on this at the start, for e.g. 'Does domestic violence happen in your neighbourhood? And what do you do when this happens – is it settled by a group (who?) or left to be managed personally by the husband-wife?')
  - v) Situation of physical harassment of women in public areas or at work. Are women safe in the working environment? For example, in the factories and in the orchards.
  - vi) Specific problems faced by widows, WHH, old women, disabled, adolescents (safety, security, harassment, mobility)?

#### 4. Checklist Focus Group Discussions

##### Topics for Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

##### Land rights

##### Land owned by the family or household

- i) Is land registered in whose name? Husband? Father? Wife, Mother?
- ii) How is inheritance arranged? Daughters also inherit from their parents?
- iii) Any women you know around here, who have their own land?
- iv) Do these women work on that land themselves?
- v) Who of you are members of Farmers' Groups?
- vi) If we use the terms poor, medium and rich for farmers, we explain it as follows. Do you agree?
  - Poor: you work on other people's land or in their house
  - Medium: you work on your own land or in your own house
  - Rich: Other people work for you, on your land or in your house.

##### 8. Agriculture

##### Crops and farming system



- i) Who owns mango trees and orchard?
- ii) Who cultivates tomatoes?
- iii) What other crops you grow?
- iv) Do you have livestock too?
- v) Who is taking part in the project of SNV called SWITCH?
- vi) How are you benefitting?
- vii) How are pests controlled? Are pesticides used?  
Who does the actual spraying? Men, women, or labourers? Are the labourers women or men?  
Is the pesticide organic or toxic?
- viii) Do you have access to knowledge and training for the tasks you are doing?
- ix) Any specific problems in the farming system?

## 9. Work

### Gender division of work in Mango cultivation

- i) Which tasks are done by men?
- ii) Which tasks are done by labourers?
- iii) Which tasks are done by women?
- iv) How many hours per day, per month, per season?
- v) Which other tasks men have?
- vi) Which other tasks women have?
- vii) Who makes decisions about the work?
- viii) Any specific problems?

### Gender division of work in Tomato cultivation

- i) Which tasks are done by men?
- ii) Which tasks are done by labourers?
- iii) Which tasks are done by women?
- iv) How many hours per day, per month, per season?
- v) Which other tasks men have?
- vi) Which other tasks women have?
- vii) Who makes decisions about the work?
- viii) Any specific problems??

### Other work

- i) Do you have a paid job? If yes, for how many hours per week, months of the year? Which work?
- ii) Would you like to do more work in mango and/or tomato cultivation?
- iii) How many hours per day is for cooking, care for children and family, fetching water, cleaning, etc.

## 10. Water and drought

### The availability of water for domestic purposes, drinking, sanitation, and for your crops

- i) Your district is known for drought during a large part of the year. How does it influence your domestic work?
- ii) How is your productive work influenced? Agriculture, livestock, etc.
- iii) Who grows paddy? Is there enough water for irrigation? How many crops per year?
- iv) How are the mango's and/or tomatoes getting their water? For example the tomatoes, they will need irrigation. How is that taken care of?
- v) Who is responsible for watering the tomatoes?

Other subjects if time permits: those subjects that arose during Inquiries, for example:

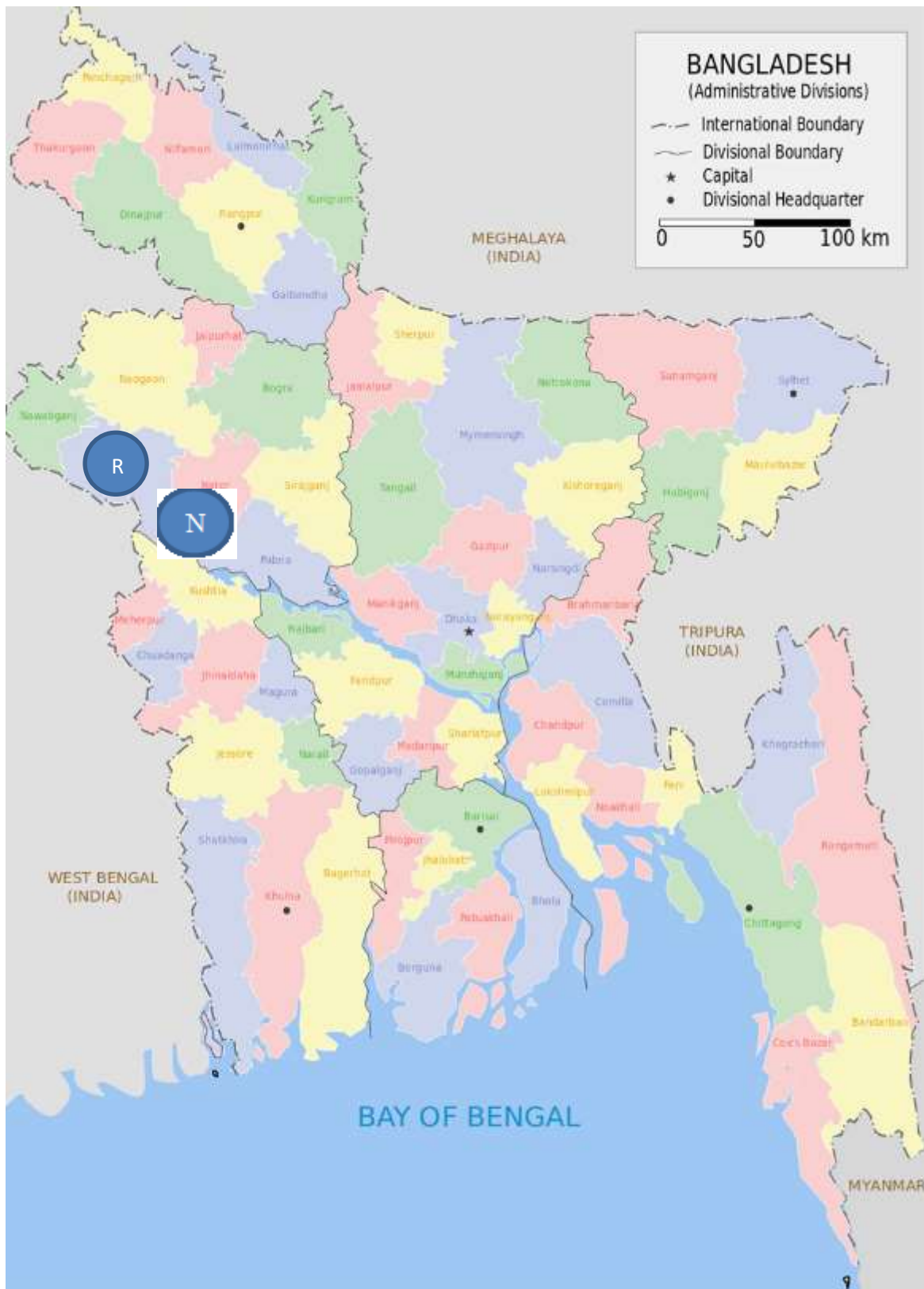
1. Child Marriage and how this affects empowerment of women
2. Coping ability and vulnerability to external shocks (disaster, economic crises)
3. Decision-making in the household
4. Domestic violence and perceptions of women and men on it (separate sex groups).

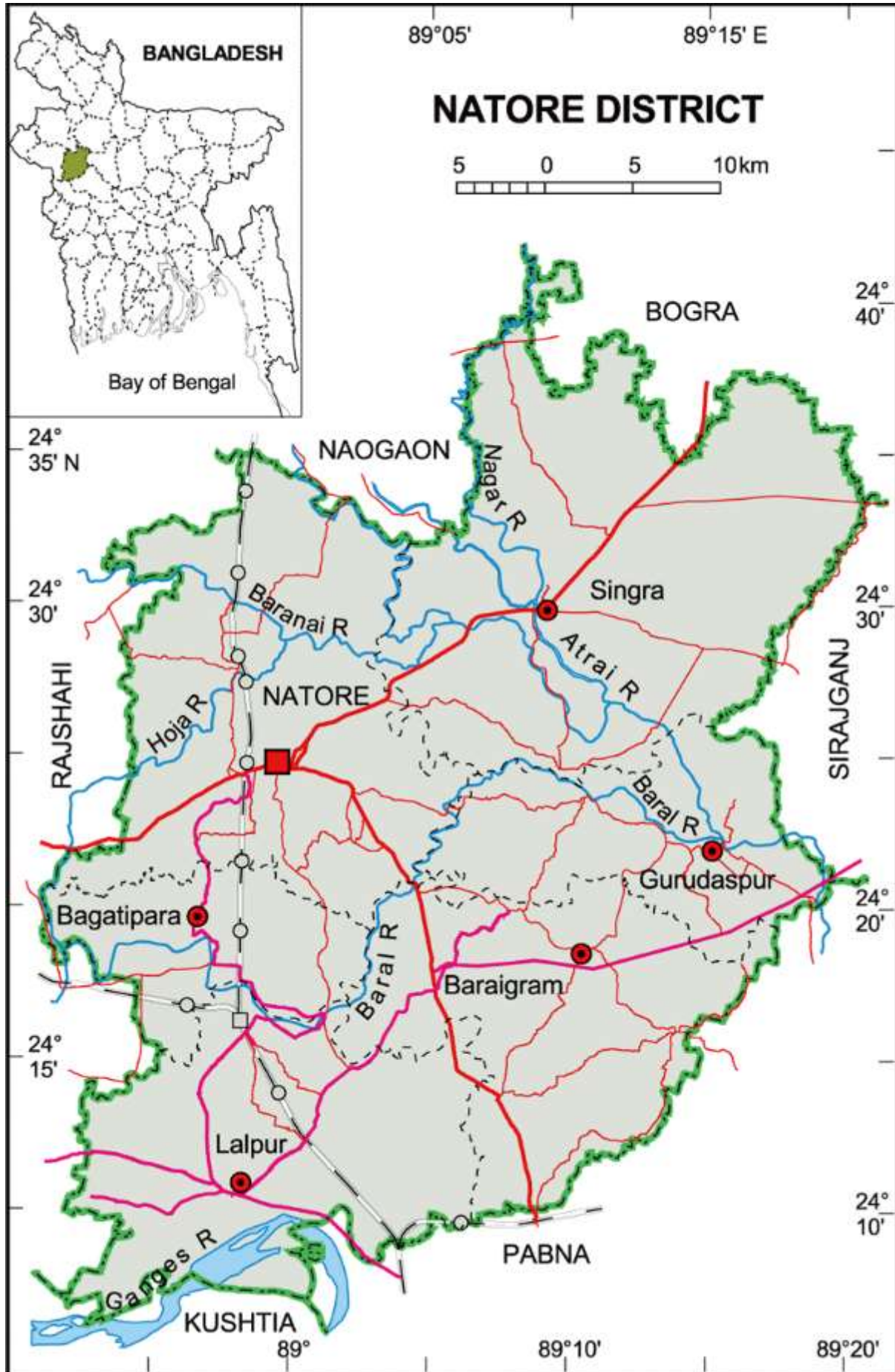
## 5. Checklist for Consumer Interviews

1. **Potential consumers of mango and tomato products**
  - i) Do you use processed products of mango and tomato?  
For example: .....
  - ii) Do you buy this in a shop?
  - iii) Why don't you use it?
2. **Shopping and decision-making**
  - i) Who does the shopping in your household? Do you go for shopping or your wife or husband? Or a servant?
  - ii) Who decides what will be bought?
  - iii) If you buy mango and/or tomato processed products, how you make your choice? Do you care about the brand?
  - iv) What if you come home with a different brand?
3. **Information about food products**
  - i) Where do you get information from?
  - ii) Does the person who does the shopping also get the information?
  - iii) Do you discuss in your household the safety of food products?
4. **Care for safety of food**
  - iv) Are you worried about safety? And is your wife or husband also worried?
  - v) Is there a difference between worry of your wife and of you?

## 6. Maps of Rajshahi and Natore districts







## ANNEX 4: Cases of women and men farmer members of the Safe Mango and Tomato Producer groups, and some non-member farmers and labourers

1. Koicharpara
  - a. Md. Abdur Rahim, male mango farmer, non-member
  - b. Nazma Begum, female farmer, member of the SNV Safe Mango Producers group, wife of Secretary of the group
  - c. Shikha Khatun, female farmer, member of the SNV Safe Mango Producers group
  - d. Salma Khatun, female farmer, member of the SNV Safe Mango Producers group
  - e. Md. Asgor Ali, male farmer, Chairman of the SNV Safe Mango Producers group
  - f. Beauty Khatun, woman farmer, non-member of the group
2. Bidirpur, and surroundings
  - a. Jarina Begum, woman labourer, non-member
  - b. Sirin Sultana, female farmer, wife of member of SNV Safe Tomato Producers group
  - c. Md. Mokter Hossain, male farmer, member of SNV Safe Tomato Producers group
  - d. Group of six women labourers
  - e. Ms Fulkoli Rani, Oraon woman farmer and labourer
  - f. Ms Rumi, a Santhal adolescent girl, agricultural labourer
3. Aauray
  - a. Ayesha Begum, female farmer, wife of member of SNV Safe Tomato Producers group
  - b. FulMeher Begum, abandoned and landless woman, labourer, non-member
  - c. Md. Shariful Islam and his wife Mst. Jesmin Begum, member of safe Tomato production group
4. Biharipara
  - a. Md. Abul Bashar, male farmer, Chairman of the SNV Safe Mango Producers group
  - b. Fahima Begum, female farmer, member of the SNV Safe Mango Producers group
  - c. Merina Begum, female farmer, member of the SNV Safe Mango Producers group
  - d. Surma Begum, female farmer, member of the SNV Safe Mango Producers group
  - e. Akhira Begum, female farmer, wife of Chairman of the SNV Safe Mango Producers group

- f. Meher Jan, landless woman and night guard in others' mango fields, non-member
- g. Latifa Begum, female farmer, member of the SNV Safe Mango Producers group
- h. Md. Matiur Rahman, male farmer, member of the SNV Safe Mango Producers group
- i. Ms. Fatema Begum, Guard of mango orchard
- j. Ms. Shauli Begum, wife of a member of safe mango farming group.
- k. Md. Abdul Hakim, Non-member farmer's group
- l. Ms. Halima Begum, wife of member of mango producers group



A farmer member of Safe Producer Group transplanting tomato seedlings, and discussing with the AO, Oct 2018

Women farmers and GWA team when leaving Koicharpara after the FGD and the interviews



1.a. Case study: Md. Abdur Rahim

**Date:** 17 September 2018

**Location:** Koicharpara, Bagatipara, Natore.

**Interviewers:** Joke and Khadiza

**Category:** Non-member of the Safe Mango Producer Group

**“Is it enough to train only 30 mango producers when there are so many of us?”**

Md. Abdur Rahim is a mango producer with about 20 trees. He also works as labourer, but not during the peak months in mango cultivation. He was interested to join the Safe Mango Producer Group by SNV, but could not, because the group quota was already filled. He has one son and one daughter. Apart from his mango trees, he cultivates paddy, jute, and vegetables. His son and wife also work in activities related to production of mango and other crops. For mangoes, his son works with him in the field whilst his wife is responsible for tasks that can be done from the homestead, such as cleaning of equipment after it has been used for spraying pesticide, and grading of mangoes. In few instances his wife also goes to work in the orchard.



Though he is not a member, he benefits indirectly from the SNV project, from the information he gets from members about Good Agricultural Practices. For example, after hearing from his uncle, who is the member of the group, that it is sufficient to spray mango trees with pesticides thrice in one season, he reduced his spraying frequency from 8-10 times a season to 6. He is of the opinion that even if he only sprays when the insects force him to, the 3 times, as prescribed by SNV, is not enough. He says that having followed this and other instructions of the training has helped him get a higher price for his mangos in the local market, like the group members. He lists the main benefits of the SNV project for him being the training it provides on better cultivation practices, the better price he now gets for his mangoes, and the ability to be able to sell his fruit to a big company like PRAN.

His main recommendation for SNV would be to include more people in their Safe Mango Producer Group. “Is it enough to train only 30 mango producers while we are so many?” he asks. He also thinks that SNV project should consider including other locally grown fruits and crops like banana, guava etc. as these are in high demand by consumers, and could greatly benefit both farmers and consumers from safe production practices.



**1.b. Case study: Nazma Begum**

**Date:** 17 September 2018  
**Location:** Koicharpara, Bagatipara, Natore.  
**Interviewer:** Runia  
**Category:** Member of the Safe Mango Producer Group and wife of the group secretary

**“I am empowered by the land I inherited from my father”.**

Nazma Begum is a member of Koicharpara Mango Farmers Group, along with her husband who holds the position of the Secretary. They have two school-going sons. She inherited scattered fragments of land from her father, amounting to a total of 3 *bigha* (about 1 acre), which she turned into mango orchards as soon as she registered the

land in her name. She also receives a share of the sale of fish from her father's ponds. She grows vegetables and fruits on the mango fields such as rice, turmeric, tomatoes, sugarcane, papaya, lime, peas, guava, and banana, mainly for household consumption.

Her husband owns 3 acres of land in which he grows paddy, mangoes and seasonal crops. Nazma visits her mango orchards only during harvesting when she cooks for the labourers.

She considers herself to be a middle-income farmer. To her knowledge, there are only 2 or 3 other women who have inherited their fathers' properties in her village, although she does not know what they do with the land. The livestock and poultry she owns are managed by a nearby landless family, who she pays for this. She lists the main risks in mango cultivation as insect attacks and storms, both lowering yield and quality, and therefore also the price of mangoes. While she and her husband consult each other about familial issues concerning their children, it is mainly her husband who takes the final decisions on mango farming and other crops. During the mango harvest, Nazma normally hires 3-4 labourers for one month, who used to spray pesticides eight times per season. Her group is only one year old, so they are not totally sure yet about the safe methods of mango production. She says her group members hope to get more training from Agriculture Extension Office and SNV together on specific issues such as the quantity and measurement of the pesticides they should spray in their mango orchards.

While some national and local level credit organizations like Grameen Bank, Asha, and TMH run credit programs in Koicharpara, she and her husband dislike taking credit from these organizations. *“Some (farmers) have succeeded by investing that credit but others became further shackled and indebted to the credit organizations and gradually become poorer”* - she shares from her experiences.

Although she has heard that in some parts of Rajshahi the drought caused by diverted water flow (due to the Farakha barrage in India) has turned the land into desert, she says this is not the case in her area. On the issue of personal empowerment she says that although her husband sometimes overrides her decisions at home, she considers herself a powerful woman because she has her own land, can produce and earn from it and can live independently if she so wishes. She is not involved with heavy work as she has earned enough money from the mango orchard to hire labourers. She however rues the fact that she did not go to school after grade 5, not because her parents could not afford her school, but because they were illiterate themselves and ignorant about the importance of education for women. Although Nazma Begum does not have her own bank account, she still thinks she has control over the money she earns from selling the mango from her orchard as her husband never refuses her money when she asks for it.



### 1.c. Case study: Shikha Khatun

**Date:** 17 September 2018  
**Location:** Koicharpara, Bagatipara, Natore.  
**Category:** Member of the Safe Mango Producer Group  
**Interviewer:** Runia



#### “I have never heard of a Farmers’ Card”

Shikha Khatun is a 32 year old woman member of the Koicharpara Mango Group in Natore with twin sons who are in primary school. She had to stop her education when she was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade because her parents could not pay for her education anymore. She was married off soon after. Shikha does not own land but works jointly with her husband on the one *bigha* of land he leases for mango cultivation.

It is not common in Koicharpara that women work in the mango orchard, even though women do work in turmeric and vegetable gardens where the work is considered lighter. The women who work in paddy and other crops, get lower payment than the men labourers. Shikha Khatun says that this is because women do lighter work.

In mango farming, she decides jointly with her husband about hiring labourers, farming methods, pest control, training, and technology. They have recently introduced Sex Pheromone traps in their mango orchard, advised by the Agriculture Extension Officer. She has got training from SNV on safe methods of mango cultivation and safe use of pesticides in mango orchards.

Responding to the question of why women do not work in mango orchards as a day labourer, and what they find wrong with this, Shikha Khatun said young women find it undignified to work in a field because this is seen as men’s work. Some women work in the PRAN factory where they earn a maximum of Tk. 5000 per month. She informs us that permanent workers of the factory get a daily bus pick-up and drop facility.

Shikha has never heard of the national Farmer Card<sup>28</sup> before, and neither she nor her husband has ever received it. Although she does not have her own bank account, she has a mobile phone with which she can communicate with her parents, friends, relatives. She also uses it to communicate with the agents of PRAN factories who keep contact with the farmers for purchasing mangos for the factories. She says that the rate of domestic violence and assault of women in public places in Koicharpara is very low because this is a place out of poverty. Moreover, the rate of school going boys and girls is very high in the village and girl students can even be seen riding a bicycle to school.

Asked about the situation of physically challenged, old women and disabled people she commented that she did not observe any discrimination towards these groups here, and thinks they are all able to avail of their pensions and government allowances.

On the issue of personal empowerment she finds herself empowered to take decisions not only in mango farming but also on spending, savings and investing money when she wants. She feels free to move about, and finds that in the farmers’ group meetings the women farmers’ opinions and views are also equally considered. Even though she has no own land and has to cultivate mangoes on leased property, people of her surroundings respect her effort and work to improve her life and livelihood. She thinks SNV accepted her to become a member of this Farmers group because of her hard-work and interest in mango cultivation.

<sup>28</sup> The card, issued from the 2010 Agriculture Input Assistance Card program in Bangladesh, distributes cash subsidies to farmers with marginal, small, and medium (0.02-3.03 hectares) farms

#### 1.d. Case study: Salma Khatun

**Date:** 17 September 2018  
**Location:** Koicharpara, Bagatipara, Natore.  
**Interviewer:** Joke and Khadiza  
**Category:** Member of the Safe Mango Producer Group

***“Now I know everything and I decide myself when I will do what with my mango garden”***



Salma Khatun participates as a member of the Safe Mango Producer Group in the name of her husband, who has a business in Malaysia. She owns some land herself, mainly used for aquaculture, and works in the mango orchard owned by him. In the absence of her husband she is the head of her household. She does all the household work including taking care of her 5 year old daughter, as well as manages the work on the orchard . She has good relations with her in-laws, who she meets regularly and finds that they appreciate her work.

Her husband owns 7-8 *bigha* of land, of which 4 *bigha* is taken up by the mango orchard. The rest is for paddy. In her own land she grows vegetables, enough to sell to neighbours and vendors who come to her house. She raises poultry but no cattle. She tells us she uses little pesticide in her vegetable garden and only when necessary.

The work in mango production takes nearly six months, which she manages with the help of hired labourers, who she supervises all the time. She walks through the garden for observation, cooks for the workers, cleans the pesticide equipment, and helps with other necessary work. For mango production her only problem is the drought period, when unripe mangoes fall off the tree and the garden needs to be irrigated for which she has to hire labourers. She feels able to do all the household and farm work, and finds that she makes her own decisions on all matters including expenditure. She keeps her husband informed by phone, and shares with us that he is appreciative of her efforts.

Salma tells us that the water and sanitation situation in her house is fine. Though there is no man and few family members in her house, she has never experienced sexual harassment. The only problem she faces is that the nearest community clinic is about 8 kilometer away from her house. She feels positive about the impact of the SNV SWITCH project activities and her membership, especially on her own ability to make decisions based on knowledge of GAP. In her words: *“Previously I used to spray pesticide 8-10 time in the mango garden, on advice of the labourers, but now I know everything and I decide when I will do what with my mango garden”*.

Although she is not a registered member of the producer group, she says she can express her opinion freely in the meeting and training session. Other group members respect her and listen to her, which makes her proud.

To conclude, being a farmer and member of the Safe Mango Producer Group is positive and empowering for Salma Khatun. She now knows enough about how to produce mangoes in a safer way, which helps her to be empowered socially, economically, physically and politically. She was already empowered, and membership in the producer group has made her even stronger.

**1.e. Case study: Md. Asgor Ali**

**Date:** 17 September 2018  
**Category:** Chairman of safe mango producer group  
**Age:** 60 years  
**Location:** Koicharpara, Bagatipara, Natore  
**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam



**‘Land should be bought for my son, not for my daughter’.**

**Asgor Ali’s remarks,  
 On gender relations:**

*“I have two daughters and one son. Both daughters are married. Their families are well. However, my son is still unmarried - he is working in Singapore for the past three years. When I ask money for my family needs, my son is sending whatever I need. I have decided that if I buy land in the future then that land will be bought for my son because our society gives more value to those who have more land. Now I have 5 bigha land. This land will be divided into 2.5 bigha for my son and 2.5 bigha to be shared by my daughters after my death. This amount of land is still not enough for my son. If I want to see my son in a better position in our society then obviously more land should be bought for my son, not for my daughters. This is one of the reasons why women are deprived from parent’s land inheritance.”*

**On the project:**

*“This project changed our way of thinking of safe mango production system. Before, we used unlimited pesticides and we did not know the amount of pesticides we should use, but now I know these things. We are now familiar about safe mango farming.”*

**1. Land rights**

- i) Land is registered in whose name? Husband? Father?  
*6 bigha land is registered in the respondents name.*
- ii) Does your wife own any land? Or does she have her own pond?  
*Wife owns 10 decimals land, no pond*
- iii) What does your family (household) look like: children, elders, siblings?  
*Now only husband and wife are living in the family. (2 daughters are already married and 1 son lives in Singapore as a migrant worker)*
- iv) Any women you know around here, who have their own land? Do these women work on that land themselves?  
*Yes, I know one woman - her husband is now working in Malaysia.*
- v) If the land is owned by you, do you work on the land yourself? Do you consider yourself poor, medium or rich?  
*I work on my land, my economic condition is medium.*
- vi) How much land do you own: land size and tenure?  
*6 bigha own land, and 2 bigha is leased land. Total 8 bigha land.*
- vii) Are you member of a Farmers’ Group?  
*Yes, I am a member of the Farmer’s group and also I am the Chairman.*
- viii) Will your daughter and son inherit your land? Will they get an equal share?

My son and daughters will inherit land after my death. Not equal, they will inherit land according to the Sharia Law, my son will get twice as much land as my daughters.

## 2. Agriculture

### Crops and farming system

- i) Does your household own mango trees and orchard? Yes, I have my own mango trees.
- ii) Does your household cultivate tomatoes? No.
- iii) What other crops you grow?  
*Paddy, potato, sweet potato, banana, reddish, onion, garlic, chilli, guava, pulses, etc.*
- iv) Do you have livestock too? Yes, two cows and 3 goats.
- v) Who is responsible for each of the tasks?  
*I cut the straw, and fodder but mostly my wife is feeding the cows and goats.*
- vi) Who makes the decisions about farming methods?  
*I make the decisions about the farming.*
- vii) How are pests controlled? Are pesticides used?  
*Around 1 year ago, we used unlimited pesticides in our field but after becoming a member of the Safe Mango producer group, we use a very limited amount of pesticides. Most of the time we receive advice from SNV staff and consult with the agricultural officer. Now we use pesticides three times per season.*  
Who does the actual spraying? You, your wife, or labourers?  
*My labours are spraying the pesticides. I just guide them about the amount of the pesticides. Sometime my wife washes the spraying machines, and dries them in the sun.*
- viii) Do you have access to knowledge and training for the tasks you are doing?  
*Yes, I have received 5 training sessions on safe mango farming.*
- ix) Does your wife have access to information, knowledge, training for the work she does?  
*My wife has no access to information, knowledge and training. Sometime she asks about the training I receive, but I do not share the details with her.*
- x) Any specific problems you face in the farming system?  
*There are some problems: labour cost is high; climate change has affected the timing and intensity of rains which has a negative impact on the mango yield; sometimes we cannot get a proper return on the investment we make as the mango price is less.*

## 3. Work

### Gender division of work in Mango cultivation

Which tasks do you do?	Which tasks are done by labourers?	Which tasks does your wife do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cutting off the extra leaf of mango tree,</li> <li>• Pesticides spraying</li> <li>• Identifying the disease</li> <li>• Ploughing the land</li> <li>• Administering fertilizer</li> <li>• Overseeing the mango orchard</li> <li>• Sale of mangoes to the market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spraying the pesticides</li> <li>• Watering in the orchard</li> <li>• Working as a guard</li> <li>• Harvesting the mango</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooking for family and labour</li> <li>• Feeding cattle and goats</li> <li>• Provisioning drinking water for family and labourers</li> <li>• Sometimes washing the spray machine</li> <li>• Sometimes visiting the mango orchard</li> <li>• Bringing food from house to orchard</li> <li>• Mango sorting and grading during mango harvest</li> <li>• Preparing basket for mango storing</li> </ul>

How many hours per day, per month, per season your wife works, and how many do you work?

During off season, women work an average of 2 hours daily, but this rises to around 8 hours during peak season. For me this is around 4 hours work in the off season, which increases to 8 hours work during the peak season (which is around 3 months).

Any specific problems?

Water crisis is one of the main problems. During the dry season, we cannot easily access water. At this time the water cost increases, as around 400 BDT is required for 1 time irrigation of the orchard.

Other work

- i) Do you have a paid job? No. I am not doing any paid work.
- ii) And your wife? Does she work outside the yard? Can she go wherever she likes or needs to go? My wife mostly works in the household, and very rarely goes out to see our crop field.
- iii) Would you like to do more work in mango and/or tomato cultivation?

Yes I want to increase my orchard area because, after all, it is profitable.

#### 4. Water and drought

- i) Your district is known for drought during a large part of the year. How does it influence your agricultural work? Agriculture, livestock, etc.  
Actually climate is changing in our area, as we do not get rain when required. Rain comes at unexpected times. Crop yields get significantly lowered during the dry season (January-April)
- ii) How is the domestic work of your household influenced?  
The women face problems to collect water from another source. Cooking, maintaining hygiene is also more of a problem.
- iii) How are the mango's and/or tomatoes getting their water? For example the tomatoes, they will need irrigation. How is that taken care of?  
Both mangoes and tomatoes need irrigation, per irrigation I need to pay 400 BDT. Mango production needs around 3 rounds of irrigation.

#### 5. Empowerment: Some findings of the four elements

Elements	Before membership	After membership
<b>Social:</b>	Before I became member of this group, people respected me but not as much as now.	My self-confidence has increased. I am invited to, and honoured at social functions. Despite my lack of education our neighbours seek and value my opinion in social issues.
<b>Political:</b>		I am able to organize myself and others. I can effectively participate in decision-making to influence development efforts. I have been elected as a Chairman of this group.
<b>Economic:</b>	When we were children we could not access proper education, so I only finished my primary level. My family did not understand the importance of education, and nobody cared about it.	I have access to relevant resources of production like land, ponds, livestock, equipment, credit, training, etc.
<b>Physical:</b>		I have a sanitary latrine at my house, but there is no safe sanitation in the work environment at orchard. I have the ability to resist domestic violence. If any domestic violence happens in your neighbourhood then we try to resolve the conflicts through community meetings, Recently, there was a conflict between two brothers in our group, then we arranged a meeting and resolved the chaos.

### 1. 1.f. Case study: Beauty Khatun

**Date:** 19 September 2018  
**Location:** Koicharpara, Bagatipara, Natore  
**Interviewer:** Joke and Khadiza  
**Category:** Woman farmer, non-member of the Safe Mango Producer Group



Beauty Khatun is a mango farmer but not a member of the Safe Mango Producer group formed by SNV. Her family consists of three members: her husband, herself and her 22-year-old son. She has 5 *kathas* of land in her name where she grows 5 mango trees. She manages the small mango farm with the help of her husband and son, and also hires labourers for tasks like spraying pesticide, pruning, harvesting etc. Tasks like ploughing the land, applying fertilizer and guarding the garden are done by her husband and son. She is responsible for cooking for the labourers, cleaning the harvested mangoes, sorting them by removing the unripe and damaged fruit, grading them according to their size, preparing the baskets to put the mangoes into, filling the baskets with mangoes, labeling the baskets, cleaning equipment used for processing mango, and other work as it comes up.

Though she is not a member of the Safe Mango Producer group, she has participated in the training sessions meant for the members and learned something from the discussions that took place during them. Some of her farming practices have changed since the training sessions. For instance, she has reduced the frequency of spraying pesticide in her farm to 3 times, and has started grading mangoes, which she did not do earlier. She says:

*“Grading helps me get a better price for my mangoes than other farmers”*

She would like to be a member of the Safe Mango Producer group because she thinks that will bring her some benefits.

### 2.a. Case study: Jarina Begum

**Date:** 17 September 2018  
**Category:** Day labourer, not a member of the Safe Tomato Producer Group  
**Location:** Bidirpur, Godagari, Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Khadiza and Joke



***“Is there any easy work? All the work is hard”***

Jarina Begum is a day labourer. She and her family live on *khas* land<sup>29</sup>. Her husband is mentally disabled and cannot work for his family. So Jarina Begum is the head of the household and primary bread winner, without any land of her own or of her husband. She has no parents in law. She has three children: one son and two daughters. One daughter is married, lives with her in-law’s in their house, and the other one is studying in class 10. She tried sending her 12 year old son to school as well but he was unwilling because he wanted to help his mother in supporting the family.

So he now works as a daily wage labourer in construction work, but this is quite irregular. Her husband does not interfere with her decisions.

She works in the field for tomato and other crops cultivation. She is involved in most of the stages of tomato cultivation from preparing the seedbed and sowing the seeds to caring for the seedlings and transplanting them, watering, weeding and fertilizing the growing plant, to the harvesting, cleaning, grading of the fruit, right up to the preparation for the market and marketing. The only task done solely by men is the digging and making of soil beds in the field. She works 8 hours per day and gets a daily wage of BDT 200 for her work as a day labourer, while men get BDT 300 for the same work and hours. Her income is not sufficient to maintain her family and she can hardly save any money. She has no choice but to go to work every day, which is very tiring, and is taking a severe toll on her health. Now she suffers from severe pain in her waist and knees but she is not able to spare the time or money for treatment. She says:

*“The money I earn is not sufficient for maintaining the family. Where will I find money for treatment?”*

Because of living on *khas* land, there is no free space around her house for planting vegetables or raising livestock, which makes her fully dependent on the market for all her food. She says she would prefer to receive rice from the farmers for whom she works instead of a meal. In this way she can reduce the cost for buying rice for her family, even though this means sacrificing her own intake of food. When asked which part of her field work is easy to do, she replies:

*“Is there any easy work? All the work is hard”.*

She has no help from her family as her mother has no income, and her brothers and brother in-laws are also poor and can barely support their own families. She thinks it would be very helpful if she could get support from the government, or any organization, to improve her life and livelihood as a farmer.

<sup>29</sup> *Khas land* refers to government-owned fallow land, where nobody has property rights

## 2.b. Case study: Shirin Sultana

**Date:** 17 September 2018  
**Category:** Wife of a member of the Safe Tomato Producer Group  
**Location:** Bidirpur, Godagari, Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Joke and Khadiza

### ***“Tomato does not shine easily. We have to work hard on it”***

Shirin Sultana is a tomato farmer whose husband is a member of the Safe Tomato Producer group organized by SNV. She has two daughters who are both married, and two unmarried sons. Her elder son lives in Dhaka where he works in a medicine company and the younger son is studying, living with the family.

She has no land of her own, but her husband does. Along with cultivating his own agricultural land, he leases land from others to cultivate, as well as works in others' land as a day labourer. The younger son helps his father in the field with cultivation but does not work as a day labourer. Labourers are hired when necessary. The couple owns 2 bullocks, 2 cows and one calf, as well as some poultry. Usually Shirin Sultana takes care of them. Apart from tomato production, they also cultivate paddy and wheat.

Shirin Sultana works in tomato production from the beginning of the production process to the marketing of the yield. This includes tasks such as preparing the seedbed and protecting it from rain or livestock, harvesting the seedlings from the nursery for transplantation, cooking food for the labourers, grading, cleaning and drying the tomatoes, preparing the crates for carrying tomatoes to the market, loading the crates, and a lot of other cleaning work.

Her workload is lighter during the tomato cultivation period from September to November, and peaks during the harvesting period from December to January, at which time she hardly rests. She explains certain factors that make her work harder than usual: the foggy weather and lack of sun during winter in Rajshahi

makes the cleaning and drying of tomatoes very time consuming. Unripe tomatoes at harvest also mean extra work. During grading, she separates ripe and half-ripe tomatoes and then she covers up half ripe tomatoes with jute sacks and put them in the sun to be fully ripened. Furthermore, she has to wash all the tomatoes and wipe them before loading them onto the crate for the market. She also has to prepare the crates with paper before putting the tomatoes in them. When recalling her workload



during the harvesting period she tells us:

“Tomato does not shine easily. We have to work hard for it!” Despite her intensive involvement in the production, harvesting and grading of tomatoes, Shirin does not go to the market for selling the fruit as that is always the work of her husband. After selling the yield, he gives her the money to keep, but not for long, because inputs for the next boro crop or wheat, have to be bought from it. She says: “Women have no power; we just work in the house and eat”.



## 2.c. Case study: Md. Mokter Hossain

**Date:** 18 September 2018  
**Category:** Member Tomato Producers Group  
**Location:** Bidirpur, Godagari, Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Runia

### “I often feel cheated by seed and pesticides companies”

Thirty five year old Md. Mokter Hossain is a general member of Bidirpur Tomato Producer Group of SNV, Godagari, Rajshahi. He owns 10 -12 *katha*<sup>30</sup> of land, while his father has about 12 *bigha* on which he grows tomatoes, rice and other crops and vegetables such as brinjal, chilies, peas, mustard, lentil, and turmeric. He also raises cattle and poultry in the homestead. As a member of a joint family, he lives at his parent's house (3 *katha* of homestead) and does farming on his father's land and ponds.



While his father is still alive he has not been handed over his land even though he is the only son. He says that after the death of her father his wife got land from her father. Similarly, after his death, his two sons and wife will get their due share of his land and properties, but not now while he is alive. For tomato cultivation, he seeks the help of his mother and wife in the nursery, cleaning, drying and grading only. Labourers do hard physical work like ploughing, making the beds and planting, watering and also irrigation, if needed.

Women of his house do a lot of drudgery work at home and in homestead gardening. They also cook rice for the labourers and clean the machine and tools after they have been used for spraying pesticides. His wife looks after the beds of tomato seedlings in his absence and grows some onion, peas, and vegetables in the homestead for household consumption during winter. She does not supervise the cultivation of tomatoes in the field, and is not allowed to attend the SNV trainings and consultation for tomato cultivation along with the other male farmers. Mokter Hossain says he does not feel the need to consult his wife regarding tomato farming.

He uses a minimal amount of carbide and ethephon to make the tomatoes look ripe before selling them to the shops and factories. From his understanding there is no objection yet from the government to use these chemicals on crops and vegetables. His hired labourers are responsible for spraying pesticides and he provides them with some protective gear such as head cover, hand gloves and apron.

He says there is a big problem with availability of quality seed in their village, and they are often cheated by well-known companies of seeds and pesticides. Farmers only find out about the poor quality of inputs after they have been used, by which time it is too late to remedy.

Mokter Hossain is busy not only with his tomatoes, but also with his clothing store in the local market, so he does not have time to help his wife in the household. He shares that he has a personal bank account of his own while his wife does not have one, although she has her own mobile phone. However, he draws money from the bank whenever his wife needs cash for family expenses.

<sup>30</sup> See Annex 10 for a conversion chart for local land measurements

## 2.d. Group of women labourers

**Date:** 18 September 2018

**Location:** Village: Bhidirpur, Upazila : Godhagari, District: Rajshahi.

**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam

**Respondent:** Ms. Shuli Begum, 46 years

**Other persons present:** Women labourers: 5 Muslim and 1 Hindu women coming from the field during our visit at Bhidirpur tomato production group.



Shuli Begum 3<sup>rd</sup> from the left side, Bidirpur, Godhagari, Rajshahi

### **Muslim women are normally not working in the field as a day labourer, what are the differences between you and other Muslim women?**

It is true that Muslim women are not working as a day labourer in our country. But our case is different. We are 6 women in our village who unfortunately have no husband, they either died or left. So, where we can get our food, who will pay our daily living cost? The answer is: no one, so we do this work. Other Muslim women have a husband, agricultural land, and other income sources, but we don't. In the beginning, I worked as a housemaid in our village. But I got only food for myself, and monthly received only around Tk. 300- 500. I worked almost 6 to 8 hours. Sometime I had to work at agricultural field as men labourers do. Gradually, I started work in the field all the time, because I then was paid more.

### **How your neighbours see you as a Muslim labourer?**

Our neighbours know my situation, so they don't mind. Some neighbours inform me when they need my work. However, some other people insult me asking why I work as a day labourer? But I don't care, they don't give me anything. Generally, we don't get respect from the society.

**Please give me your names:** Ms. Shuli, age-46, Ms. Rosown-ara, age-47, Ms. Chandona age-33, Ms. Salina, age-45, Ms. Jhumuara, age-40, Ms. Obidon, age-70.

**Tell me about your education?** We are all illiterate. We all come from poor families. Our family did not know the importance of education. Most of us had child marriage. Still we had a nice past.

**Where do you live? Do you have own land?** We live in the south-west part of our village (Bidirpur). We have no own land. We live in Khas land.

**Tabel 9. The differences between Muslim women labourers and Adivasi women labourers?**

Muslim women labor	Adivasi labor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normally, Muslim women started labour after the death of their husband or when no other source of income.</li> <li>Muslim women can do some selected work</li> <li>Muslim women avoid heavy work</li> <li>Muslim women labour need to learn all tasks</li> <li>Work nearby village</li> <li>Mostly same pay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adivasi women started labor work from the early stage of their life</li> <li>They have no choice of work</li> <li>They do all kind of work</li> <li>Adivasi women are skilled in any kind of agricultural work.</li> <li>Work even as far away as 30 km.</li> <li>Mostly more or less but same pay</li> </ul>

**Do you get financial/micro-credit support from NGOs?**

Most of the NGOs avoid us because we lack assets, how to recover it.

**What type of livelihood problems are you faced now a days?**

I fully depend on my agricultural work. But I do not find work every day. When drought or flood comes we are jobless and then we earn nothing. Day by day our working opportunities are getting less. I also feel physical problems... different diseases. If I cannot work well then people also do not accept my labor. So, I am worried about my livelihood. We could not buy cattle or a goat. I can make *Nakshi Katha* (handicraft), but I could not buy the relevant materials, and it is also difficult to find out buyer and could not sell the market.

**Do you get any support from Government or other NGOs?**

Our member and chairman only give attention to their preferable people and relatives. They ask money if I asked for support. Occasionally, (during last Eid time) I got 20 kg rice support from our member. During election, they come to us and give 200 to 500 taka. Then we don't see them.

**What types of work men and women does in tomato production?**

Tomato Production Activities	Men	Women
Preparing seed bed , Shading		√
Irrigation through (water) spray almost every day on the seed bed	√	√
Irrigation through spring well	√	√
Compost fertilizer preparing		√
Compost fertilizer bringing to the field	√	
Compost fertilizer spraying	√	√
Fencing around the bed	√	√
Plant pullout and keep in the basket		√
Organic fertilizer preparing		√
Preparing food for men/labor		√
Cultivation (overseeing) through tractor, leveling the soil by the hatch	√	
Prepare the row and canal (bed)	√	
Pesticides spraying	√	
Cleaning & weeding	√	√
Irrigation in the field	√	
Harvesting	√	√
Tomato bringing home	√	
Grading and sorting		√
Drying (for color and pesticides spraying)		√
Selling tomato to the buyer/ market	√	
Rotted tomato collection, cleaning & washing		√

**How much are you paid per day in the tomato work? Is pay equal for men and women?**

I receive around Tk. 200- 300, sometime less. The men always gets 100 to 150 taka more than us.

**Do you have sanitation facility in your house?** We have a kacha toilet.

**Do you have cattle or livestock?** No, sometimes we try to rear domestic birds like duck, hen.

**Empowerment:** Social: No, Political: No, Economic: No, Physical: No.

**2.e. Ms. Fulkoli Rani, Oraon women farmer and labourer****Date:** 08 October 2018**Age:** 41**Location:** Village; Gopalpur, Godagari, Upazila, Rajshahi (near to Bidirpur).**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam

**“I myself saved that money from the agricultural labour. This is the best achievement of my life. So, I own the land”**

Ms Fulkoli Rani has 1 daughter, 2 sons and a husband. Both husband and wife are uneducated. Her daughter is studying in class seven and sons have dropped out from class 8. Now her sons also doing labourer work.

Right-now, her family has 5 decimal home area and 10 decimal agricultural land. The agricultural land is bought by her. “I myself saved that money from the labour work. This is the best achievement of my life. So, I own the land”. Most of the women they don’t have land in our area. The husband or parents are not willing to give the land. In addition, brothers are also cheating the sisters after the parent’s death. Mostly, women are cheated.

Our previous generation had a nice heritage but now we are labourers. Our grand-father had more than 100 bigha land but that land was grabbed and subtracted during the war between Bangladesh and Pakistan. The Pakistani army burnt our home and in that time all documents also burnt. The situation was such that we were bound to flee to our relative’s house at Dinajpur. After independence, around 1 year later we came back home and saw that all land was grabbed and occupied by others. My grandfather tried to get his land back but unable to show the original land documents. When it was confirmed that all land was lost, after some days we found my grandfather dead.

For us it is not possible to get financial support from the government. Most of the non-government organizations also do not give us microcredit support. They think that we are too poor to repay. Some of our neighbours took loan but we could don’t. Land is the most important resource for us, and we have very little. That is our major problem. Most of the time we could not get work opportunity in our village or nearby village. In our Oraon community, every member works as a day labourer. Anyone who does not, will die from starvation.

I can write my name only. I went school only 2 year in my child hood. My sons did not continue their education to meet the family demand. For tomato-related work I receive around Tk. 200-250 in the peak season. But in the lean season, we get paid Tk. 100 to 150 per day. Oraon people get the same amount for men and women, sometime men gets more than women. But the Bangalees get around 50- to 100 more for the same work.

We have a latrine. We have 5 cattle in our family.

**Empowerment:****Social:** A limited social empowerment,**Political:** No.**Economic:** A limited Economic empowerment;**Physical:** A limited Physical empowerment.

**2.f. Ms Rumi, A Santhal adolescent girl, agricultural labourer**

**Date:** 08 October 2018

**Age:** 18

**Location:** Village: Gorangobari, Union; Matikata, Upazila: Godagari, Rajshahi.

**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam

**“All elements of empowerment do not apply to us, Santhals”**

Ms. Rumi is 18 years old, studied class 5. Her family has no own land, living at Khas land of the Mandir that was gifted by a landlord Mr. Shri Gorango about 80 years ago. Now, there are three members in her family (including mother and younger brother). Her brother is Kazal, age 15 years in class 10, recently he moved to Dhaka for work and income so that he can continue his study. Her mother was out for work.

Four years ago her father died of kidney failure. She said: ‘I wanted to go to school but when my father’s illness continued more than 3 years, then we did not get 3 meals per day.

So, I dropped out from school and became a full time labourer. I tried to enroll in class six but did not have the money. I started to work with my parents at 12 years, now this is my main profession.

We are poor people, poor people don’t have land. I heard that my grandparents had a huge amount of land but my parents had nothing. I want to buy some land in future, and break the tradition that we are landless’. Our main occupation is agricultural labor, both for men and for women. Almost all Santhal people do this job. Now a days, some people pull rickshaws. We have 5 hens at the moment.

**Micro-credit**

We can get the financial access form the NGOs but we are scared, we will not take it again. Because, my mother took a loan from an NGO 2 year ago. Then after one week the loan officer came to receive an installment. It was extremely difficult to recover. In case my mother could not arrange the money, they became so angry and used very bad words. I remembered one day, it rained all week, and we did not get any work, then the loan officer came and asked taka 150. My mother said ‘it is impossible to pay as we had no work the whole week. He was so fired up with my mother, and tried to catch our hen. My mother said one of our hens is now giving eggs, and requested not to take it. He did not care what my mother said and they started quarreling, which made me cry. Suddenly, the loan officer took our two hens (that time the hens were inside due to the rain) which price would be more than 300 taka. So, because of this bad experience we don’t want a loan again. The government institutions do not give the loan to landless people.

**Livelihood problems**

New agricultural technologies are introduced and day by day the demand for our work is decreasing. We are agricultural labourers and fully depend on this work. The land is being unusable due to the drought. Most of the time we have to work in other areas, and get even less money, because we need to pay the transport costs, and in the early morning we need to start our journey. Sometimes, we bring food from home and sometime we don’t.

Mostly, we work with a group of women, so we do not face problems. Sometimes, people make bad comments. If I feel any difficulties then we discuss amongst us through our own language.



We avoid quarrel. I have a strength I think I can resist all these problems, and I don't care who says what.

Also the Government does not value us as a human, we have no identity. We could not say our identity. We did not get any support from any NGOs of Governments.

I receive around Tk. 200 per day in the season. In other times we get paid 100 to 150 taka. We bring our food from our house. Women always get less paid than men. If we get 200 taka then men will get 250 taka.

We have a broken toilet. We will build a nice toilet soon.

All elements of empowerment do not apply to us.

### 3.a. Case study: Ayesha Begum

**Category:** Wife of member of Tomato Producers group

**Date:** 19 September 2018

**Location:** Aauray, Natore

**Interviewer:** Runia

***“When ours are ready, Indian tomatoes flood the market...”***



Thirty two year old Ayesha Begum is the wife of a member of Aauray Safe Tomatoes Producers Group with three school-going children. Her husband has no land of his own, but leases 1 bigha (1/3 acre) of land on which he cultivates tomatoes. From the very beginning, she has worked alongside her husband in the entire chain of tomato cultivation as they cannot afford to hire labourers. After the death of their fathers, they expect to inherit some property. Her husband does the ‘heavy’ work of ploughing, planting, watering/irrigation and spraying pesticides, while she is responsible for work that is considered lighter: weeding, watering, grading, washing and cleaning pesticide machines and tools after use. Apart from tomatoes, they cultivate vegetables such as potato, green chili, brinjal, okra and many more, some of which they sell in the market every week, but most of which is for household consumption. She is planning to build a brick house by saving money from selling tomatoes in the market.

As this Safe Tomato Producer Group was formed just one year back she assumes that the farmers in the group still need to learn more. She tries to learn about safe tomato production from her husband after he has followed the trainings from the SNV staff who work with the Puthia Farmers Groups. In her opinion one major problem faced by local tomato producers is that just as they get ready to sell their product, Indian business owners export their tomatoes to Bangladeshi shops and factories. As a result, the small local farmers lose their market as well as expected good prices for tomatoes.

Speaking about the water situation in their village Ayesha Begum shares that there is one tube well or deep tube well shared between 5 households and those who do not have it in their premises collect from their neighbours. It is not very common in the area that people depend on ponds for household use of water. In most of the houses they have electricity of the Rural Electrification Board (REB) and solar electricity from different companies.

### 3.b. Case study: Fulmeher Begum

**Category:** Abandoned and landless woman, non-member  
**Date:** 19 September 2018  
**Location:** Aauray, Natore  
**Interviewer:** Runia



***“It is unfair that women get 100 Taka less for the same work as men labourers”***

Fulmeher Begum is a 33 year old woman who is neither a member of the Safe Tomatoes Producer Group nor a wife of a male farmer.

Farmers (m/w) are selected as members of the Farmers Group because they cultivate on their own land or at least lease a certain amount of land for tomato farming, and she does neither. She started work as a day labourer when her husband left for Dhaka, abandoning her. She had no other option but to live with her two daughters in her in-law's house, while she struggled to provide for them.

About her work in the tomato fields, she says she works for about 6 hours like the male labourers. Except ploughing, she does all work like carrying debris, preparing seed beds, monitoring young plants, watering them, weeding and grading. But she gets BDT 100 less than what men labourers get as payment. She finds this unjust and unfair because women labourers

work as many hours as men, doing the same tasks. Apart from this paid job she has to do a lot of work in the household, but her daughters help her with this. Fulmeher mostly takes decisions regarding her income and expenditure herself, but is sometimes influenced by her mother in law's opinion. She has bought a cheap mobile phone for herself and her daughters so that she can call her relatives and employer when



*The two daughters of FulMeher*

needed, and her daughters can communicate with their class mates and teachers of the school. As she dropped out of school when she was married at fifteen, she wants her daughters to continue their education as long as possible.

Fulmeher Begum does not own land in her name and lives on the homestead of her in-laws who have been kind enough to house her and her daughters after her husband left. Her father is also landless, so she will not inherit land. She sees herself as a poor farmer. However due to her work in other people's tomato fields, she knows a lot about the various aspects of tomato cultivation now: she knows how to prepare seed beds, nurture young plants and how much water to put on it. She has never been responsible for spraying pesticides as this is done only by men farmers and their hired labourers. As she stays on the same homestead with her in-laws, she has easy access to their tube well for drinking water and household washing and cleaning activities.

**3.c. Md. Shariful Islam and his wife Ms. Jesmin Begum, member of Tomato production group.**

**Age:** 27 (Mr. Islam) and 24 (Ms. Begum)  
**Date:** 19 September 2018  
**Location:** Aauray, Natore Sadar, Natore.  
**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam

**Tell me why women are not included in the tomato production group?**

Mr. Islam said ‘most of the women have no land, this is the main reason why women are not members of the group. My parents have around 11 bigha land, but those I will inherit in future, but not now. So, we decided to lease some land, but I had no money, and my wife offered me to sell her gold ornaments. Literally, I got most of the money from my wife, but the land is on my name. This is the tradition, no matter where the money comes from, the title deed is on the name of the man. So, there are a number of reasons why women own less land in our country. And women are not aware of their rights. We don’t know any women who have own land. We are husband and wife. We have one son and parents, and 1 younger brother (he is studying at honors level). 4 bigha land is of our parents, and 4 bigha is leased.

**Agriculture**

Apart from the tomatoes, we grow paddy and various vegetables. We have 2 cows. I feed them grass at the field but my wife feeds them at the house. We both make the decision about the farming, but most of the time I (Mr.) make the decisions. I have received 3 trainings but my wife did not. My wife has no access to information and training, she was not allowed in the training. When asked about specific problems, Mr. Islam mentions: 1. Production cost is high; 2. We could not get proper price against the investment; 3. Diseases are so acute for tomato production; and 4. Labour cost is also high.

**Work:** Gender division of work in Tomato production

Mr Islam	Labourers	Ms Begum
Land cultivation	Land preparation	Preparing seed bed
Seed bed preparation	Spraying the pesticides	Water in the seed bed
Give Fertilizer/buy fertilizer	Pull out the grass	Clean the extra old (red) leaf from the field
Pesticides spraying	Watering in the tomato	Cooking for family and labour
Identifying the disease	Harvesting the tomato	Feeding cattle and goats
Sell the tomato to the market	Helping tomato grading and preparing the basket	Bringing drinking water
		Sometime washing the spray machine
		Bringing food from house to tomato
		Tomato sorting and grading
		Preparing basket for tomato storing

During off season women work on an average 1 hour in tomatoes, but around 4 hours works during peak season. Mr. Islam works around 1 hour in off season in tomatoes, but around 6 hours works during peak season (around 3 months). I would like to increase my tomato area, because after all, it is profitable.

**Empowerment: Some findings of the four elements**

**Social Empowerment:** Self-image increased, some people give value to what we say.

**Economic Empowerment:** Male can spend whatever he likes but women can’t. Mr. Islam have access to relevant resources of production like livestock.

**Political:** In my family, male are mainly making decision for crop production related activities. We have access to resources of production like land, ponds, livestock, equipment, credit, training.

**Physical Empowerment:** We have a sanitary latrine at my house and a tubewell.



#### 4.a. Case study: Md. Abul Bashar

**Category:** Chairperson of Safe Mango Producers Group

**Date:** 20 September 2018

**Location:** Biharipara, Puthia, Rajshahi

**Interviewer:** Runia

Md. Abul Bashar is the chairperson of the Biharipara Safe Mango Producers Group in Puthia, Rajshahi. He is 50 years old and has two school-going daughters and a son who is mentally challenged. Recently retired from the Bangladesh army Md. Abul Bashar returned to his birth place in Rajshahi, where he is now settled, and has started mango cultivation on the 4 *bigha* (110 decimals) of land he inherited from his father. The Safe Mango Producers Group that he is member and Chairperson of is a year old, and he has received some training on safe mango production and value chain, conducted by SNV and the Agriculture Extension Office in Puthia. He opened a bank account for the group where the members jointly deposit some money every month, which can be used for the welfare of the poor farmers.

Abul Bashar consults with his wife on decisions related to their children's education, household management as well as mango cultivation. However, he only helps his wife in household and care work when he gets time free from his work in the orchard and out of home.

Although his wife does not go to the mango orchard every day, she keeps herself informed about safe mango production, and various developments in the production process, including the diseases and pest attacks in the orchard.

The couple is worried about the annual increase in types of insects, which they notice in the mango trees and mangoes. On the usage of pesticides, Abul Bashar says they spray the mango orchard six to eight times per season. He does this himself, along with hired labourers, and uses protective clothing, one set of which was received from SNV.



#### 4.b. Case study: Fahima Begum

**Category:** Member of the Safe Mango Producer Group  
**Date:** 20 September 2018  
**Location:** Biharipara, Puthia, Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Joke and Khadiza



***“If husbands can be convinced, women also can come to the training and can learn directly.”***

Fahima Begum is an executive member of the committee of the Safe Mango Producer Group of Biharipara, Puthia, Rajshahi by SNV. She has 7.5 *katha* land registered in her own name, on which she cultivates paddy, onion and other crops. The mango garden is on land owned by her husband, who also leases other mango gardens. Since she is closely involved with mango production along with her husband, she joined the Safe Mango Producer Group.

Her family consists of 5 members, including one son and a daughter who are both studying. Fahima is not only responsible for all the household work in her family, but she also works for mango production and other crops all the year round. She thinks she does 50% of the work for mango and other crop production, but gets little recognition or payment for it. In her words:

*“Women’s work is not recognized, though we do a lot”.*

Fahima and her husband discuss and take most decisions together, on household matters, children, mango production and other crops. On occasions, though, her husband’s opinion gets priority over hers. For example, last year when she advised her husband not to lease other mango gardens due to the lower price they were getting for their mangoes, her husband ignored her advice and leased other gardens. Fahima shares that after joining the Safe Mango Producer Group, she and her husband pay extra attention to good agricultural practices, but still face some problems. She says:

*“We work hard to produce good quality mangoes but we don’t get a better price. So it would be very good, if we get a higher price as well.”*

In general she is positive about the effectiveness of the SNV SWITCH project and forming a group with other local mango producers, as she thinks the members have learned a lot about safe production techniques, and especially about using less pesticide. Speaking about personal empowerment, she says that as an executive member of the group she is valued by all other members. She can talk in the meetings and everybody listens to her. She thinks other women should participate in the training sessions because they are also doing a lot of the work for mango production. In her opinion the obstacle to this is that men normally do not allow women to go outside and participate in training sessions. They prefer to participate in the training themselves and give information to their wives secondhand. She thinks that if husbands can be convinced, women could come to the trainings so they can learn directly from them.

#### 4.c. Case study: Merina Begum

**Category:** Member of the Safe Mango Producer Group  
**Date:** 20 September 2018  
**Location:** Biharipara, Puthia, Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Khadiza and Joke

***“I think I am in a very good position in my family”***

Merina Begum is a 35 year old woman farmer with two daughters and one son. One of her daughters is married and living with her in-laws, so presently her household consists of herself, her husband, one daughter and one son, both of whom are studying. Her husband does different types of business and agricultural work, while she does household work and agricultural work. She has no land of her own, but expects to inherit some after her parent's death. Her husband owns 1 ¼ *bigha* of land which is used to grow mangoes and her father-in-law has 3 *bigha* of land where they grow paddy, beans, and other seasonal crops and vegetables . She considers her family to be a mid-level farmer family and shares that she actively takes part in the production and processing work of all crops, both inside and outside the house. Merina and her husband are happy with the yields from their land and do not need to lease other land. She says she is able to produce sufficient rice for household consumption and even has a surplus of 50-60 mound of rice every year to sell.



Since the start of the group in 2016, Merina is an executive member of the Safe Mango Producer Group on behalf of her husband who is too busy to come to the meetings and training sessions . She has attended all the training sessions and practices her learning in the field.

She comes across as a highly empowered woman economically, socially, politically and physically. Both she and her husband discuss together and make decisions jointly about all household, agricultural and economic issues. They respect each other’s opinion without conflicts. She also faces no restriction to move freely. She freely goes to the fields, participates in the training sessions, and goes to other places if she needs. She only needs her husband’s permission to go far away. In her words:

*“I think I am in a very good position in my family. Because I can make decisions, I know reading and writing, my children are studying, I am not dependent on anybody, and I am not indebted. So I am well and can do anything. This may not be true for other women. They may not make decisions and I can see, my husband is valuing me, but others’ husbands are not valuing them. Many women are completing all the household work but there is no peace and recognition for them in their family.”*

Furthermore, being the executive member of the group, she is respected and valued by other farmers and members of her community. Her opinion is listened to. When she was asked her opinion about doing so much work, she said:

*“I enjoy my work and like to do work. The body remains healthy when people work.”*

She also has access to good quality water and sanitation facilities. Recently they reconstructed their house and built a toilet inside. She preferred to construct the toilet within the house because then she and her husband would still be able to use it in their old age. She shares with us:

*“My husband said, if our sons do not take care of us in our old age and I die first, this toilet will be helpful for you, and if you die first, this toilet will be helpful for me.”*

#### 4.d. Case study: Surma Begum

**Category:** Member of the Safe Mango Producer Group  
**Date:** 20 September 2018  
**Location:** Biharipara, Puthia, Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Joke and Khadiza

***“It would be better, if there would be more women in the training.”***

Surma Begum is a very young farmer. She got married at the age of 19 and now she is 24 years old. She has one son of three and lives with her in-laws. She has no land of her own but her husband has a mango orchard and other land. So she is the member of the Safe Mango Producer Group on behalf of her husband.



Mostly, it is her father-in-law who takes care of the mango field, but she and her husband also work for mango production. Labourers are hired when needed. She does not go to the garden much but does all the home-based work related to mango production and marketing.

Since joining the group, Surma attended five trainings on safe mango production from SNV, about which she is positive: *“Whatever I am learning here is new to me.”*

She thinks that other members are also learning a lot about safe mango production which is helping them to produce good fruits and get a good price for them. Moreover, consumers are getting safe mangoes from them. However, she observed that during the trainings, trainers never talked about the separate work of men and women for mango production, or about the time men and women spend for their specific tasks in mango production. Members were not asked to note down the time they spent in mango production activities in the SNV documentation booklet. Consequently, only the time and wages of the labourers is counted under business costs. Surma recognizes that as owners of the garden, both she and her husband are also working a lot for mango production. However, this goes uncounted and unpaid, especially for women, as men are the ones going to the market, selling the mangoes and getting the money. Although her husband gives her the money to keep and recognizes her contribution, she notes that she doesn't get any honorarium for her time and efforts. She says:

*“My work is recognized in the family but not paid. This work is for my family. So I have to do it, even though it is not paid.”*

She also notices that few women own mango orchards. She is concerned that the number of women members in the group is small and that many women are not able to participate in the training sessions though they are doing a lot of work for mango production. Stressing the importance of including more women in the group, she says:

*“It would be better, if there would be more women in the training. Now women are learning from their husbands but if they would be able to join in the training sessions with their husbands, they could learn more. Then it would help them to not only enrich their knowledge and skill, but also to improve the economic condition of their family.”*

Surma is not happy about the fact that when she completed her higher secondary level education and wanted to do a job her family did not allow her this. Speaking on discrimination against women in our society, she says:

*“Women's rights are not properly fulfilled in our society. Women have no freedom, no employment opportunity, no mobility, and lots of restrictions. And that is why they, and their families, are in a backward situation.”*

#### 4.e. Case study: Akhira Begum

**Category:** Wife of Chairperson of Safe Mango Producers Group  
**Date:** 20 September 2018  
**Location:** Biharipara, Puthia, Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Runia

**“Often I spray the insecticides myself”.**

Akhira Begum is a 42 year old mango cultivation farmer whose husband is the Chairperson of the Biharipara Safe Mango Producers Group. She has two school- going daughters and a 20 year old son who is mentally ill. Having to care for a mentally challenged young adult alongside co-managing her husband’s 4 *bigha* mango orchard, leaves Akhira Begum with less free time than any other woman in the village.



Akhira Begum has received some training on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) from SNV, and is one of the few women who takes personal responsibility of spraying pesticides in the mango orchards, especially when her husband and other male labourers are not available for the job. She takes particular care to take safety measures during spraying pesticides in their mango orchard. Informing us about alternative livelihood strategies of other households in her area, Akhira informs us that some couples in Biharipara work as a night guards in the mango orchards to earn some money. However, except for Adivasi women, very few women come to work in a mango orchard, as they consider it heavy work fit for men only. The women labourers who work in a mango orchard or in vegetable homestead gardening sometimes prefer rice or grains instead of money as daily payment for their work.

Akhira Begum is well-known in the area for helping poor people and tries to provide some work for them in her mango orchard, vegetable garden and even in her household as a helping hand. Regarding water facilities she shares that like many other families in Biharipara, they have a tube well which water they use for drinking, cleaning, and washing clothes and kitchen utensils. For the orchard they extract ground water by a shallow pump machine.

#### 4.f. Case study: Meherjan

**Category:** Landless woman and night guard  
**Date:** 20 September 2018  
**Location:** Biharipara, Puthia, Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Runia

#### “We had to sell the mango orchard when my husband needed hospital treatment”.

Meherjan is a 38 year old woman who we found cooking lunch for her family in her kitchen. Her husband used to work in a private company but had to stop work recently as he got a heart disease. Meherjan has two sons, the eldest of who is working in the Bangladesh army, and the other is doing his Master’s degree in Rajshahi University. Neither Meherjan nor her husband own land except for their homestead.

Her husband had 5 *katha* of land 5 years back where they used to cultivate mangoes, but they were forced to sell it when her husband had a heart stroke, to pay for his treatment in hospitals in Dhaka.

Five years back, when they had their own mango orchard, they got training on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) by the Agriculture Extension Office, Puthia. Now both Meherjan and her husband occasionally work as night guards in someone else’s mango orchard. Apart from this, Meherjan also works in a micro-scale factory of herbal beauty products nearby Puthia for two days a week. She cultivates some banana, papaya and garlic in her backyard for household consumption and to give to relatives and neighbours, and also rears poultry and sells eggs of hens and ducks in her neighbourhood.



When asked about the national Farmer Card, she could not remember if they had ever received it or not; she could only remember that a few years back they received a card from the Agriculture Extension Officer. However, she is not sure if it was a Farmer Card or irrigation card because they have never used it. She says that neither she nor her husband have ever attended Union Parishad meetings.

Asked about decision making for the household and work, Meherjan shares that both she and her husband take decisions jointly particularly on children and family matters, and never try to override each other as they respect each other’s opinions, ideas and views.

#### 4.g. Case study: Latifa Begum

**Category:** Member of the Safe Mango Producer Group  
**Date:** 20 September 2018  
**Location:** Biharipara, Puthia, Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Joke and Khadiza

**“In the group I feel valued for my contribution”**



Ms. Latifa Begum is a member of the Safe Mango Producer Group. There are only three members in her family: she, her husband and one son, who is studying in Rajshahi University. She has inherited 1 *bigha* and 10 *katha* land from her father and her husband has 2 ½ *bigha* land. Of her land, 8 *katha* is used for

mango and the rest is for cultivating paddy, potato, brinjal, and other vegetables. They do not take any land on lease. She also has a garden of banana trees and papaya trees in her homestead. She takes care of the gardens, selling bananas and papayas, and keeping some of the fruits for household consumption.

Regarding decision making in the household, she says both she and her husband decide on all matters together – regarding the family as well as agricultural production. There is no dispute between her and her husband. In the group, she feels she is valued for her contribution, and thinks that all the group members get along well and respect each other. She says she is very happy with the activities of SNV for safe mango production.

#### 4.h. Case study Md. Matiur Rahman

**Category:** Member of the Safe Mango Producer Group  
**Date:** 20 September 2018  
**Location:** Biharipara, Puthia, Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Joke and Khadiza

**“I worked in another’s land and spent my savings to educate my sons. Now they are engineers and that is my achievement.”**

Md. Matiur Rahman is a 69 year old member of the Safe Mango Producer Group. He retired from agricultural work and day labour work, but still looks after his mango garden. His family has 8 members. He has 2 sons, 1 daughter, 1 daughter-in-law, 1 grand child from his son, his wife, and his mother. His mother is very old but able to walk around with a stick. Both of his sons are well educated. They are engineers and stay in Dhaka for their work.

He has 7-8 *bigha* land, of which he uses 1 ½ *bigha* to grow both mango and paddy, and the rest is given out on lease. He has 17 mango trees and grows paddy on the ground under them. To protect the root of the mango tree from submersion in the irrigation water of the paddy, he grows the trees on raised beds using extra soil. He also grows vegetables in a small area of land. After keeping enough for the family's consumption, he sells the rice, vegetables and mangoes. He considers himself a small farmer because he does not own much land. The land he is utilizing now is from his father, which will ultimately be divided among his 2 brothers and 5 sisters.

Therefore, he has to share some profit or income from the land with his siblings.

Being elderly he needs help from others for the farming activities. His wife helps him in the mango, crops and vegetable cultivation, and he also hires labourers for the heavy tasks that he and his wife cannot do, such as pruning, applying fertilizer, spraying pesticide and irrigation. He has to pay 300 taka to the labourers for their work from 8.00 am to 2.00 pm. He tells us that the labourers, all of whom are men, do not like to work till 5 or 6 pm, and that although there is no restriction on local women to go to other's fields or work on their field, they do not work as day labourers. Normally women of indigenous groups or ethnic minority work as day labourers but they are not living in Biharipara, he adds.

He has not yet faced any problems in his farm work due to drought. If he needs to irrigate his paddy field, he draws water from the deep tube-well, which has water all the year round.

He reconstructed his house recently, and also extended its area. In the reconstructed house, he has made a toilet inside the house. Earlier it was outside and problematic for his mother to use. His sons designed the house and toilet structure. He thinks, having a toilet in the house is very helpful for his mother, but also for him and his wife because they are becoming older too.

He is very proud of his sons. He says: "I worked in other's land and spent my saved money to educate my sons. Now they are engineer and that is my achievement."

Being the senior-most member of the Safe Mango Producer Group, he is respected by everyone



in the group. He can express his opinion openly, and everybody listens to him.

In the family, they take decisions all together. For crucial issues, he also asks the opinion of his sons. He thinks if a decision is made together with everybody, it has a better chance to be a good one. He says, "Doing work with ten, there is no shame in either win or loss".



**4.i. Ms. Fatema Begum , Guard of mango orchard**

**Date:** 20 September 2018

**Age:** 55

**Location:** Biharipara, Puthia, Rajshahi

**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam

**Other persons present:** Her husband (joined end of the interview)

**“Guard is more important than producer”**

Ms. Begum mentioned, we are 3 members in the family (me, my son and my husband). My husband is a van puller, and my son works outside as day labourer. We are illiterate. My son only completed class 8. I tried to educate my son but could not due to the financial crisis. We have only 3 decimals land (home area). Most of the time my husband could not find work as van driver. So, I work as housemaid at our neighbour’s house. Normally, I earn Tk. 500 – 800 from housemaid work. When the mango season comes, that time we earn Tk. 5000 from the guard job. There is a challenge in this job: if any mango is stolen then we have to pay the value of the missing mangos. So, both (I and my husband) we stay in the orchard for 24 hours. Around 2-3 months this job continues and the whole time we live in the orchard. We make a temporary shelter, we cook food, a toilet, and everything is there. If guests come then they also stay with us in the orchard. Because, the guard is more important than the mango production, after all we ensure the security. After forming the SNV safe mango production group, the demand for our work also increased.



**4.j. Ms. Shauli Begum, wife of a member of safe mango farming group.**

**Date:** 20 September 2018

**Age:** 38

**Location:** Biharipara, Puthia, Rajshahi

**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam

**‘Husband’s decision is final’**

Ms. Shauli Begum (10 class educated), married 13 year ago. She has two children (age 5, and 2). During the interview she said husband’s decision is final for each and every matter. Her husband

thinks that women should not be involved in any gathering or event, because that would be a bad thing, women could not produce a good solution. Women should work inside the house not outside. They should not interfere in any men’s gatherings. Even, if I oppose any family matter a quarrel will be the result, so I avoid this. He is also very cordial. He fulfills all my requirements. I also agree with his decisions.

We are husband wife, 1 son and 1 daughter. Yes, I know two women who have own land, there home is just opposite of our home. Around 5 Bigha land we have, in addition, my husband does business. I have 12 chickens. I prepare the food for the labourers, who do most of the work.

There are some problems: the main one is high labour costs and that we could not get a proper price for our mangoes, no processing system. Another problem is when mangoes were ripe, we had no way of storing them for some time.

Tasks by me (woman)	Work done by labourers	Work by my husband
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cooking for family and labour</li> <li>○ Sometime visit the mango orchard</li> <li>○ Mango sorting and grading during mango harvest</li> <li>○ Preparing basket for mango storing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Watering in the orchard</li> <li>○ Give the fertilizer</li> <li>○ Spraying the pesticides</li> <li>○ Work as a guard</li> <li>○ Harvesting the mango</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Appoint the labour</li> <li>○ Prune mango tree,</li> <li>○ Identifying the disease</li> <li>○ Land preparation/ cultivation</li> <li>○ Oversee the mango orchard</li> <li>○ Sell the mango to the market</li> </ul>

**Empowerment: Some findings of the four elements**

**Social:** our self-image is good, any kind of social events people invite us. Our village is very rich. Everyone respects each other.

**Political:** I have no right to join a group. I am not allowed to participate in decision-making.

**Economic:** Though I have no access to production like land, ponds, livestock, equipment, credit, training, etc. but my husband fulfills all my requirements. If I asked money from my husband then he will give me without any question. I can spend while I am not earning.

**Physical:** We have sanitary latrine, safe water access, and I can spend money for treatment.



## ANNEX 5: Focus Group Discussions

1. Koicharpara, Mango Farmers, mixed group
2. Bidirpur, Tomato Farmers, male group
3. Aauray, Tomato Farmers, male group
4. Shonardighi, Tomato Farmers, female group
5. Biharipara, Mango Farmers, mixed group

### 1. Koicharpara Focus Group Discussion with Safe Mango Farmers Group, Women and Men

**Date:** 17 September 2018  
**Location:** Koichapara, Bagatipara, Natore.  
**Number of participants:** 37 (26 men and 11 women)  
**Facilitators:** Joke, Runia, Mahidul and Khadiza  
**Notes:** Khadiza



***“If we calculate our wages, there will be no profit”***

The Nirapod Aam Chashi Samiti (Safe Mango Producer Group) is a group of 30 mango farmers, initiated and led by SNV. Formed a year ago, it comprises 20 men and 10 women members, with an Executive Committee of 5 members, 2 of whom are women. To be eligible for membership of this group one must own or lease mango gardens, be interested to produce mangoes in a safer way, and have time for attending meetings and participating in the trainings. Each member pays 100 BDT membership fee per month and the group sum of 3000 BDT collected per month gets deposited by the group’s treasurer. Members decide jointly about how these savings get spent or invested. For example, some of the money was used to build a store room where the harvested

mangoes are kept to sell, and an open shed with a roof where members can have their meetings. The meeting for the FGD was held in this shed.

Although group membership requirement of ownership of a mango garden tends to limit women's participation in this group, there are some scenarios where women whose husbands have a mango garden, can be a member. Among the 10 women members, only 3 women own mango gardens in their name, while the other 7 women are members on behalf of their husbands who are busy with other activities and hence unable to attend the meetings and training sessions.

There are also three husband and wife member couples in this group. While all the women in these couples are intensively involved with mango production activities, not all their male partners are farmers. Despite women doing a large share of the farm work, there is still a gender bias where wives of the men farmers are not recognized as farmers, while husbands of women farmers are treated as farmers even though they may not be involved in the farm.

The group members list several benefits of being part of the Safe Mango Producer Group, such as improved knowledge on safe mango cultivation practices use of fertilizer, when and how often they should use pesticide, how to prepare mangoes for the market so that they can get a good price, etc. Most importantly, they say they were able to improve their income from mango production compared to the previous years<sup>31</sup> which improved the household financial situation. Membership in the group has thus helped their social and economic empowerment, as they earn a better income, benefit from the linkages with an international organization, and important functionaries of the national Department of Agricultural Extension. Both women and of men feel more confident and have a more positive self-image, as their neighbours and relatives respect them more and ask them for advice. One of the members of the group said:

*"Today we are here with you. So others are wondering what we are doing here. They will ask us later what we have discussed and learned here today."*

A specific benefit of membership in the group for the women members is that for the first time they received training and information on the 'male' tasks within the mango production process in which they were hardly involved earlier. For example they learned how and when to plough the land, how many times they need to spray pesticide, how they should spray pesticide etc. They added that this learning saved their money because now they are using less fertilizer and pesticide.

Both women and men farmers thought they benefitted most from the know-how on safe cultivation practices in mango, the reduced use of pesticides, and the training on getting the mangoes ready for the market. When asked about their pesticide use, the members informed us that previously they were used to spraying pesticide 6 or 8 times a season, but from the training they learned that spraying 3 times is enough for good production. One member remarked:

*"We care less about the money, safe production is more important"*

The women and men farmers very much appreciate their improved market linkages enabled by the SWITCH project, as along with selling in the market, they sell their mangoes to PRAN, a big agro-processing company. The members tell us that earlier they could not sell their mangoes to PRAN or to any other agro-processing company. But now, showing the record they keep of all their activities (number, timing and amount of fertilizer and pesticide uses, time of harvesting the mango etc.) they are able to sell their mangos to them. SNV made the linkage between farmers and the PRAN Company, and the Agricultural Officer certifies their product as 'safe'. They acknowledge that along with SNV, the Department of Agricultural Extension has been very

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<sup>31</sup> This can easily be quantified from the individual booklets SNV has given to the farmers to document the whole process, including yields, costs and income.

helpful to them for producing better and safer mangoes and, because of these activities, they are now getting a higher price and more profit compared to the previous years<sup>32</sup>.

However, farmers say they are not directly communicating with the agro processing companies. Some agents, called Hub Leaders come to them and buy their mangoes. The hub leaders transport the mangoes to different agro processing companies. The treasurer of the group is a mango-trader and tells us that PRAN is very happy with the mangoes with fewer residues of pesticides.

The farmers do not know how their mangoes are processed in the processing factories, but they are satisfied with their own production process because they are producing mangoes which are good for health. In one member's words:

*"We are satisfied that we are doing nicely. What PRAN does is not our business".*

When asked about their income from mangoes and other crops the women say that mango yields only once in a year, so it gives income only once in a year. It is therefore difficult to survive throughout the year only depending on mango production. They have to save as much as possible and invest the earnings from mango in the cultivation of other seasonal crops like rice, sugarcane, wheat, peas, lentils, brinjal, chilli, banana and vegetables. Interestingly, they also grow turmeric and coriander on the land under the mango tree, making more efficient use of the land. Most of the women keep livestock and poultry, which is another source of income. They get manure for their mango garden and crops from their livestock, daily perishable domestic waste and ash from their mud stove.

Both men and women work for mango production but their work is not always the same or at the same time. When men were asked to mention women's tasks for mango production they mentioned:

- Women cook food for labourers, who are hired to work in the mango garden
- Women collect and carry water to mix with the pesticide
- Women water the mango trees in the garden by watering can, pitcher or with a pipe from the deep tube well, when they see young green mangoes are falling down because of lack of moisture
- Women carry the equipment and tanks used for spraying pesticide and later they wash them
- Women and men harvest mango together
- Women do mango grading
- Women clean the gum residue from the mango fruit
- Women clean and dry the mangoes
- Women prepare the crates by layering it with paper to hold the mangoes for selling
- Women put mangoes in the crate
- Women put labels on the mango crate
- Women clean the garden and processing place after the mangos have been taken to the market by the men.

When women were asked to mention men's work for mango production they mentioned:

- Men do all the work in the garden: using fertilizer and pesticide, irrigation, and others. Only if men are away, women do men's work.
- Sometimes when labourers are not available, women help men to do their work.
- Men mainly guard the garden when mangoes are ripe but sometimes women also do so. Normally women guard the gardens during the day time and men do this at night. Sometimes labourers are hired to guard the field but labourers cannot always be trusted.

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<sup>32</sup> The GWA team cannot verify and quantify this, but the SNV team can.

- Men carry the mangoes to the market and sell them.

Both men and women members agreed that apart from mango cultivation, they need to do a lot of work for other crops and women mostly bear the burden of household work. Men help their wives with household work in emergency situations, for example when the women are ill. Men members also mentioned that they entrust the money from the sale of mangoes and crops to women.

*“It is safe with them, whilst we could not even be trusted with 10 taka.”*

There is good cooperation and understanding between the members. They decide in the meeting whose mangoes will be harvested on which date. They harvest the mangoes of 3 to 5 members per day and all the members work together to do this. This way it continues till every member’s field is harvested.

Mango production involves about six months of work. According to the instruction of SNV, farmers document during this time which work the labourers have done, who the labourers are, how many labourers they hired, how much they have paid them, which fertilizer, manure, and pesticide they have used, and the dates, amounts and the costs. Surprisingly, they do not count their own and their wife’s working hours. According to them as they are owner of the garden, their work is unpaid and does not need to be counted.

Discussing the hours worked by the members themselves reveals interesting information. At the beginning of the mango production, for nearly three months, men work around 4 hours every day. During this time they plough the land, clean the garden, apply fertilizer, spray pesticide and irrigate. Most of the time they hire labourers to do all this. On the other hand, during this same period, women work about 6 hours every day. This time their main responsibility is to cook food and manage eating and drinking arrangements for the labourers. Besides, they help men to do all their work regarding mango cultivation. During the later three months both men and women work more than 10 hours a day on average, doing joint work as well as specific tasks. But in the harvesting time, lasting one month, both women and men work nearly 12 hours a day.

MANGO	Months 1, 2, 3	Months 4, 5	Month 6 Harvesting	Further work
Women’s work	6 hrs/day	More than 10 hours/day	Nearly 12 hours/day	Household, children, other crops, vegetables
Men’s work	4 hrs/day	More than 10 hours/day	10-12 hours/day	Other crops

(this table is based on information the members themselves provided us with, for all to hear)

“Women work more time in the mango production than men” the president tells us.

Unfortunately, neither men nor women farmers count the time they are spending for mango production. The profits are calculated by deducting the costs for labourers and other expenditures from the income from sale of mangoes. They do not realise that this is actually their wages plus profit, and that they may have not made enough to cover their own labour costs. Coming to this realisation, one member said:

*“If we calculate our wages, there will be no profit.”*

Now this issue is raised, all the members started to realise that they should also count their own time and that should be paid (or at least calculated with a shadow-price). They said in future they will do so because it matters for the value chain calculations.

Some additional observations:

The member farmers of this group are well-to-do, even though they do not own much land. Their houses look beautiful and large. The store and shed they built as a group is also made of good and durable material.

## 2. Bidirpur Focus Group Discussion with Safe Tomato Farmers Group, Men

**Date:** 18 September 2018  
**Location:** Bidirpur, Godagari, Rajshahi.  
**Number of participants:** 30 (all men)  
**Facilitators:** Joke, Runia, Mohidul and Khadiza  
**Notes:** Runia



**“We prefer chemical fertilizers and pesticides, whilst our women prefer natural pesticides like sex pheromone trap”.**

Arriving in the village, there are signs of the ongoing paddy harvest all over the place. Everywhere there is fresh straw and the street is used to dry rice. Now the land is available to the next crop: tomatoes.

The Research team conducted an FGD with about thirty male participants from Safer Tomato Farmers Group which was formed one year back. The project of SNV organized the Tomatoes farmers’ groups in order to improve their understanding and implementation of good agricultural practices (GAPs) so that they can achieve safe food certification and improve the market for their produce nationally and even internationally.

When questioned on land ownership, most of the farmers in the FGD said they owned their land. They added that some of their wives, about 5 % of the women in Bidirpur, inherited some land of their fathers. In a few cases these women carry out tomato cultivation on their land together with their husbands, while others simply give their land to their husbands for their farming activities. Most households have their own livestock and poultry for household consumption. In discussing who does what work, they said as tomato farming is smaller scale farming compared to mango farming, many women like to be involved in this. Like their husbands, many women work in tomato cultivation from the beginning to the end of the production cycle, just before marketing. They say the training of SNV increased their awareness of the importance to

produce safe food but they are not always sure how to reduce risks. After investing a lot of money in tomato farming, their priority is on how to produce more and getting higher prices. Not only men and women but also children participate in the work of preparing a seedbed and watering the bed to let the seed grow to young plants quickly. The tomato farmers (male) prepare the seed beds in the yard of the house so that women farmers can take care of them by watering the plants and protecting the seedlings from rain and small animals and insects. The seedbeds are made on raised earth, with drains in between them so that superfluous water drains away quickly. Seedlings need care for 24 -25 days, after which the soil is made wet and soft to pull the young plants out for transplanting. The work women do for caring for the seedlings and transplantation is considered an extension of their household work, by them and their husbands.

Mostly hired tractors are used for ploughing the tomato field, but 2 of the members have bullocks, which they use. Usually they employ 4 labourers for a day, mostly male but sometimes also tribal Santhal women. Ploughing 1 *bigha* by tractor costs Tk 1000. The preparation of the beds and *nalas* (gullies) costs Tk. 1500 per *bigha*. The Santhal women earn Tk 300 per day in the peak season for their work, Tk 100 less than men for the same work.

In the field, farmers use some chemical fertilizers such as Triazone, ESP and TSP to restore soil components and let the plants grow faster. Many women farmers prepare some organic manure at home of cow dung, straw, ash, rotten leaves compost and vermi-compost. The men spray the compost in the field themselves or by hired labourers. Sex pheromone traps are used only for brinjal production so far. They sometime spray some chemical pesticides as a precaution for early insect attacks (white fly and fruit roller are mentioned). Men farmers say they prefer chemical fertilizers and pesticides, whilst women prefer natural pesticides like sex pheromone trap. Since the GAP training in the group, pesticide is now applied 3 times, while it used to be applied many more times before. The harvest is after 2 months, and women help with the work. Women grade the tomatoes by three sizes: big, medium and small. Green tomatoes and less attractive tomatoes are kept aside to sell in the local market at a cheap rate. Women keep some tomatoes for household consumption by making salad every day, and using them for home-made pickles and sauces, but they say they do not know how to prepare good sauces and preserve the tomatoes for long. After grading and putting the tomatoes in the crates they either sell those to wholesale business owner or in the local market, depending on the how long the tomato produce will keep fresh, and the weather variability. Earlier they would take tomatoes to Dhaka or Chittagong or to other large markets. Now PRAN food processing company also buys tomatoes through a hub leader, although they have not received very good prices from PRAN yet. There is a wide gap in how much profit different farmers make from the business: some farmers can make profit of BDT 5000 while others make a profit of BDT 50, 000 in a year. Marketing and making good profit is always a challenge for tomatoes farmers, and they expect that SNV would assist in this area by creating linkages with big markets like foreign buyers. They also mentioned the invasion of the local market by mangoes and tomatoes from India. When local farmers are just ready to sell their tomatoes in the local market, the big tomato traders import tomatoes from India and sell it in the local markets at cheaper prices than local farmers can. Another problem mentioned by the group members is the scarcity of cold storage facilities. There is only one cold storage building in Bidirpur which also lacks space, because PRAN and Kishwan send all purée of tomatoes and pulp of mangoes to the cold storage before they start producing the products. They requested the research team to ask the private company to come forward to invest in cold storage. Weather variability also affects tomato farming, for example, the farmers say last year there was little rain and this year there was excessive rain, both of which led to yield loss. Out of thirty farmers in the group, only 11 farmers have own tube wells at their household premises, which could be used to irrigate fields in case of less rain. The farmers conclude that although there are some challenges in tomato farming it is gaining popularity everywhere, as it is financially benefiting thousands of families in Rajshahi and Natore region.



### 3. Aauray Focus Group Discussion with Safe Tomato Farmers Group, Men

**Date:** 19 September 2018  
**Location:** Aauray, Natore Sadar, Natore  
**Number of participants:** 32 (all men)  
**Facilitators:** Joke and Khadiza  
**Notes:** Khadiza

#### *“There is no end to the work”*

We were having the meeting near the river bed of a small river, and enjoyed the shade of some lovely trees.

Safe Tomato Producer Group is the first group of farmers in Aauray, Natore Sadar. This group consists of 31 men members. Among them, 4 have no wife.

When asked about the various activities involved in tomato cultivation, the men mentioned preparation of the seed bed, irrigation of the seedbed, transplanting the tomato seedlings, ploughing and irrigating the field, weeding, harvesting the tomato, cleaning and grading the tomato, arranging them in the crates and selling them in the market.



They said that all this work is done by both men and women, but some work is mostly done by men and some work is mostly done by women. When they were each asked to mention one activity that women do for tomato cultivation, they mentioned: preparing seedbeds and taking care of the seedbeds, shading the seedbed, sowing, irrigating the seedbed, pulling out the seedlings to transplant, irrigating

in the main field after transplanted, carrying water to the field for mixing with pesticide, cleaning the equipment used for spraying pesticide, weeding, clearing dead leaves and branches from the plant if they are many, preparing fertilizer manure, harvesting, grading and sorting out tomatoes, wiping each tomato and washing those that are muddy, cleaning equipment used for carrying and cleaning tomatoes, preparing crates for the market, and helping men to carry the cart full of tomatoes to the market.

They also mentioned that transplanting, spraying pesticide, carrying and using fertilizer to the field, harvesting, carrying tomatoes home, cleaning the tank used for spraying pesticide, carrying tomatoes to the market and selling them is mostly done by men. On the other hand, irrigating in the seedbed, pulling out the nursery to transplant, preparing fertilizer manure, grading and sorting out, and cleaning work is mostly done by women. Women are doing all this work because they are good at doing it and it is possible to do most of this work by staying in the homestead. Normally women members of their family do not go to the field but if the work load is more and

they do not get enough labourers, women go to the field as well. Mentioning all these tasks they need to do for tomato production, one of the members said: “There is no end to the work”. Discussing the bad impacts of cleaning equipment used for spraying pesticide by women, the men were told how, since women cook food, clean utensils, take care of children, and do many other household tasks, it is not good for them to be in contact with toxic substances, as this can lead to food poisoning and ill health of children as well as other family members. The men farmers were also advised not to be in contact with children before cleaning themselves properly after coming back from spraying pesticides in the field. They considered this issue seriously and said that normally they clean the equipment used for spraying pesticide but sometimes women also do this. But in future they will not let women do this work. They were also told about the risks of using nearby ponds and other water sources to clean pesticide equipment as this is where women, men and children bathe and fetch water from to do other work. They were advised to carry water do the cleaning of equipment them in a place where children do not go. When it is not possible to do all the work only using family labour, the men said they hire labourers. These are mostly men but sometimes also tribal Santhal women, as local women hardly work in the field as hired labourers. Labourers work 7-8 hours in a day and they are paid 300-400 BDT for that. For men they pay 400 BDT and for women they pay 300 BDT. Regarding the 100 BDT wage discrimination between men and women their justification is that women labourers come later and they get food or rice along with the wage which men do not. They said both men and Santhal women labourers get breaks for rest and smoking. However, they also acknowledged that Santhal women do good work compared to most men labourers.



The farmers say they have so far received 3 trainings from SNV on Safe Tomato Production. In the first training, they learned about the processes involved in tomato transplantation which included preparing seedbed, sowing, protecting the seedbed, watering the seedbed, etc. In the second training, they learned about main bed (field) preparation, including how to prepare the main bed, weeding, pruning, irrigation, using fertilizer and pesticide. In the third training, they have learned about proper methods of harvesting, grading, and getting the produce ready for the market etc. All the farmers agreed that they learned many new things about safe production, which they did not know before. Apart from learning from the training, they also learned from the prospectus SNV has provided, and they got some information from the SNV staff along with the trainers. However, though both men and women work for tomato production, only men are

attending the training sessions and receiving the information. The men say that they are informing their wives about what they have learned, and also take their wives to the field to show them best practices in weeding, pruning, harvesting and some other work which women help with in the field.

The men don't think they earn much from tomato cultivation. Along with meeting the wage of



labourers, they have to pay for irrigation which comes from the river through a pump. Some of them also use shallow tube-wells water for irrigation, which also requires money. They need to pay for tractor, pesticide, fertilizer and some other

things. Moreover, the men do not calculate how much time they and their family members are spending for tomato cultivation and do not allocate payment for that time. They think that if they count the time spent by them and their family members in the production, there will be no money left as profit. In fact it would not even be enough for their payment. Seen from this perspective, the farmers say there is not much profit out of tomato cultivation, which they can save in the bank for the future. Normally they keep their money with their wives. Only 10 farmers have bank accounts among the 31 members, but even they do not keep their money in the bank always, as it is needed for investing in the next crop and for their living expenses.

Nevertheless, farmers are very happy being a member of the Safe Tomato Producer Group. Previously they were following traditional and manual methods for tomato production, which sometimes caused losses. But now they are informed about good methods and hope to get better prices compared to the earlier situation. The men illustrate different improved practices and links such as have reduced their use of pesticide; using scissors to harvest the tomato instead of hands; sorting and grading tomatoes in large, small and medium size and separating green, over ripe and damaged tomatoes; marketing to big fruit processing companies like PRAN Agro-Processing, who will buy their tomatoes in bigger quantities. As a result, now their tomatoes are safer, the tomato is not damaged, and they are getting a good price.

The farmers see specific benefits of their market linkage to PRAN Agro-Processing Company as the season of tomato starts later in Rajshahi with the result that although they benefit from having a shorter winter, at the time that their tomatoes are ready to sell, the market is already flooded with tomatoes, which used to mean lower prices for them. Now, with the guarantee that they can sell most of their produce to PRAN for an agreed price, they have better income security. However, the farmers say, they would be greatly helped by subsidized input prices and better techniques to fight diseases in their tomato crop.

#### 4. Sonardighi Focus Group Discussion with Safe Tomato Farmers Group, Women

**Date:** 20 September 2018  
**Location:** Sonardighi, Godagari, Rajshahi  
**Number of participants:** 40+, all women  
**Facilitators:** Joke, Mahidul, Khadiza, Runia  
**Notes:** Runia and Joke

##### “We are bargadars and need a fair price for our tomatoes” (Oraon woman farmer)

The research team conducted a FGD with the Women Tomato Farmers Group of Sonardighi, Rajshahi which was formed just a month earlier. Eight Oraon tribal women farmers also joined the discussion, who had joined the group just one day before the FGD was held. Some of them have land, and others are share-croppers, sometimes working in other people’s land as a day labourer. They don’t inherit land from their fathers.

It was interesting to talk with the Oraon women, and also to hear the differences between them and the Muslim Bengali women in the context of tomato cultivation. There were very few women in the group who have land registered in their own name. Most of them do share cropping and lease land for tomato-cultivation. The share-cropping or *barga* system here works as follows: Of the harvest 1/3 is for the landowner, 1/3 is production cost and 1/3 is for those who produced the crop. Only four women farmers were found who did not have husbands.



The Muslim women say:

*“Our husbands earn so little, how can we have land?”*

Tomatoes are their main cash-crop, but other crops such as paddy, peas, maize, wheat, potatoes, and lentils are also grown, partly for household consumption and some to be sold.

Although the women farmers have been cultivating tomatoes for many years, this is the first time they have been organized as a Farmers Group.

Like Muslim women, Oraon women do not have the same right to land ownership as men. However while Muslims women are not usually allowed to be involved in tomato cultivation in the field and often have to hire labourers for such work, the Oraon women do all the agricultural work in the field and at the homestead, apart from ploughing which is the work of men. The income is higher if a woman has her own land, compared to those who do work in other people's land as a day laborer. Muslim women told us that when they cannot afford labourers, they will go with their husbands to the fields.

Two days ago the women farmers had their first training. They recalled the subjects: seedling management, diseases and pest management, and how to make the plants strong.

Availability of water is a major problem faced by the women. There is a scarcity of water in tube wells and deep tube wells and they have to depend on the government's Barind project which supplies piped water twice a day to the villagers, for BDT 14 pp/month. Oraon women's access to water is even more insecure as they have to collect water from tube wells of distant neighbours' houses, often having to pay for it and also for repair when a tube well is broken (BDT 100). Pond water is considered unsafe in the area due to run-off from fertilizers used in the fields, which is washed into the ponds with the rain. In the dry season the water in the ponds is only knee-high, which they use for cleaning, washing and bathing.

Safe hygienic toilet facilities are scarce in this area, with the Muslim women using mostly temporary toilet/latrines facilities, and the Oraon women having no latrines at all.

All children go to a nearby school, however there is no pre-school or kindergarten (such as the one run by BRAC) in Shonadighi. Despite strict monitoring and screening by the local government to make sure that girls attend schools, there have still been some cases of early marriage of girls in Shonadighi. One old woman told us that she married at 8, while others mentioned various ages of marriage between 11 and 20 years, The Oraon women say they were married at 18 years or shortly before that age.



## 5. Biharipara Focus Group Discussion with Safe Mango Producers Group, Men and Women

**Date:** 20 September 2018  
**Location:** Biharipara, Puthia, Rajshahi.  
**Number of participants:** 41 (34 men and 7 women)  
**Facilitator:** Joke and Khadiza  
**Notes:** Khadiza and Joke

*“I bought land in the name of my wife as a security, in case our children do not take care of her in her old age!”*



The meeting was held on the roof of a house in construction. The Safe Mango Producer Group in Biharipara has 30 members. Among them, 7 are women and 23 are men. They have an 8 member Executive Committee, which includes 2 women.

Among the members, all men own land but only 2 out of the 7 women members have land registered in their own name, which they inherited from their father. They say that it does not make a difference, because they make decisions with their husbands anyway. None of the women members are the head of the household. Five men in the group say they bought land in their wives' names, but the latter are not members of this group. One of the five men shared with us his reason for buying land for his wife: “I bought land in the name of my wife as a security, in case our children do not take care of her in her old age!” Landholding size in this area is moderate with most land plots being under 30 *bigha* (10 acres) in size.

Questioned on the gendered division of tasks in mango production, members acknowledged that both men and women work in mango production. Then men were asked to mention what work women do for mango production. They listed the following tasks:

- Women cook food for labourers
- Women do grading of mangoes (which the men have learnt from the AO in the SNV training, and which they then taught their wives. Men say it would be good if the women could directly learn from the AO.)
- Women take care of the garden: they walk in the orchard to check activities of the labourers, they monitor the situation of the insects, they see when irrigation is needed, which they then discuss with their husbands. This is most important work.
- Women irrigate the garden

- Women remind men to use fertilizer and pesticide in the garden
- Women who can read and write, keep record of the activities in the SNV booklet
- Women carry water for mixing with the pesticide
- Women prepare the fertilizer manure
- Women guard the garden in the day time
- Women keep good mangoes for children and to send to relatives etc.
- Women put the mangoes in a crate (together with men)
- Women clear and collect dry leaves from the trees.

One of the men members said:

From the beginning to end, women are with us. Important activities are done by women.

When women were asked to mention what men do for mango production, they mentioned:

- Men spray the mango trees with pesticide, or the labourers do it
- Men use fertilizer, manure in the garden, which is prepared by women
- Men prune the trees
- Men irrigate in the garden
- Men harvest mangoes
- Men guard the garden at night
- Men go to the market to sell the mango etc.
- Men go to the bank. At times they give the money from selling mangoes to the wife to guard. They sell the mangoes in 3 times, where the money from the first sale goes to the wife for the household, and the money from the second and third sales go to the bank
- Men do the grafting, and then women look after the saplings

However, these tasks are not strictly segregated. Most are done by both men and women when it is convenient for them. They also take help from the labourers, when the workload is heavy. This farmers' group has received 5 trainings from SNV about safe mango production. Previously they used pesticide 6-8 times a season but now, they have learnt not to use pesticide more than 3 times. Especially the women can tell us in detail what they have learnt about the use of fertilizer and pesticide. How protective clothing is used, and how mangoes are caught in a net, not to be damaged. This year although the yield was higher, the price for mangoes was lower, and their income remained the same.

The main benefits of the SNV project are: Increased knowledge about new technologies to produce safe mangoes; being able to keep a record of all the expenditure and income, know-how on grading mangoes and the market link with agro-processing companies. We are told that they grade and pack the mangoes of all members together. PRAN only buys 2 varieties but the hub-leader is a good man. The other mangoes go to the normal market or to the large wholesale market in Baneshwar. Some areas

where the members seek assistance: the best mango varieties are not taken by PRAN, so the farmers would like SNV to create a link to a supermarket for these superior quality mangoes. They are also interested in crop-insurance, and especially in cold storage facilities nearby. That they have not recorded their own working hours does not matter too much to them. As one farmer says: *"To have educated my son from this, it is enough profit for me"*.



The only mango we saw during the fieldwork was this frozen one!

## ANNEX 6: Key Informant Interviews

1. Koicharpara
  - a. Saiful Islam, Agricultural Block Officer
  - b. Zahid Hossain, Ward member of Koicharpara Union Parishad
2. Bidirpur
  - a. Ms. Bancha Muni, Santhal woman labourer
3. Aauray
  - a. Md. Ramjan Ali, Ward member of Aauray Union Parishad, Natore
4. Sonardighi and surroundings
  - a. Bina Murmu, Santhal woman labourer
  - b. Lilu Tudu, Santhal woman labourer
  - c. Srimoti Chandana, Santhal woman labourer
  - d. Aruti Orao Mins, Oraon woman farmer, and tomato sharecropper
  - e. Elina Mormu, Santhal woman, famer and labourer
5. Biharipara
  - a. Atiqur Rahman, Teacher Biology in Baneshar, Rajshahi

### 1.a. Key Informant Interview: Saiful Islam

**Function:** Subassistant Agricultural Officer, Block Supervisor  
**Age of respondent:** 40 years  
**Date:** 17 September 2018  
**Location:** Koicharpara, Bagatipara, Natore  
**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam

#### Please tell us a little about your role in the SWITCH project:

*“Most of the farmers of this village are always communicating with me if they face any problems with their crops. I know that the farmers of this village are interested to produce safe fruits and vegetables.*

*Around 1 year ago, when SNV staff informed me about this safe mango production project, I advised them to include*

*this village. When the project began in this village, the SNV staff initially faced problem to build a group with 30 members. Farmers were not eager to form a group and asked me whether joining the group would be beneficial for them or not. I assured them that forming a group would help them to get more information on safe production techniques and enable linkages with the wider market. I also help them when they require any kind of consultation. Together, we want to enhance availability of safe fruits and vegetables across Bangladesh and beyond.”*

#### Land Rights:

**Why are women not equally included as members of the Safe Mango Producer Group?**





As far as I know group members have to own land. As most of the women have no land, they are not included as members of this group.

**Why are women mostly land less?**

Our society has the tendency to cheat women. Even parents and husbands avoid giving rightfully inherited land to women.

**Who are the owners of mango orchards (men or women) in this area?**

Mostly men are the owner of mango orchards.

**Agriculture**

What other crops are grown by the farmers of this area?

Paddy, potato, banana, guava, onion, lentils and some seasonal vegetables

When do farmers communicate with you?

When farmers experience any kind of problem with their crops, like their trees losing their leaves or being attacked by insects, they communicate with me. In addition, from the time of planting of the crop to harvest farmers frequently call me for advice. Some farmer want to know how much and which fertilizers they should use for their different crops. Some farmers want to know the recommended pesticide amount to use for their land size. Most of the farmers of this group have my mobile phone number.

**Who makes the decisions about farming methods in this area?**

Mostly the male members of the family make the decisions about farming. In a few families, who have good understanding between husband and wife, decisions are made jointly. In very few cases where male members are away from home for a long time, their households are headed by women who make their own decisions on farm management and practices.

**How are pests controlled? Are pesticides used?**

Farmers are using pesticides on almost all types of crops, vegetables and fruits. One of the main reasons for this is that the pesticide companies are advertising a lot, claiming that the use pesticides will help farmers get more production. To a certain extent, farmers also get some positive results from pesticide use, but in most cases farmers are misled and spray more than they actually need to. However, after the SNV intervention, farmers are now more aware of GAP, and know when and how much pesticide they need for mangoes.

**What are the problems for mango farming in this area?**

- Most of the farmers have no knowledge of proper farming, when to irrigate the gardens, how to identify the specific diseases and accordingly select the appropriate pesticides, and the right dosage for the orchard size.
- Increased incidence of extreme weather conditions and climate variability, for example,; sudden storms that destroy the unripe green mango. Extreme dry weather that requires more irrigation which is costly.
- Farmers are not able to get maximum returns on their investment.
- Mango is a perishable fruit, and there is no storage system or cooling or heating technology to increase shelf life of the ripe mangoes.
- Sometime the company agent or hub leader does not deal fairly with the farmers.

**Work Gender division of work in Mango cultivation**

Which tasks do men do?	By labourers	Which tasks do the women do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land ploughing</li> <li>• Fertilizer collection and spraying</li> <li>• Pesticides spraying</li> <li>• Overseeing the mango orchard</li> <li>• Selling the mangoes in the market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spraying pesticides</li> <li>• Watering in the orchard</li> <li>• guarding the orchard</li> <li>• Harvesting the mango</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooking for family and labourers</li> <li>• Feeding cattle and goats</li> <li>• Bringing drinking water for labourers</li> <li>• Sometimes monitoring the mango orchard</li> <li>• Bringing food from house to orchard</li> <li>• Mango sorting and grading</li> </ul>

### 1.b. Key Informant Interview: Zahid Hossain

**Function:** Ward member of Kaicharpara Union Parishad  
**Age:** 38 years  
**Date:** 17 September 2018  
**Location:** Koicharpara, Natore  
**Interviewer:** Runia

Zahid Hossain is a Ward member of Kaicharpara Union Parishad of Natore. He tells us that Kaicharpara is famed for its mangos and the livelihood of the villagers is predominantly linked to mango farming in the growing season. Those who do not own land or cannot afford to lease land for mango farming work on others mango orchards as daily labourers. Landless men are not only employed as a day labourer in mango orchards but also in other crops fields. He says women are reluctant to do farm work as this is seen to be a man’s job, and unsuitable for women. He tells us that their Union Parishad has a male Chairman and 12 members, of which 3 are women (they occupy the seats reserved for women in the committee). There are 13 development sub-committees in the Union Parishad in which the 3 women UP members are also involved. Zahid Hossain estimates that about 10% of the local women have land in their own name but is not sure about the exact figure. According to him, some of the women who inherited land from their parents use it for growing mangoes, in order to contribute to their family’s income, and especially to the education of their children. Major problems in Koicharpara, according to him, are water and sanitation, poverty, transport, and infrastructure. The drinking water and sanitation situation is particularly critical, with there being no dug wells, and few people being able to afford tube wells and hygienic toilet facilities without support from the UP.

### 2.a. Key Informant Interview: Bancha Muni

**Age:** 39 years  
**Function:** Santhal woman labourer  
**Date:** 18 September 2018  
**Location:** Bidirpur village;  
 Gopalpur, Godagari, Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam

*“We depend on agriculture, beel rivers, forest, khas land and natural jungle fruits. But these resources are seriously decreasing. We were hunters and gatherers, and now day labourers”*

**Tell me about your land ownership?**  
*We are landless. I do not know the details of why we are landless. But I heard that different land laws discriminate against us. Some of our relatives have some land but they could not sell even for extreme survival, due to the restrictions of the*



government laws. Some people mentioned ‘You come from the Jungle, you should stay there’. We have no right to land and this makes us poor.

**What is your main occupation?**

Our main occupation is agricultural labour. Almost all Santhal people do this work. Nowadays, some people are doing van or rickshaw pulling, but for both men and women our main occupation is day labour.

**Do you get financial/micro-credit support from NGOs?**

Most of the organizations do not give us microcredit support. They think that we are landless and if we fail to repay an installment, then how will they recover it? Another problem is that we leave our homes early in the morning for work far away, and return late in the evening. So, NGOs and Govt. organizations are not able to meet us.

**What type of livelihood problems are faced by Santhal people in this area?**

We depend on agriculture, beel rivers, forest, khas land and natural jungle fruits. But these resources are seriously decreasing. We were hunters and gatherers, but are now facing a crisis in our traditional livelihood strategies, and are now fully dependent on the day labour work, both men and women.

**Other issues**

**Tell me about your work/employment**

Day by day our work opportunities are getting less. Most of the time we cannot get work nearby. In our Santhal community, every member - both husbands and wives - work as day labourers.

**Tell me about your education?**

I am illiterate. My family is also illiterate. My daughter and son can write their names but have left school since class 3 to go out with me for work. We could not meet our food requirements because every item of food is very costly. Now I hear I have to send them to school. I don’t know whether the school will accept them or not because it is 3 years since they left their last school.

**Remarkable opinion or situation**

We are scared. We do not take any risks. We avoid quarrels and want to live in peace.

**Do you get any support from Government or other NGOs?**



We are tribal Adivasi people, we are illiterate, and we do not know when and where we can get support from the government and NGOs. Several times I requested our ward member to issue me a card (to access benefits from the social safety net programme of the government for the extreme poor) for me, but he asked for BDT 2000 for 1 card. I could not manage to pay it, so I don’t get the support. We come to the world only to work... when we will die then it stops. Let’s see how many

days it will continue.

**How much you get paid per day in the tomato cultivation work?**

I receive around BDT 200- 300, this amount is in the peak season. But in the lean season, we get paid BDT 100 to 150. Our owner does not give us lunch. They think that we are lowly people, and their family members do not like to prepare food for us. So, we bring food from our house, and also have to spend for travelling. Sometimes, some land owner does not pay us on time, and we need to come several times to collect our money. In a few cases we get cheated when landowners refuse to pay the daily wage they committed to. For example, we agree to work for 300 taka per day, but midway through our work they mention we will be paid 250 Taka. In that case, we cannot bargain as we are already bound.

**Do you get equal pay for men and women?**

As Santhals men and women get the same, but Bengalis get 50 to 100 more for the same work.

**Do you have sanitation facility in your house?**

We have a kaccha toilet - a pit latrine.

**Do you have cattle or livestock?**

No, we cannot find time to rear them.

**Empowerment: Some findings of the four elements**

**Social:** No social empowerment

**Political:** No political empowerment

**Economic:** No Economic empowerment

**Physical:** No Physical empowerment

**Concluding sentence:**

Lastly she said “You guys asked many questions. What is my benefit from this interview? In fact you have wasted my valuable working time.”

As an interviewer, I felt bad that I could not give anything in return for the woman’s valuable time. All I could do was thank her for her valuable information and time. I said she was like my sister and asked if I could take a picture of hers to keep for future memory, which made her happier.



### 3.a. Key Informant Interview: Md. Ramjan Ali

**Function:** Ward member of Aauray Union Parishad, Natore  
**Date:** 19 September 2018  
**Location:** Aauray, Natore  
**Interviewer:** Runia

Md. Ramjan Ali (40 years) is a ward member of Aauray Union Parishad, Natore. According to him, Aauray was famous for tomatoes production in the past. Now it has been hit by attacks of excessive and new types of pests/ insects on one hand and low prices in the market on the other hand. The SNV SWITCH project aims to give a boost to tomato farmers of Aauray by providing them with training on safer methods of pest control. Along with many landholders in the area, there are some sharecropper farmers and few landless families too. The members of the Safe Tomato Producers group are mostly middle-level farmers, and some sharecroppers.

Farmers of Aauray cultivate tomatoes, but not on all of their land as before. They now complain about the problem with pest control, as well as low prices in the market. When asked about drought, Ramjan Ali said that since the work of Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA) Rajshahi is not suffering much from drought anymore, apart from some areas of northern Rajshahi. There are no dug wells here anymore, and the earlier practice of women fetching water from dug wells has long since disappeared.

There are about 40,000 people in Aauray Union Parishad. About the development work of the UP, Md. Ramjan Ali tells us that they provide deep tube wells and tube wells for irrigation and ring slabs for sanitation. The Union Parishad helps the farmers with the provision of shallow machines, boring pipes, and polyethylene pipes, all of which are needed for irrigation. The Union Parishad has also helped with road construction, renovation and provides welfare assistance to the elderly and disabled people by giving them fixed allowances, and targeted relief and rehabilitation during disasters.

There are three women councilors in the Ward, who also get budget allocation for development of their constituency. This budget is for VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding) and VGD (Vulnerable Group Development<sup>33</sup>) programmes, for pension schemes for the elderly and disabled and women and children affairs. These three women members attend the meeting of other committees of the Aauray Union Parishad as well, e.g. the Disaster Management Committee.

In Aauray there are 10% to 12% of women who own land, inherited from their father or husband. As an example he told that he has given some land to his mother and wife. About sanitation he said around 80% of latrines are semi pucca (not hygienic), and 20% are fully pucca (improved) in his Union.

Union Parishad of Aauray takes a strict stand against early marriage. To protect girls' rights, the UP member visits the house as about which they get a report of early marriage, and stops that marriage at once. Later, the parents of the girl get counseling. The Women and Children Committee of the UP also play an important role in dealing with this issue. A few years back when there was a project of BRAC on domestic violence in Aauray, one of their staff sat in the Union Parishad office and did couple counseling and gave legal advice to the victims.

He said that there are no Santhals in Aauray village, but some families live in nearby Sultanpur. He tells us that once the Santhal community was very rich but gradually the people became alcoholic, lazy and did not work outside much. At that time they sold much of their inherited land and became poor. For safeguarding their land, the Government has put restrictions on selling of Santhals' land. In case they want to sell, they need to notify the Upazila Land Office. They can buy land at any time but are restrained from selling their own properties without permission of the Upazila land office.

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<sup>33</sup> The VGD is a Safety Net programme of WFP and ILO.

#### 4.a. Key Informant Interview: Bina Murmu

**Function:** Santhal woman, agricultural labourer  
**Date:** 8 November 2018  
**Location:** Gobindbari village, Shonadighi, Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Runia

Bina Murmu (24 years old) is a *Santhal* woman who lives in Gobindbari village in Shonadighi, Rajshahi with her husband, daughter (with two and half years old) and father in law. Her father-in-law has only the homestead (3 kathas = 1.7 decimals) in his name. The house is all clay made, neat and clean. Bina's grandfather had converted from Hindu to Catholic Christian many years back. Since then they have been following customs and rituals of the Catholic church.

Both Bina and her husband work as agricultural labourers in others' fields. Her work is sowing, transplanting seedlings, weeding, harvesting and threshing in the paddy field. Men get Tk. 350 while women get only Tk. 300 for this work. She gives as main reason for the wage difference is that women labourers reach the work half or one hour later than men. Women first have to finish all morning work at home (such as cleaning washing, preparing breakfast, feeding children cooking for lunch). They work in paddy fields altogether for six months in a year while the other 6 months she has no work outside home.



Santhal women are not often called for working in tomato cultivation, unlike Santhal men. She could not say why. Many Santhal men go outside of the village for work in brick fields and house construction. Although Bina does not raise cattle in the premises of her house, she keeps some ducks and chickens for eggs for home consumption.

About tomatoes, from her earlier observation she tells that, usually men labourers are responsible for spraying pesticides. Here is no water scarcity. A German NGO called DUSCO together with the Union Parishad installed all tube wells in such points so that four families can use one for drinking water and bathing. There is also a big pond at the beginning of the para. It is adjacent to the Gobindbari temple, which was used to a house of a Hindu Zamindar in the early ages in Shonadighi. Most of the men members of the families use the pond for bathing and for washing their clothes as well. If they can boil the water from the pond it is also safe for drinking. In this village also some Muslims and Hindu families live together with the Santhals in harmony. Bina, at 18, failed her Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC) final exam and her father did not let her try again, or do some vocational training, which she had wanted. She was married off quickly after, nobody of her family could stand against her father's will.

She collects cow dung putting in a round stick for fuel, and also on the clay walls. Her husband always tries to share household work when she cannot finish alone or is tired and sick, her brother in laws also helps his wife in household chore as she observes. Being a customer of Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (BREB), they are much satisfied with electricity supply services. In summer they experience more scarcity than in the winter. She does not have a television, nevertheless they are very fond of some Indian drama serials, which she sometimes watches at her Muslims neighbour's house.

She is registered as voter and can cast her vote in national and local Union and Upazila Parishad election, consulting with her husband and father-in-law on this matter.

#### 4.b. Key Informant Interview: Lily Tudu

**Function:** Santhal woman, agricultural labourer  
**Date:** 8 November 2018  
**Location:** Gobindbari village, Shonadighi, Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Runia

Lily Tudu (50 years old) is a Santhal woman, lives in Gobindbari village in Shonadighi, Rajshahi. She lives with her two sons and one daughter and husband in her husband's house who has only the homestead as a family property (2 Katha = 2\*1.65 decimals =3.3 decimals).

Lily Tudu and her husband both work in the paddy field, in sowing plants and cutting and threshing the matured paddy as a day labourer. Their sons also sometimes help in the same work, but her daughter not yet. As a young unmarried girl, there is a chance of her being harassed. After ten grade of schooling, her son has passed his Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC) exam in the last year, and it is not sure yet if her son will do his graduation or not. For their children, they both worked hard and saved some money with which they now build a one-storied brick house on the homestead. The three children will get separate rooms as they needed.



To her knowledge, there is no restriction from the Government on *Adivasi* to buy landed property, only they cannot afford land. About water and sanitation, she said, they only have a semi pucca latrine (which is also called pit latrine with ring slab). Women of her family fetch water from the tube well for drinking, to use in the toilet, bathing and for the kitchen. Like other men, her husband and son bath in the open pond adjacent to the temple. Santhal women mostly work in paddy cultivation and are not asked for work in mango orchard or tomatoes. Only some Santhal men work in tomato cultivation. The work in paddy is from 7:00 AM to - 3: 00 PM a day. Sometimes they are paid in money and sometimes paid is share of yield: 20 kilos per 80 kilos of paddy. As an ID card holder, she can cast her vote to the person who is suggested by her husband and sons. Her daughter and she do all household work together, while her sons prefer to stay more outside, maybe in the

market for gossiping, playing cards, and carom board, when they get some leisure from their study. She raises some poultry and livestock, for which they also constructed a new brick stable.

There is no communal conflict between Muslims and Hindu families who live in the same village with the Santhals. They sometimes discuss the option to go to India, where they could get better work, but her neighbours from other religions discourage them to leave. In October, after the *Durga puja* there is a month-long village fair near the famous Gobindbari temple, where many small entrepreneurs from different corners of Rajshahi throng to sell their products. That is the time for the families of this village to enjoy by buying some household stuff, for example, kitchen utensils and household furniture (wooden, rope and cane made mostly). People come from far villages to enjoy this fair, stay some days in their relative's house here, which all enjoy.

#### 4.c. Key Informant Interview: Srimoti Chandana

**Function:** Santhal woman agricultural labourer  
**Date:** 8 November 2018  
**Location:** Gopalpur Village, Godagari upazila of Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Runia

Srimoti Chandana is an Oraon woman (20 years old now) who lives in Oraon para, Gopalpur village of Rajshahi. She got married off five years back when she was an 8th-grade student in a school. She was only 15 but her parents could not provide her with sufficient food and proper education. Chandana has a two years old son now. Like the majority of Oraon at this place, her family and she are also followers of the Sanatan (eternal) religion, in fact, they are the followers of the Hindu religion although there are some little differences between the rituals of mainstream Hindus and Oraon Hindus. For example, their marriage is registered in Union Parishad office although they follow Hindu traditional customs. She lives in her father-in-laws' house who has only the homestead of two bighas land where her husband's three more bothers' families are all living together.

The Barind project brought a piped water supply system, but it is now defunct. There were some tube wells provided by the Union Parishad many years back, but these are now over-used by 10 families, so there they only collect water for drinking. They do rest of the washing and cleaning of clothes, kitchen utensils, bathing and also fish farming in the pond which is in their own homestead, and which is shared by ten families. During tomato cultivation they engage many more men than women who mainly do work in the paddy field. Men get 300 taka and women get 280 as men start their work very early in the morning while women join 1-2 hours later after finishing all the responsibilities of the household. Apart from working in tomatoes and other crops and vegetables field, some Oraon men are also do other work such as mason, goldsmith, blacksmith, primary school teacher. Some men also migrated to Dhaka city for jobs in factories. Chandana tells us that there is no woman in their village who has a Pregnancy Card or receives neo-natal or post-natal health services or allowances as they have seen in neighbouring villages. To her knowledge, of the many widows in this village, very few have got widow allowances, which is a lot of hassle to get.



During liberation war (in 1971) when they sought refuge in India, their lands were appropriated by Muslim land grabbers, and on return, they were told that the land was no more their property. Some influential families cheated Oraons by keeping their land and only giving 10 kilos or 20 kilos rice for 5 to 10 kathas lands. They do not have the original land buying papers with them anymore to show to the court and claim back their lands, because they had not expected this when they fled during the Liberation War for Pakistani forces.



#### 4.d. Key Informant about Oraon position: Mrs Aruti Orao Mins

**Function:** Oraon woman farmer, and tomato sharecropper  
**Age:** 52  
**Date:** 8 November  
**Location:** Gopalpur  
**Interviewer:** Joke and Khadiza  
**Notes:** Joke

**“Forty years passed in which my father spent a lot of time and money going to court officers and the Land Department. Four years ago, he died, and we will never get our land back.”**

Aruti has a husband and 3 sons and 1 daughter. They have 2 bigha own land and grow paddy. The husband ploughs, the women transplant, weed, harvest and process the grain. They manage to cultivate 2 crops per year, and sometimes 3 crops, if there is enough irrigation water. BRDC owns the water, and they pay for water according to the surface of their land. Aruti has not been to school. She considers herself now as small farmer. The girl Mayabuti is in class 7, in the school close by, a school for all children, never mind their background.

Aruti was a child of 5 during the Liberation War, when the parents took refuge in India. After the war they again had a hard time to return, and had to come in the night crossing the river. They came back to their 12 bigha land (4 acres), but they could not reclaim it, it was occupied by Muslim farmers. Her father filed case after case, but without success. He was told: come next week, and then again: come next week. That is how forty years passed in which he spent a lot of time and money going to court officers and the Land Department. Four years ago, her father died, and her cousin is now trying, but the officers told him:

*“You are not the owner. The owner is dead, so you have no right to that land.”*

They were poor and she worked as agricultural labourer till she was 42.



For drinking water they get water from a DTW 5 minutes walking distance. For other water she and her daughter fetch water from the pond. There is a toilet, just for their family. Aruti looks after her 5 cows, 2 goats and 20 chickens.

They also cultivate tomatoes as sharecroppers. She does all the work, together with her son. They sell the harvest to wholesale vendors, packed in sacks. She heard about some Oraon women who had been asked for a tomato farmers' group.

Aruti married at 15 or 16, but she does not allow her daughter to marry so young. She can study as long as she wishes. We ask about the toilet in school. She says that it is fine, although there is no waste-basket. Aruti will have to pay 1 lakh as dowry for her daughter. The two other sons are also in school. She tells that all Oraons are Hindu.

About other issues she tells that the water is too far away, and also the toilet needs to be closer by. They feel proud to be Oraon.

#### 4.e. Key informant: Santhal woman, famer and labourer Elina Mormu

**Age:** 30 years  
**Location:** Goramgo Bari, Godagari, Rajshahi  
**Date:** 8 November  
**Interviewers:** Joke and Khadiza  
**Notes:** Joke

**“I married young, but I don’t want to do “that bad thing” to my daughters.”**

We meet Elina in her very neat mud and adobe house, which she has nicely decorated. Her father in law is at home and joins the discussion. Together they are 6 family members. They have bought the yard. Eline has always worked in agriculture, and she finds employment for about 6 months per year. Some days she maintains and decorates the house together with her sister in law. She has two daughters, Onita and Lisa, in class 4 and 2. She works for a tomato farmer, and she will start the harvest in one month’ time.

Last year they also cultivated tomatoes themselves on a leased field, and because it was profitable, they tried to lease the land again. However, the owner of the field is now cultivating tomatoes himself. They still have 2 bigha as bargadars on which they cultivate paddy and dahl. Her husband tills the land.

In this village Hindus, Muslim, Santhal and Christians live together in harmony. She was brought up in the Santhal religion, but was then converted to Roman Catholicism. Her father in law is still worshipping the Santhal religion.

Together with her sister in law (sister of her husband) she collects water. They have 2 cows and 1 goat. Eline has been in school till class 10. She married young, but does not want to do, what she calls “that bad thing” to her daughters. She wants them to be 20 or 21, when they marry.

Onita’s picture had been used for a publication of World Vision. She had received Tk 8000 from America, but had never seen a European person. So, this was the first time she saw one.



### 5.a. Key Informant Interview: Atiqur Rahman

**Function:** Biology Teacher in Baneshar, Rajshahi  
**Date:** 20 September 2018  
**Location:** Biharipra, Puthia, Rajshahi  
**Interviewer:** Runia

Atiqur Rahman is a Biology teacher in a college in Baneshar, Rajshahi. Before joining this college, he studied Biology at Rajshahi University. As Biology teacher he became interested and involved in mango cultivation, and is a member of the SNV initiated Biharipara Safe Mango Producer Group since 2017. He owns 297 decimals or 3 acres of land, in some of which he produces mangoes, selling them in different markets every year. He earns well from his orchard, about Tk 4-5 lacs per season. Other family members of his, like his brother and wife, are also involved in mango cultivation, although they both are also teachers in a college.



Since the water management activities of the Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA) in the last 4 to 5 years Biharipara, Rajshahi has not experienced drought or shortage of water. BMDA initiated a long-term and comprehensive program on water management including agriculture and irrigation for Rajshahi regions which was a drought-prone area. The services of BMDA for the people of Rajshahi included drinking water supply, a supply of seeds for agriculture, digging canals and wells (recent development in some areas for vegetable gardening and household use). From his point of view, all these contributions of BMDA make Rajshahi region a greener and more livable place.

In his opinion, although most of the mango farmers employ men labourers in their orchard and women are not involved in the harvesting and irrigation work, the male farmers do not look down upon the women who work in mango, rice or vegetable farming. As a farmer, he is sometimes invited to some agriculture related meetings, training on IPM and to the NCDP (National Center for Disaster Preparedness), by the agriculture officer and Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA). He is also a member of few more organizations and groups in Rajshahi, such as the Rajshahi Teachers Association and North West Diversification Program of RDRS (Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Society).

In his college, there is an annual course on Agriculture with some field demonstrations, where girls constituted half of the 200 students last year, all of who completed the course successfully. Atiqur Rahman informs us about different education and credit programmes and activities in Biharipara, where the quality and quantity of some (BRAC) fall short of others (Grameen Bank, ASHA). On water and sanitation services in the area, he tells us that 60% of the toilets are pucca (hygienic) 30% semi-pucca (temporary structures, unhygienic) and there is 10% open defecation. Like other regions in Bangladesh, early marriage happens in Rajshahi too, he says. However the percentage of early marriages here is about 30 %, lower than in other districts in Bangladesh, according to him. As a teacher, he feels it is his moral and social responsibility to protect young girls from forced marriage, and to help them get back to school and college. He thinks the government initiative of providing a stipend for girls to attend school and college encourages poor families to continue their daughters' education.

## ANNEX 7: Factory staff Interviews

3. KISHWAN Agro Processing Factory
  - a. Woman factory worker, Ferdiousi Akter
  - b. Woman factory worker, Rahela Begum
  - c. Male factory worker, Zashim Uddin
  - d. General Manager, Md. Golam Mostafa, male
  - e. Group of women workers
  
4. PRAN Agro Processing Factory
  - a. Babita Begum, Woman, Line Supervisor
  - b. Alhara Parvin, Woman, Asst. Manager of Social Welfare Office
  - c. Sobita Bibi, woman factory worker
  - d. PRAN Agro Business Limited: Md. Kamruzzaman Tito, Senior manager, Contract Farming, and other managers
  - e. Hazara Khatun, woman factory worker
  - f. Anisa Begum. woman Factory Worker
  - g. Morsheda Begum, Woman Factory worker



Kishwan Office, meeting with the General Manager

### 1.a. Female factory staff interview: Ferdousi Akter

**Function:** Worker in Kishwan Agro Processing factory  
**Age:** 24 years  
**Date:** 18 September 2018  
**Location:** Pirganj, Natore  
**Interviewer:** Runia

Ferdousi Akhter is the only worker in the label checking section in the Tomato and Chilli Processing Unit of Kishwan Agro-Processing Industry in Natore. Ferdousi is a young married woman with one child, living in the village of Pirganj near Natore, and has been working in this factory unit for the past three years.

Kishwan Agro processing factory offers some attractive facilities for their women workers, for example, the daily pick up and drop facility. Ferdousi likes her job and finds the work easy. Her only complaint is that she needs to stand for long hours and can hardly enjoy a free minute to sit on a chair, or have a relaxing break.

She tells us that the working environment in this factory is very congenial. Men and women workers work here with mutual understanding, cooperation, and respect for each other. There have only been one or two incidents of harassment. She does not have any idea if there is any anti-Harassment policy at work, however in case there are any incidents, men or women can go straight to their line manager who will take actions against the perpetrators, who may even be sacked. She said, if this type of harassment was frequent women workers could not work here with confidence.

She heard about maternity and paternity leave for the workers in the factory, but since she joined the job after the birth of her child, she knows no details about this. Like many other young couples, Ferdousi's husband also works in this factory, in another section, as a line supervisor. The facility they appreciate most is the Kishwan bus that picks them every morning and drops them safely home in the evenings.

When she first started working at Kishwan, her in-laws were not pleased at all, not trusting her to be out of home for a long time and unhappy that she could not help with the household work. However, when her husband also got a job in the same factory, her in-laws were not upset anymore. They now appreciate the financial contribution their son and his wife make to the family, as well as their improved social status in the village.



*This was the worst work we found in KISHWAN: to look at the TL tube light. Nearly all work was "decent work".*

**1.b. Female factory staff interview: Rahela Begum**

**Function:** Worker in Kishwan Agro Processing factory  
**Date:** 18 September 2018  
**Location:** Pirganj, Natore.  
**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam

**Case description:**

Rahela (25 years) comes from a poor family. She lives near to the Kishwan agro-processing factory and works in the sorting and separation section there. Although she does not earn much she is happy that she can get this job and contribute to her family's needs.

**Since when do you work here?** Around 1 year 4 months.

**What is your educational qualification?** 8th class pass

**Tell me about your family?**

*I am married, I have one child of 4 years. My husband works as a day labourer. We have only 15 decimals of land and no other sources of income. Sometime my husband cannot find work. In addition, my father-in-law and mother-in-law also live with us. So, my income is helpful.*

**Please tell me about the division of work: What specific jobs do men and women do in this factory?**

<b>Men's tasks:</b>	<b>Women's tasks:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bringing flour from the truck</li> <li>• Collecting heavy equipment</li> <li>• Bringing the mangoes or tomatoes from the truck</li> <li>• Bringing bags of sugar from truck</li> <li>• Operator</li> <li>• Loading the truck</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sorting</li> <li>• Leveling</li> <li>• Cleaning</li> <li>• Operator</li> <li>• Sticker and Date cutting</li> <li>• Stamping</li> <li>• Cleaning and drying the bottle</li> </ul>

**What type of tasks are heavy/ risky in this factory?**

- Every task is risky, but we take care. Though, all products (from start to finish) come on a conveyor belt, some places are very hot. There is a cooling system, but it is still hot. We cannot remain in those places the whole day.
- Most of the time we need to work standing, we are not allowed to sit. Standing the whole day is difficult. Other than that everything else is fine.

**How much salary do you get per day/month?**

*Our salary is low but we have no alternative, and are bound to this work. I receive BDT 120 per day of work. If I work overtime I get BDT 20 per extra hour. Some of our colleagues get 150 to 160 taka.*

**Do you think that everyone gets equal pay?**

*The rule is that for the same work all get the same salary. Those who are working here longer get more and those who do heavier work get more. So, normally men get more than us.*

**Empowerment: Some findings of the four elements**

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Before work</b>	<b>After work</b>
<b>Social:</b>	<i>We are poor people, normally people did not value my work and did not respect me</i>	<i>Actually, I am so busy with my family and work, I rarely get time to attend any social events. People now are interested to know how I am doing, valuing my contribution and also respect me.</i>
<b>Political:</b>	<i>I have no decision-making power in the family.</i>	<i>My family now count my decision However in the company we cannot influence any decision, because we have little power. The company's decision is final.</i>
<b>Economic:</b>	<i>I have no income opportunity</i>	<i>Now I can earn</i>
<b>Physical:</b>	<i>Before we had no toilet</i>	<i>Now we have built a nice toilet. Now I can pay for medical care for my children and family</i>

**1.c. Male factory staff interview: Md. Zashim Uddin,**

**Function:** Worker in the labelling section  
**Age:** 26 years  
**Date:** 17 September 2018  
**Location:** Kishwan Factory  
**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam

**Since when have you worked here?** Around 1 year 3 months.

**What is your educational qualification?** 9th class pass

**Please tell me about your family**

We are a joint family, I live with my two brothers, 1 sister, father & mother, grandfather and grandmother. I am the eldest son of my family. My younger brother is in his 2<sup>nd</sup> year at college and my sister is studying in the intermediate second year. My father is a van puller. We are a poor family and I have the responsibility to help my family. I could not continue my education due to lack of money. Now, I have a job here, helping my family as much as possible.

**Please tell me about the division of work in this factory? What work do men and women do?**

Men's tasks:	Women's tasks:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unloading raw materials</li> <li>• Loading final products</li> <li>• Bringing the mangoes or tomatoes from the truck</li> <li>• Operator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labeling</li> <li>• Operator</li> <li>• Product sorting</li> <li>• Packaging</li> <li>• Date cutting</li> <li>• Stamping</li> <li>• Cleaning</li> </ul>

**What type of work is risky in this factory?**

Operator work is risky because every machine is connected to another machine, so we always have to be careful that every machine is functioning well, otherwise accidents can happen.

**How much salary do you get per day/month?**

I receive BDT140 per day of work. If I work overtime I get BDT 30 per extra hour.

**Do you think that everyone gets equal pay?**

Women get a lower salary compare to the men. Most of the time men do heavy work, that is why women get less.

**Why are there fewer men workers in this factory?**

Men prefer to earn more money. Even a day labourer can earn BDT 250- 300 per day. But, here the salary is very low. So, men are not interested to work for so little. I am working here because I am learning a new skill, and I have work daily, unlike the day labourers who have only seasonal work.

**Empowerment: Some findings of the four elements**

Elements	Before work	After work
<b>Social:</b>	Socially, people gave less value to our family as we were poor.	I could not continue my education, but I am trying to pay for the education of my younger brother and sister. Now, people of our community value and respect me.
<b>Political:</b>	I had no decision making power	I am sometimes able to take decisions in my family now. If I give good suggestions to the factory management, they sometimes consider them and use them. Recently I suggested that the packaging space needed to increase and the management did that.
<b>Economic:</b>	I had no income opportunity	I am now earning and can spend whatever I earn
<b>Physical:</b>		I help my family in the needs for medical care, education and house building and repair work

### 1.d Male factory staff interview: Md. Golam Mostafa

**Function:** General Manager of Kishwan Agro Processing Factory  
**Age:** 48 years  
**Date:** 18 September 2018  
**Location:** Pirganj, Natore.  
**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam and team

#### How many staff are working in your factory?

The company divides the staff into two sections a. Management and b. Workers.

##### a. Management section:

Level of staff	Male	Female
Senior Management	7 (100%)	0
Mid-level Management	0	3 (100%) Officer rank

##### b. Worker/labourer section: The company categorizes the workers as skilled and un-skilled

Skilled		un-skilled	
Male	Female	Male	Female
50 (33%)	100 (66%)	50 (33%)	100 (66%)

The table above shows that all the senior management positions are occupied by men, while all the mid management positions are occupied by women. However, there are twice as many women as men in both the skilled and unskilled labourer categories. The good thing is that local women living in the villages have access to an earning opportunity. Golam Mostafa informed us that the factory work is mostly light and that the workers are not burdened by heavy work.

#### How do you recruit your factory staff?

- Vacancy advertisements circulated in the local newspaper
- Vacancy posters displayed in the factory entrance
- Public announcements
- All applicants are interviewed, and there is a written test for applicants for officer positions.
- Selected applicants are given an appointment letter
- After recruitment, candidates are given training and instructions for their respective tasks.

In addition, during the peak season of mango or tomato harvesting additional people are hired with short-term contracts to manage the excess work load.

#### What type of works men and women do in your industry?

Men's tasks:	Women's tasks:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sugar damping</li> <li>• Flour bagging</li> <li>• Loading the goods</li> <li>• Unloading the goods</li> <li>• Storing of finished goods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processing</li> <li>• Sorting</li> <li>• Cleaning</li> <li>• Operator</li> <li>• Leveling</li> <li>• Sticker fixing</li> <li>• Sealing the date</li> </ul>

#### What are the staff working hours?

The working hours are from 8.00 AM to 5.00 PM, with an hour break for lunch, toilet and refreshment. If any staff feels sick then she/he are allowed to take rest.

#### How do you ensure the occupational safety of your staff?

- We train our staff to take over their job responsibilities properly
- We provide them with special dress, apron, shoes, mask, shoe covers,
- Every worker follows the safety guideline



- We ensure a good and healthy working environment
- We have assigned staff for toilet cleaning and management
- We follow the government policy of occupational safety
- We strictly prohibit child labour

**What salary and benefits do you offer your staff?**

- We have a policy for salary level based on their position.
- There is equal salary for women and men for equal work
- The regular staff gets two festival bonuses per year which is equal to 1 month salary. Those who are working here for two years are eligible to get this benefit.
- In addition, at least 20% of the workers are getting promotion.

**How do you ensure the quality of your goods?**

We are always keen to maintain the good quality of our products. We have ISO, Halal and CCP certificate. Now we are in the position to acquire the GMP certificate from SNV., Hopefully, we will achieve it soon.

**1.e. Group Interview of Women, Kishwan**

**Date:** 18 September 2018

**Location:** Kishwan Agro products Limited, Pirgonj, Natore  
**Interviewer:** Khadiza  
**Number of respondents:** 10 women  
**Category:** Women factory workers

***“Our hands burn, but there is nothing we can do”***



A lot of women are working in the Kishwan factory, in different sections. The 10 women interviewed were working in the cleaning and sorting of dry red chilies to be used in mango pickle, mango chutney, tamarind chutney, tomato ketchup, tomato sauce and other processed food items being produced in the factory.

When asked about their satisfaction with their workplace facilities, the women mentioned many advantages of working with Kishwan: separate changing room and toilets for men and women, sufficient breaks during work to rest and eat, possibility to take leave for sickness or any emergency; timely payment of their salary plus two festival bonuses; and a safe working environment for women, with no fear of sexual harassment.

The only complaint they had was about having to handle chilies with their bare hands. They said that gloves had been provided by the company but it was not possible to wear the gloves for a long time due to the excessive heat. One of the women asked the interviewer: *“Have you ever put on gloves for half an hour? After 5 minutes hands starts to sweat. No air passes to the hands. How can we put on gloves for the whole day?”*

The women say their hands keep burning all the time, and if they accidentally touch other body parts, especially their face and eyes, the discomfort is even worse. They have to be especially careful using their hands for the toilet. One woman told us: *“Our hands burn, but there is nothing we can do.”*

They wish that they would be able to alternate their work sorting chilies with some other work, and that this task would be distributed among other line workers too. However so far that has not been an option, and these women have no choice but to come in everyday to do this painful task. Overall, the women feel happy to have a paying job and to work here.



## 2.a. Female factory staff interview: Babita Begum

**Function:** Line Supervisor in PRAN Agro Processing Industry  
**Date:** 19 September 2018  
**Location:** Ekdala, Natore  
**Interviewer:** Runia

Babita Begum, a young woman (24 years), has been working as a Line Supervisor in the tomato sauce section of PRAN Agro-Processing factory for 4 years. Her husband had first joined the factory and advised Babita to apply for a position which he found on the job notice board posted in the factory. She has studied till Grade 8 in the village school and that was one of the criteria to apply for the position of Line Supervisor which she is holding now.

Although during the last few years, after her trial period, her salary increment was only 5% (now the monthly salary is BDT 5500), she is satisfied with her job because the industry has some good facilities for their permanent staff. Babita and her husband are entitled to avail the pick-up and drop transport services, maternity and paternity leave and children's crèche facilities in and outside the campus. They feel the work and colleagues as their second family.

About water, sanitation and hygiene aspects she says there are clean and separate toilets for women workers, and they are entitled to monthly medical checkups, medical advice and medicine by qualified female doctors.

Babita has a nine year old daughter who is studying in grade 3 in a local primary school. She feels



happy that, through her work, she can save some money to meet her daughter's needs and demands. Last year she used her salary to renovate and repair her house, and is planning to buy a small plot of land in the near future in which she wants to cultivate mangoes.

## 2.b. Female factory staff interview: Alhara Parvin

**Function:** Asst. Manager of Social Welfare Office in PRAN Agro Processing factory

**Age:** 30 years old

**Date:** 19 September 2018

**Location:** Ekdala, Natore

**Interviewer:** Runia

Alhara Parvin is Assistant Manager of the Social Welfare Office in the factory. As a Social Welfare Manager, she looks after all facilities for workers and checks if they are maintained properly. If a worker has a complaint about anybody or anything, he or she can report this to the Social Welfare Manager who is able to take immediate action. To start with, she was a Line Supervisor in one section of this factory, but 10 years ago she was promoted to the position of Assistant Welfare Manager. She is also responsible for the Baby Care Center of the factory. Matrons in this center work in three shifts per day– this arrangement gives women workers ease of mind. The Pran Agro-processing factory is committed to follow ILO and Government Labour laws strictly and not to tolerate deviances.

Alhara works in a close coordination with the Social Compliance group of staff. An Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy is in place, and there is a mechanism also to collect complaints and take actions against the perpetrators. There is a complaint box on each floor. She tells us that some people made use of this opportunity, and appropriate actions were taken to address the complaints. The Social Welfare team has the responsibility to carry out their work in strict privacy and confidentiality until the perpetrator is found guilty and charged.

The factory also complies with government’s industrial and environmental regulations, for waste treatment and disposal for example. It has an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) for treating the industrial waste water for its reuse or safe disposal in the surrounding environment. Alhara also spoke highly of the toilet facilities (with the sanitary napkins provided for women workers), the factory’s dining facilities and the medical center in the factory premises with female doctors.



Daycare Centre in PRAN Factory

**2.c. Female factory staff interview: Sobita Bibi**

**Function:** Bottle drying and labelling of tomato sauce production department, PRAN  
**Age:** 24 years  
**Date:** 19 September 2018  
**Location:** Ekdala, Natore.  
**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam

**Could you tell me about your family?**

We are very poor. We live on Khas land and have no land of our own. I have completed my 5<sup>th</sup> grade and have a 5 month’ old son. My husband is a day labourer. We need my salary.

**How long have you been working here, and how many hours do you have to work here?**

I have been working here for more than 2 years. Now I am allowed to work 8 hours as my baby’s age is only 5 months, when my baby’s age crosses 7 months then I will have to work 12 hours.

**What type of work do you have to do here?**

I am working in the sauce production section. Here I am doing bottle drying, bottle collection from basement, lining the bottles, putting stickers on the bottle and checking the bottle caps

**Please tell me about the division of work between men and women in this factory?**

Men’s tasks:	Women’s tasks:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality control</li> <li>• Drum bringing</li> <li>• Machine movement</li> <li>• Chemical collection</li> <li>• Testing</li> <li>• Water management</li> <li>• Quality measurement</li> <li>• Bottle bringing</li> <li>• Packet dispatch</li> <li>• Machine cleaning</li> <li>• Pulling out the product from the machine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bottle drying</li> <li>• Labeling</li> <li>• Integration of sauce ingredients</li> <li>• Base preparation</li> <li>• Chemical mixing (without touching by hand)</li> <li>• Testing</li> <li>• Overseeing the gas and water are okay in the machine.</li> <li>• Quality measurement</li> <li>• Operator</li> <li>• Date cutting</li> <li>• Sticker putting</li> <li>• Packaging</li> </ul>

**How do you maintain your occupational safety?**

We use aprons, wear hand gloves and wear masks on face and shoe covers.

**What salary and benefits do you get?**

My monthly salary is BDT4800 to 5300 and I get two bonuses per year.

**Do you think that everyone gets equal pay?**

No, different employees get different pay, for reasons I don’t know. Permanent staff gets more salary. Mostly, also, men are paid more than women. If men are not paid more they will not work, but women have no choice but to work. So, women are bound to work with less pay. I work here because my house is nearby, and the factory has day care and doctor facilities. I can work here without tension. However, I feel hot. Even though the fans are working this place is always hot. Other than that everything here is good for me.



## 2.d Meeting with PRAN Agro Business Limited

### Participants:

Md. Kamruzzaman Tito, Senior manager, Contract Farming, PRAN

Md. Shohel Rana, manager, Quality Control, PRAN

Badrul Islam, PRAN

Md. Saidur Rahman, SNV

GWA-B team

**Date:** 19-09-2018

**Location:** PRAN Factory, Eakhdala, Natore.

**Note:** Mahidul and Khadiza

**“We mix certain chemicals to preserve the food item for a long time”**



In total, PRAN Group has 13 industrial parks and Ekdala is one of them. PRAN has 21 production lines. Ekdala Park is basically an Agro-processing products' factory. Noodles, tomato sauce, chocolate bean, mango juice, mango drinks etc. are produced here. Presently, around 10,000 (ten thousand) staff are working in the Ekdala park or factory. Among the staff, 70% is women and 30% is men. Around 10% staff are unskilled and rest of the staff are skilled. PRAN Company gives chance to its staff to be skilled day by day through training and practical learning, and sometimes attachment with the relevant colleague of the relevant department. Among the unskilled workers, women are the majority.

Staff are recruited through advertisement on the national and local Newspapers. The Human Resource Department of the company is responsible for all formalities of the recruitment. PRAN has a recruitment policy and authority follow the policy for any kind of recruitment. In Ekdala, usually staff work in 2 shifts: 7.00 AM- 3.00 PM and 3.00 PM – 11.00 PM. But in time of more production demand in some season, they recruit more staff with short-term contract according to their demand and introduce another shift from 11.00 PM -7.00 AM.

All the staff working in the Ekdala factory has an Identity Card and uniform which they have to keep with them inside the factory. The health and occupational safety code and conduct is also strictly adhered to. Sexual harassment within the compound of Ekdala factory is of course completely prohibited. If any incidence of sexual harassment happens, the welfare team takes care of the matter and take instant action. In addition, PRAN has a HR policy to prevent these kinds of problem. Md. Kamruzzaman told about the facilities for the staff in Ekdala factory as follows:

We divide the working hours so that every staff can get sufficient rest and concentrate on their work. They have one hour break while on duty. If anyone feels a problem, then they can get leave or rest depending on the condition. All staff maintain the occupational safety: Wear special shoes, aprons, masks. The factory and work place is AC controlled. We have a hygiene management staff, they always clean the inside of the factory and the toilet as well. Each and every staff should follow the code of conduct of safety. We have a strong monitoring system of each section, if monitoring staff find any problem, inform the relevant department, who will solve it. For occupational safety, we follow the ISO 4500 standard.

Besides, in this factory, there is a grievance box in each section. If anyone wants to complain against anything, they can do it anonymously. Also, a social-welfare unit and a social welfare officer is in place. If the officer (a woman) finds any complain, she discusses with the senior management, and take the necessary steps to solve the problem accordingly.

About the salary, benefits and leave of the staff PRAN personnel informed that the salary of the staff depends on their position which is following the HR salary policy. Only regular staff gets the festivals bonus. Yearly regular staff gets around 18-22 days leave following government leave allocation.

In addition, the 4 months maternity leave with salary and benefits are allowed for the permanent staff. If the mother asks for another month of leave, they allow it but without salary and other benefits. There is a day care center within the Ekadala factory compound where mothers can keep their children and work without any tension. Also there is a school called PRAN School for the children of the PRAN staff which is patronized by the government primary school. For the staff who are living far, there is transport facilities in place.



In the Ekadala factory, there are 10 managers. Among them, four are women. The manager of the welfare department is a woman. Besides, Finance director is a woman; HR section has one woman; SEM director is a woman. However, all GMs are men. In all the sections, men and women are working and there is no particular section for men only or women only.

Additionally, separate toilets, dress changing rooms, and the dining room are available for men and women. There is an assigned person to ensure the cleanliness of the toilet every day.

However, though PRAN Company is producing sanitary napkin, there is no allocation of the sanitary napkin to the women worker for free.

About food product safety PRAN personnel told:

We ensure safety from raw materials to finished goods, farm to folk. We are very much aware of it, as we are the lead of a competitive market. We have received a number of safety and quality certificates, and accordingly ensure the safety: HSCP, BSP, ISO, EMS, Halal, DUA –US, and some others. We have quality policy, food safety policy and quality

team involving 85 Quality controllers. In the quality team, 2 are women. We have a testing laboratory, where we are testing each item, and ensure the quality.



When the GWA-B team raised the question about addition of chemicals in processed mango and tomato food products, the PRAN personnel said:

We have a legal standard of mixing chemicals. We always mix things which are allowed and maintain the standard.

Then when the PRAN personnel were asked why they mix some chemicals, while it is not really necessary because in other countries it is not allowed. One of them replied:

We mix certain chemicals to preserve the food item for a long time.

About how SNV is helping farmers and PRAN, one of the PRAN personnel said:

SNV is providing training to the farmers on safe mango and tomato production so that they are now able to get a good price from the market and we also buy their products.

However, PRAN only buys products from farmers in the late season when the price of the mango and tomato is low.

## 2.e. Female factory staff interview: Hazara Khatun

**Function:** Worker at base preparation of tomato sauce unit  
**Age:** 26 years  
**Date:** 19 September 2018  
**Location:** PRAN Factory, Ekdala, Natore.  
**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam

Hazara Khatun's husband was a van puller who had an accident 6 year ago. Since then he has not been able to work much and is now operating a tea stall. His income is very low and not sufficient to maintain the family, which was the main driver for Hazara to do this work.

### Tell me about your family?

*I have 2 children: one 5 year old son and one daughter of one and a half. My son is going to school. He is now in class 1. We have a small piece of land, 22 decimals.*

**How many years are you working here?** *I have been working here for 3 years.*

### What type of work do you do here?

*Now I am working in the sauce production section. Here I have to do a number of tasks:*

- *Integration of sauce ingredients*



- Base preparation
- Chemical mixing (without touching by hand)
- Testing, overseeing if the gas and water are okay in the machine.
- Quality measurement

**Please tell me about the division of work of men and women in this factory?**

<b>Men's tasks:</b>	<b>Women's tasks:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operator</li> <li>• Quality control</li> <li>• Drum bringing</li> <li>• Machine movement</li> <li>• Chemical collection</li> <li>• Testing</li> <li>• Water management</li> <li>• Quality measurement</li> <li>• Bottle bringing</li> <li>• Packet dispatch</li> <li>• Machine cleaning</li> <li>• Pulling the product out of the machine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration of sauce ingredients</li> <li>• Base preparation</li> <li>• Chemical mixing (hands-free)</li> <li>• Testing</li> <li>• Overseeing gas and water in the machine.</li> <li>• Quality measurement</li> <li>• Operator</li> <li>• Bottle drying</li> <li>• Labeling</li> <li>• Date cutting</li> <li>• Sticker putting</li> <li>• Packaging</li> </ul>

**How do you maintain your occupational safety?**

We use aprons, hand gloves and masks on face and shoe covers.

**What salary and benefits do you get?**

My monthly salary is BDT 6000, and two Eid bonuses per year.

**Do you think that everyone here gets equal pay?**

There are different types of employees. I am a regular employee, and all regular employees get the same salary and benefits regardless of being a man or woman. The salary depends on the work. Some men workers get less than me. But mostly, men are doing more work and heavier work, so they get more salary.

## 2.f. Woman Factory Worker: Anisa Begum

**Date:** 19 September 2018

**Location:** PRAN Agro Business Ltd, Ekdhala, Natore

**interviewer:** Khadiza

**Category:** Women factory worker

**“The quality of the food of PRAN is good. We maintain good hygiene”**

Anisa Begum is a 26 year old woman with a 7 year old daughter. She is barely literate and can just about sign her name. She has been working with PRAN for the last 6 years. She started her work as a machine operator assistant and was promoted to machine operator after four years. Presently her position is



cooking operator and her responsibility is the machine that mixes pickles, sauces, chutneys etc. Her house is half an hour away from her workplace. She starts from her house at 6.15 am to reach work at 6.45 am. She starts work at 7 am as soon as she has changed into her work uniform. At 10.00 am she gets a half hour snack break and at 3.00 pm she gets another half hour break to have lunch. She usually brings a packed lunch from home as it is expensive to buy lunch at the factory canteen, and going home for lunch is not a possibility because of the distance. Occasionally, when she has had food at the canteen, she found it of a good quality.



Despite working a long time with the company, she has not had a pay increase. She currently earns a basic salary of 5,300 Taka per month. When she works overtime this increases to about 8000 Taka per month. She also gets a bonus twice a year.

Anisa is happy working in PRAN. She says the supervisors treat all the workers well. The factory offers good medical facilities for primary health care and there is a doctor on-site. There is also an ambulance for emergencies. Permanent staff are allowed four months of pregnancy

leave with salary. Permanent staff are also entitled to a rest period if they have worked long hours over an extended period.

Anisa informs us that there is a zero tolerance policy on harassment of women in PRAN. She has never experienced any incident of sexual harassment in her workplace and neither have any of her women colleagues, as far as she knows. She says PRAN has a day care centre as well as a primary school for the children of PRAN company staff. However, her daughter does not go to the PRAN school because it is too far from her house. Permanent staff are allowed to avail of the daycare center facilities for their children.



She is satisfied with the quality of the food produced in the company. PRAN company staff have the opportunity to buy the products of PRAN at a lower price from the shop inside the compound, and she buys things from there. In her words:

*“The quality of the food of PRAN is good. We maintain good hygiene”.*

She informs us that products past their expiry date, which are returned to the company, are always thrown away.

They do not try to reuse them.

Anisa thinks there is no gender or religious discrimination in the recruitment of employees by the company. During the peak season of mango and tomato, when the company has a lot of work, employers recruit a number of workers, many of whom are allowed to stay on, even in the low season, for other tasks.

## 2.g. Woman Factory worker: Morsheda Begum

**Date:** 19 September 2018  
**Location:** PRAN Agro Business Ltd, Ekdhala, Natore  
**Interviewer:** Khadiza

### ***“Is it not good to have a job, even with a low salary?”***

Morsheda Begum has been working with PRAN factory for the last three years. She checks filled up tomato sauce bottles for leakages. Her work day starts at 6.45 am, when she reports at the factory and ends at 7 pm. During this time, she gets an hour’s break – half an hour at 10 am for a light snack or breakfast, and half an hour at 3 pm to have lunch. She informs us that all the workers are free to go home for lunch or eat lunch at the factory canteen. The bill for food eaten at the canteen is deducted from their salary at the end of the month. Morsheda’s house is close to her workplace. She starts at 6.30 am from her house to be able to reach her office by 6.45 am. Sometimes she works overtime until 10 at night. For the overtime, she gets 32 Taka per hour.



Morsheda informs us that men are employed in the factory for operating machines and carrying heavy boxes, while women are recruited for all the other tasks. This is why the number of women in the factory is more than the number of men. She doesn’t know about the salary scale of men who operate machines.

She is happy to work here because she gets her salary on time, enjoys a bonus twice a year, is able to avail leave when needed, and access the factory’s medical centre for basic health services as well as emergency services. Furthermore, there is no risk of sexual harassment as the factory has separate changing rooms, toilets, and canteens for men and women. When asked if she thinks her salary is low, she said:

*“There are not many job opportunities around here. If I quit this job considering the low salary, I will not have any work. So is it not better to have a job, even with a low salary?”*



## ANNEX 8: Consumer cases

1. Md Russel, male
2. Nomro Roy, male
3. Minhar Ahmed, male
4. Shima Akhter, female
5. Bilkis Begum, female
6. Mariam Akhter, female
7. Saifur Hassan, male
8. Mizanur Rahman Sohel, male
9. Firoz Ahmed, male
10. Bilkis Begum, female
11. Kulsuma Begum, female
12. Omar Faruque, male
13. Faruk Hussain, male
14. Nasrin Begum, female
15. Jalil Mia, male
16. Fatema-Tuz-Johora, female
17. Shaila Rahman, female
18. Shahidul Islam, male
19. Papiya Begum Eaty, female
20. Kanij, female
21. Rumana Sharmin, female
22. Sifatera Begum, female
23. Saiful, male
24. Goutom Goshami, male
25. Shagor Rahman, male
26. Rakha Muni, female
27. Aysha Akhter, female
28. Sumuna Nasrin, female

### 1. Male Consumer: Md. Russel

**Location:** Dhaka  
**Date:** 21 October 2018  
**Interviewer:** Runia

Md. Russel is 28 years old and works as a machine operator in a garments factory near Banani, Dhaka. He lives in a factory workers' hostel in Mirpur. At the time of the interview he was buying some drinks from a grocery shop in Banani. Asked about his use of processed mango and tomato-based food and drink items, he says that he often buys mango juice and different tomato sauces to eat with local snacks like *singara* and *samosa*. As he lives in a hostel and is without his family, he buys all his own groceries. He tells us that when he was with his family in Barisal, he hardly bought or ate processed food. After coming to Dhaka for his work he has become more dependent on junk food and processed food items. His colleagues at the factory recommended certain brands in processed food products, based on which he does his shopping. He says he does not know much about the safety of processed food and that it could be harmful for the human body, but he knows that cooked food at home is better than the food cooked in a restaurant.



## 2. Male Consumer: Nomro Roy

**Location:** Dhaka  
**Date:** 21 October 2018  
**Interviewer:** Runia

Thirty year old Nomro Roy is a Nepalese researcher who has been working in a Bangladeshi health organization for the past year. His office is in Banani and he also lives in Banani with some Nepalese friends.



**Being a vegetarian and a health researcher he is aware about safe food** and knows the chemicals that factories use in processed food such as Sodium glutamate and Sodium benzoate. He tries to avoid buying processed food from shops and prefers cooking food at home. Back in Nepal, his family members depend on their mother for selecting and buying food for the household, including processed mango and tomato-based food items, trusting her choice to be best. Sometimes, when he does feel like buying processed

food he checks the ingredients printed on the packaging for chemicals. If ingredients are not printed, he will not buy it.

At the time of the interview he and his friend, were looking for some processed food like kebab, rolls, burgers and other snacks that would be made of vegetables, without beef and pork.

## 3. Male Consumer: Minhar Ahmed

**Location:** Dhaka  
**Date:** 21 October 2018  
**Interviewer:** Runia

Minhar Ahmed is a 27 year old young man working in a private company in Banani. At the time of the interview, he just came down from the office for buying a small bottle of Coca-Cola from a grocery store in front of his office. **He is very fond of buying different processed food, including mango and tomato-based products, because he likes to eat something that is quickly ready and tastier than homemade food.**

He lives with his mother, who is responsible for choosing and buying food for home consumption. His mother advises him not to eat too much processed food. He knows that there are differences between factory processed and home-made mango juice in quality as well as taste, but is uninformed about safe and safer food. He guesses that his mother would know more about this as she watches television programmes on kitchen and cooking. He does not remember ever discussing food safety with his mother.



#### 4. Female Consumer: Shima Akhter

**Location:** Rajshahi  
**Date:** 16 September 2018  
**Interviewer:** Runia

***“Processed food is not good for the health of young children”  
“I only check the labels to be sure it is halal”***

Twenty eight year old Shima Akhter is married to a business man and a regular customer of Amana Big Bazar in Rajshahi city, where she was buying kitchen utensils at the time of the interview. She is accompanied by her sister. Shima used to work as a surveyor for a local organization, but after the birth of her second son she has given up her job. Before participating in the interview she was interested to know where the research team came from, what the purpose of the study was and what the questionnaire was like.

Shima does not like to buy processed items of mangoes and tomatoes, as she gets plenty of fresh produce from the local market during the mango and tomato seasons in Rajshahi. Also outside the home, she prefers not to give the children processed food, because her son is still very young and she can make all the food he requires at home. She sometimes buys processed food like jam, jelly, sauces of mango and tomatoes of different *local* companies, but is not loyal to any particular brand or name. She checks the labels of packets and bottles mainly to see if they are Halal or not, but does not look at the ingredients as she does not know which ones are harmful for the human body. She only knows that processed food is not good for the health for young children. Her husband sometimes does the shopping but asks Shima about what to buy.

She says she comes from a middle-income educated family. Earlier when she had a job she was able to spend the money as she wished, but even now, when spending her husband’s money, she still keeps her decision making power over spending. In fact, when shopping for the household, she uses her own judgment and does not need to consult her husband as she is the manager of her household.

#### 5. Female Consumer: Bilkis Begum

**Location:** Dhaka  
**Date:** 21 September 2018  
**Interviewer:** Runia

***“My children press me to buy junk food and processed food items”.***

Fifty year old Bilkis Begum is the Managing Director of a Coaching Center for students who want to study abroad for their graduation and post-graduation degree. The Center is based in Mohammadpur, Dhaka. She graduated in Sociology from the University of Dhaka and then she started this Coaching Centre together with her elder brother.

Bilkis Begum has two school going daughters and one son whose preference for fast food over home-cooked food push her to buy processed food items like tomato and tamarind sauces and mango jam jelly and pickles, to make the food at home tastier for them. She thinks she is aware of the safety of the food the children are eating. Bilkis Begum and her husband often shop for food together in supermarkets like Meena Bazar and Agora, despite the fact that these have been fined by mobile courts at different times. Like many other customers of processed food, Bilkis Begum knows that they are generally not good for health but she cannot explain which ingredients are harmful to health, and which are acceptable.

## 6. Female Consumer: Mariam Akhter

**Location:** Dhaka  
**Date:** 21 Sep. 2018  
**Interviewer:** Runia

***“No one in my family is aware of food safety and of chemicals added to processed food”***

Mariam Akhter is a 24 year old graduate student of Physics at a university in Dhaka. She sometimes buys processed food such as mango and tamarind juice, mango bars, tomato sauce, ketchup, mango jam and jelly. As Mariam has to stay long hours outside home for study and tutoring students, she depends on buying processed food. However, she prefers to buy them in supermarkets in Dhaka, like Agora and Meena Bazaar.

At home it is her father who buys all household groceries from the local market. Her mother only partly decides what is bought when her husband does his monthly grocery shopping.

Mariam, however, makes her own choices when buying food from outside as she earns some money by tutoring students in the area where she lives. When buying mango and tomato-based processed items her choices are led by television advertisements, recommendations of her friends and relatives. Mariam tells us that while she hears about spurious activities of agro-processing food companies in Bangladesh, she does not take this information into account when buying food. She has never talked or discussed the safety of processed food with her parents or other family members because she does not know much about this. She says her parents are also not well informed about the safety of processed foods. Her mother is not aware of the safety of chemicals used in processed food, and neither is her father who does the shopping for the family.



## 7. Male Consumer: Saifur Hasan

**Location:** Dhaka  
**Date:** 21 September 2018  
**Interviewer:** Runia

***“My mother tells me to cook at home, but food in the restaurants is tastier.”***

Twenty eight year old Saifur Hasan is a young government employee who graduated in Electrical Engineering from the University of Dhaka a few years back. He was buying some processed food items like tomato sauces and mango jelly from a grocery shop in Dhanmondi, Dhaka at the time of the interview. As he is unmarried and without his family, who live in Noakhali, he often eats in restaurants. He hardly ever cooks for himself, and often visits supermarkets like Meena Bazaar to buy all sorts of processed food such mango jam, jelly, and tomato sauces and ketchup. When his mother calls him, she tells him to cook at home, because that is always tastier and healthier, but Saifur finds the food in restaurants tastier than what he can cook. Furthermore, it saves him time. When buying processed food he depends on brand names he has heard of. He admits that he is not well informed on food safety issues and thinks that it is safe to eat food when it is chilled or hot because no germ can survive in a freezer or in heated conditions. He does not know how excessive use of chemicals in processed food can be harmful for the human body.

### 8. Male Consumer: Mizanur Rahman Sohel

**Location:** Dhanmondi, Dhaka  
**Date:** 21 September 2018  
**Interviewer:** Runia

***“My ignorance about food safety is a blessing for me, otherwise I would starve to death!”***

Twenty seven year old Mizanur Rahman Sohel recently graduated from a private university and is now working in an academic institution as a math instructor. At the time he was approached for the interview he was in front of a grocery shop in Dhanmondi area in Dhaka.

Mizanur Rahman Sohel loves all sorts of processed food, to eat at home as well as outside. Discussing food safety issues, he says *“My ignorance is a blessing for me, that I know very little or nothing about food safety, otherwise I would starve to death”*.

When he lived in Rangpur, his birth place, he did not know much about processed food. His addiction for fast food and processed food began when started university and first tasted local snacks prepared in nearby stalls and restaurants. His mother, who lives in Rangpur, is concerned about his diet and calls him every day to know what he has taken for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. On the other hand, his father is very keen to know about his lodging, moving about and his new associations. He thinks his mother is very protective about her children and their diet, but not knowledgeable of the nutrition and safety of the food. What he can remember about his family is that his father always decided what food to buy from the market, as if only he was able to recognize quality products.

Mizanur tells us that after getting a job his life completely changed as he can now decide how to spend money for his family as well as for himself. Now that he has a job and is an earning member of the family he can take decisions by himself. Although the job has brought a change in many aspects of his life, it has not altered his food habits: he is still addicted to fast food and processed food and not concerned about what food is harmful and what food is safe for his health.

### 9. Male Consumer: Firoz Ahmed

**Location:** Dhanmondi, Dhaka  
**Date:** 21 September 2018  
**Interviewer:** Runia

***“Processed food is not cheap at all, why should we buy those products with harmful chemicals, spending a lot of money”?***

At the time he was approached for the interview 26 year old Firoz Ahmed was in front of a shopping mall, called Rapa Plaza at Lalmatia, Dhanmondi. He just finished his study in History from Chattogram University last year and now stays with his sister’s family to look for a job in Dhaka. He came alone to the shopping mall to roam about, without any specific purpose.





Firoz says he sometimes has to buy some processed food from grocery shops for his sister's children, such as potato chips, mango juice, tomato sauce, and mango jam and jelly. He does not think this food is very healthy because it is loaded with salt and he knows salt is not good for health. A lot of salt is mixed in potato chips and it is liked by young children very much, he adds. He knows that some processed food industries in Bangladesh make mango products without any real mango pulp, with only essence and water: it was reported in the newspapers, and also on television. He finds that many young people who regularly follow the news have become aware of this. *"I do not blindly buy any processed food products by seeing its brand name only. In fact, I look at its labels or tags to see if there are detrimental chemicals used, which can be fatal for the human body"*, he says.

His parents and other siblings live in Faridpur, a nearby district of Dhaka. He tells that his mother and entire family knows about the inferior quality of food processed in factories, and the good practices of cooking food at home, from information they get through newspapers and TV. As he has not got a job yet, he finds himself dependent on his parents in all respects. He is not much concerned about his own health, but if he gets seriously sick, he says his father will accompany him to the clinic and pay for his treatment.

He concludes the interview saying that food companies are making huge profits selling food products of which it is difficult to ensure the quality, or know which chemicals they contain. *"Processed food is not cheap at all, why should we buy those products with harmful chemicals, spending a lot of money"?*

#### 10. Female Consumer: Kulsuma Begum

**Location:** Dhanmondi, Dhaka

**Date:** 2 October 2018

**Interviewer:** Runia

*"I buy the sauces that are cheapest"*

Thirty three year old Kulsuma Begum is the owner of a Bangla food restaurant in Dhanmondi, Dhaka since 2015. In her restaurant, she makes local snacks such as *puri*, *singara*, *shamochoa*, *porota*, egg fry and many other breakfast and dinner items for customers. She serves her snacks with processed tomato sauces of different local brands. She does not know exactly which brand is good, only that it can make the food tastier. She buys the cheapest varieties of tomato and tamarind sauces from a local grocery shop. Kulsuma has two



school going children, a boy and a girl who like to eat the snacks made by their mother and use tomato sauce with them, so Kulsuma buys these processed foods for use at home too. Her husband Manik Miah helps her to run her restaurant efficiently. She is ignorant about what safe food actually means. What she understands is that processed food made in a factory cannot get bad, as fresh home cooked food can. Since starting this small business, she is able to spend more money on the education and the wellbeing of her children, and she bought a small plot of land in her name in Natore, her home district. This gives her confidence in her own abilities and she says she is now valued and respected by her husband, as well as by her relatives and neighbours.

#### 11. Male Consumer: Omar Faruque

**Location:** Dhanmondi, Dhaka

**Date:** 2 October 2018

**Interviewer:** Runia

#### ***“How can my poor parents understand food safety, with their simple eating habits?”***

Omar Faruque is a 25 year old office assistant in a corporate house in Dhanmondi, Dhaka, who also stays nights at his workplace as an office guard. He is from Mymensingh where he studied till the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. When he could not pass the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Exam there he came to Dhaka to search for a job, and has since been working for this company. He does not need to spend for his accommodation as he stays at the office at night, but he needs to manage his own meals. Like many other single young men working in Dhaka city, away from their families, Omar Faruque eats all his meals at local food stalls and restaurants. He is not sure if these meals are made with ingredients that are not good for health, but he says he uses tomato sauce with most of the snacks to add to their taste, just like he sees the other customers doing. Moreover, as an office assistant, he says he buys similar processed food items for many office staff who have snacks at office during office hours.

Speaking about his family in Mymensingh, he Omar Faruque says that his father works in a tailoring shop, and has a low income. He is the head of the household and makes all the decisions on family matters without consulting his mother. He is usually the person in the family who is responsible for shopping of all groceries from the nearby market, but he cannot afford processed foods. Omar says *“What I do not understand is how my parents could understand these issues (about safe food), as their eating habits are so simple and not dependent on expensive food items, that they do not need to know about the safety of processed food.”*

#### 12. Male Consumer: Faruk Hossain

**Date:** 28 October 2018

**Location:** Shanirakhra, Jatrabari, Dhaka

**Interviewer:** Khadiza

#### ***“Women know which food is needed and not needed for the family, not men” “I give my son a pack of mango juice. Then he is getting the nutrition of mango.”***

Faruk Hossain is a worker in a steel company. His wife works in a garment factory. His wife can read and write a little bit whereas he can only sign his name. He is the head of his family. They have one school going son. Faruk never cooks but helps his wife with the grocery shopping for the household. Since both he and his wife work, they like to go shopping together on Fridays, or in the weekend. Faruk usually buys perishable food items like fish, meat and vegetables every day

on his way back from work, deciding what to buy on his own. However he follows the instructions of his wife to buy food staples. He says:

*“Women know which food is needed and not needed for the family, not men. I know that fish and vegetables are a must, so I buy these without asking. But for other things I don’t know what is finished, and what is not. So, whatever my wife asks me to buy, I buy. She also buys some things sometimes. We go to the market together.”*

Regarding the purchase of processed mango products, Faruk says he sometimes buys mango drinks for his son, who likes them very much.

*“Children like to eat chips, biscuits and to drink juice. But I think juice is better than the biscuits and chips. It is from the mango. So, it is good for health. See, mango is not available all the year round and during the season it is very costly. So, I cannot buy much. Rather it is good if I give my son a pack of mango juice. Then he is getting the nutrition of mango.”*

He doesn’t buy tomato sauce or any product of processed tomato. He explains this saying:

*“Tomato is available all year round. Why should I buy a processed tomato product? But sometimes my son buys a mini pack of tomato sauce to have with noodles. He likes to eat noodles with tomato sauce.”*

He watched some advertisements of mango juice and tomato sauce on TV but when he is shopping he doesn’t ask for any specific brand, and takes whatever the shopkeeper gives him. He thinks all the products are the same - they only have different names and packaging. Moreover, he trusts that the shopkeeper will not give him a bad product, because he will not want it returned.

He and his wife are careful about food safety, so they do not like to buy uncovered food cooked on the street. If they want to eat something nice, they prefer to cook it in their house. His wife cooks food as tasty as that of a restaurant.

### 13. Female Consumer: Nasrin Begum

**Date:** 28 October 2018

**Location:** Shanirakhra, Jatrabari, Dhaka

**Interviewer:** Khadiza

***“I do not trust any brand and do not like to take any food from them”***

Nasrin Begum is a housewife with three school going children whose husband runs a grocery shop. She is responsible for all the household work including cooking. However, it is her husband who shops in the market for daily food items such as meat, fish and vegetables. Other food staples such as rice, grains, lentils, oil, salt etc. are available in their own shop. Whenever she needs something, she sends one of her children to her husband’s shop to bring it home. The shop is near their house.

Although processed mango and tomato products such as mango drinks, mango jam, chutney, and tomato sauce are available in their shop they are not using these products often. She tells us that her children like to drink mango juice, eat mango chutney as well as tomato sauce with *Singara, Samucha, Puri* and noodles, but she and her husband discourage them from consuming these products very often. She thinks that these products contain a lot of chemicals which are very bad for health, and says:

*“I have seen on TV and heard from others that these products are not produced in a hygienic way. Instead of using food colour, companies are using dyes in the juices and sauces, as well as in other foods like this. They are also using rotten pumpkin instead of mangoes and tomatoes, which can cause cancer. That is why I do not trust any brand and do not like to consume their products. Only when the children urge me very much to get them, I allow them a few.”*

Her husband is also aware about these issues. That is why, though he sells those products, he does not give them to his children to eat. She and her husband also tell their children about the bad impact of taking those products so that their children also lose interest. She herself likes to eat and feed her family members fresh mangoes and tomatoes. She makes juice with mango in her house with the help of blender, makes pickle with green mangoes and even prepares tomato ketchup in the house. She also preserves some green mangoes in the refrigerator to eat later with the dal when no green mango will be available. So she thinks she doesn't need to buy processed mango or tomato products.

She thinks that it is the duty of the mother to take care of food safety in the household. She explains in her words:

*“He (the husband) is always outside. How can he be very careful about household food safety? I always tell him what to buy and what not to buy, and I always advise my children to take good and safe food.”*

#### 14. Male Consumer: Jalil Mia

**Date:** 28 October 2018

**Location:** Shanirakhra, Jatrabari, Dhaka

**Interviewer:** Khadiza

***“If companies would use limited chemicals and more mango or tomato, it would be good for us.”***

Jalil Mia works in a garment factory and lives with his father, mother, sister and wife. He got married recently. His father is a vegetable vendor and the head of the household. His sister is in school. His wife does household work with his mother. Normally his mother is responsible for the daily shopping of fish, meat, oil, salt, etc. for the household. They do not buy vegetables from outside as his father brings home some unsold vegetables almost every night. Jalil does the main grocery shopping for the household in the weekend. He buys rice, dal, onion, spices and other things as asked by his mother. Sometimes he chooses on his own to buy some food that he would like to eat, such as a special kind of fish. However, very often it is too expensive to buy. Jalil knows about different processed food items of mango and tomato such as mango drinks, mango chutney, mango bars, and tomato sauce from TV advertisements and posters in the shops. He buys mango drinks for his family during Ramadan and when guests come, and mango chutney and mango bars as special treats for his family. He likes having tomato sauce with local snacks like *Puri*, *Singara* or *Samucha* in the hotel. Sometimes he is asked by his sister or mother or wife to buy tomato sauce when they make special dishes, and he will buy some mini packets of it as the bottle of tomato sauce is too expensive.

When buying these processed food products he doesn't care about the brand and usually goes by what the shopkeeper gives him. He thinks these kinds of processed foods are not very healthy, and says:

*“I think there is no or little mango or tomato in the mango drinks or tomato sauces. Companies use a lot of chemicals and flavor. But still we take them because they are nice to eat. If companies would use limited chemical but more mango or tomato, then that would be good for us”.*

He says that he is not worried about food safety but his mother, sister and wife always try to have safe and good food for everybody in the family. He explains his attitude:

*“It is the task of rich people to be worried about food safety. We try our best just to manage our daily food. When do we have time to think about food safety? We will not have anything (any disease). Allah will save us.”*

**15. Female Consumer: Fatema-Tuz-Johora**

**Date:** 22 October 2018  
**Location:** Shanirakhra, Jatrabari, Dhaka  
**Interviewer:** Khadiza

***“If I find the taste and quality is not good enough of one brand’s product, I do not buy that product again”***

Fatema-Tuz-Johora is an NGO activist. Her family consists of three people. She is divorced and is living with her old parents. Her mother works with an NGO and her father is a shopkeeper. Though her father and mother are working, they are not very strong so she always does the household grocery shopping and decides what to buy. However, sometimes she asks her mother if she needs something from the market as both she and her mother are in charge of the daily cooking.

She likes the processed products of mango and tomato especially mango drink and tomato sauce, and buys them from her neighbourhood shops. She buys mango drink to serve when guests come to her house. Sometimes she also likes to have mango drink as a treat for herself and her parents. She likes to prepare special snacks like *Singara*, *Samucha*, noodles, sandwich, and pizza for guests and her family in the weekend and for special occasions, and serves them with tomato sauce.

When she buys mango drinks for a large number of guests she buys them in 1 liter bottles, but when she buys for herself or her family, she buys small packets of mango drink because the big bottles are more expensive. She follows the same buying behavior for tomato sauce as well. Along with the price, she also considers the taste and quality of the processed mango and tomato products. She says: *“If I find that the taste and quality of one brand’s product is not good enough, I do not buy that product again. My mother also asks me to buy good tasting and safe food, even if the price is a bit higher.”*

She always checks the date of production and expiry before she buy any packed food product but usually does not pay attention to the ingredients as she does not understand what most of the chemical items are. She likes PRAN Frooto Mango Fruit Drink and Sajeeb Hot Tomato Sauce. She knows them from television advertisements. She thinks they taste good and trusts that these products are not adulterated.

**16. Female Consumer: Shaila Rahman**

**Date:** 21 October 2018  
**Location:** Banani, Dhaka  
**Interviewer:** Khadiza

Shaila Rahman is a housewife, and the main shopper for food for her four-member family. Her husband sometimes helps with the shopping, and in some weekends, they go shopping together. Both she and her husband cook for the family but she cooks on most days. Hence, it is mainly she who decides about the food to buy from the market, though her husband also selects things occasionally. Regarding processed products of mango and tomato, she is not keen to buy them. But sometimes she buys tomato sauce to mix with noodles and pasta. She likes to eat fresh mangoes and tomatoes during the season, and also preserves them in the freezer for using at other times. The unjustified high price of these processed food items is another reason she gives for not buying them.

**17. Male Consumer: Shahidul Islam****Date:** 21 October 2018**Location:** Banani, Dhaka**Interviewer:** Khadiza

***“Everything is adulterated, though they say 100% pure”.***

Shahidul Islam is a businessman. His wife is a Government employee. He usually does the grocery shopping for the household, with his wife helping out when she gets time. Normally his wife does the cooking, so she tells him what to buy.

He often buys processed mango and tomato products, especially mango juice and drinks for his children. He always prefers to buy products of trusted brands, and usually buys them from supermarkets. He likes PRAN's products but also tries out products of other companies, which he hears about from TV and newspapers.

He carefully checks the production and expiry dates on the packets, and also the ingredients they contain. If he finds that the ingredients are not good, he doesn't buy the product. About the quality of processed mango and tomato products he says:

*“Everything is adulterated, though they say 100% pure.”*

He is concerned about food safety of processed products and says that his wife is even more concerned, since their children are eating these products. Therefore, he always tries to buy good quality food and fresh food.

**18. Female Consumer: Papiya Begum Eaty****Date:** 28 October 2018**Location:** Shanirakhra, Jatrabari, Dhaka**Interviewer:** Khadiza

***“If children drink a pack of mango juice, they are getting the nutrition value of mango”***

Papiya Begum is a garment factory worker. Her husband is a rickshaw puller. She has one school going son and one 4 year old daughter. When she is out of home, her children are taken care of by her mother-in-law who lives nearby.

Both she and her husband buy groceries for the family but she prefers to do it. Explaining why she says:

*“Men cannot bargain. The same thing he buys with 40 taka, I buy that with 30 taka. So see, if he buys everything for the family, it will cost 2000 taka more per month. Better I do it.”*

Though normally she decides what will be bought, she consults with her husband on what food to buy for the weekend meal, when guests come or for any special occasion. Her husband prioritizes her choices above his and likes everything she buys while she does not always like what her husband buys. Laughing out loud, she says about him:

*“He cannot buy good things. He just takes whatever shopkeepers give him. After bringing it home I see that the vegetables are not good, the fish is half rotten, and so on.*

Among different products of processed mango and tomato, she and her husband only buy mango drink packets for their children. Sometimes they carry mango drink packets or a bottle when they visit someone else's house for the children. She only can say that there is a 'Frooto Juice' (PRAN Frooto Mango Fruit Drink), which she buys sometimes for her children. Other than PRAN, she doesn't know the name of any brand. She doesn't know about processed tomato products like sauce or ketchup but she makes her own sauce with tomatoes. She and her family eat her sauce with rice, fried rice, bread, *Singara*, and *Puri*.

Papiya Begum can't read and write well, and has no television in her house. So she has very limited opportunities to know about different food products available in the market. She knew about the Frooto Juice brand from her children and others.

She believes that packed foods are safe and reliable. She also believes that mango drink is prepared from mango so it has the nutritional value of the fruit, which is good for children. She says:

*"I ask my children not to eat open pickle or fuchka from the street because that has a lot of dust. Rather, I prefer packed food for children. These are safe and reliable. Like, if children drink a pack of mango juice, they are getting the nutritional value of mango."*

Both she and her husband are concerned about food safety and she always tries to buy good food when she shops, especially for their children.

#### 19. Female Consumer: Kanij

**Date:** 21 October 2018

**Location:** Banani, Dhaka

**Interviewer:** Khadiza

***"Because I am worried about food safety, I buy foreign products. Our local products are not very good"***

Kanij is a housewife. Mostly, it is she who buys groceries for the household as her husband doesn't have much time. She often buys products from supermarkets but sometimes also from smaller shops. She mainly decides what food to buy for the family, but is sometimes requested by her husband to buy something particular.

She tells us that most of the time she avoids buying processed mango and tomato products. However, for special occasions or when she cooks something special she will sometimes buy mango juice, mango pickle and tomato sauce. She thinks that these kinds of product are not healthy. She prefers eating fresh mangoes and tomatoes from the market, and also prepares mango juice and tomato sauce in her house.

She and her husband like to buy juices, sauce, and jelly of foreign brands as she thinks these are safer and better quality than local brands. She says:

*"Because I am worried about food safety, I buy foreign products. Our local products are not very good."*

When she does buy local products, she buys products of reputed companies like PRAN and BD. Occasionally, she asks the sales assistant in the supermarkets to suggest a good brand, and will buy what they suggest.

She is very concerned about the good health of her family members and nutritional value of the food she buys, including processed mango and tomato products.

#### 20. Female Consumer: Rumana Sharmin

**Age:** 32 years

**Date:** 20 October 2018

**Location:** West Rampura, Dhaka

**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam

Rumana is approached for the interview while she is shopping and buying a mango drink.

**Do you use processed products of mango and tomato?**

*Yes I do, like jams, jellies, mango drink.*

**Do you buy this in a shop?**

Yes, I buy it from different shops. This actually depends on my wish. Mostly, I buy mango drinks from confectionary shops.

### **Shopping and decision-making**

**Who does the shopping in your household? Do you go for shopping, or your husband? Or a servant?**

*I make the decision about my household's shopping because I do household work, cooking, food preparation, and entertaining of family and guests. I know the status of food items in my household.*

**Who decides what will be bought?**

*I myself decide what items should be bought for the family.*

**If you buy mango and/or tomato processed products, how do you make your choice? Do you care about the brand?**

*We have tried out different types of processed products in the past. Based on my experience and perception, we try to buy good quality products. Obviously, I do care about the brand, expiry date, packaging, and also pay attention to how the products have been stored in the shop. If I see the storing environment and surrounding looks dirty and dusty then I do not buy. I also care about using good quality, local branded products.*

**What if you come home with a different brand?**

*Normally, I/my family do not buy unrepented or unknown brands. If anyone comes with such products, for example, when a guest brings some sweets or fruits, ice cream or dairy products, we only eat it if we are sure about the quality. Otherwise we throw it away or give it to the housemaid.*

### **Information about food products**

**Where do you get information from?**

*We get information from our relatives, friends, and colleagues. We also get information from different advertisements on TV and through Social media*

**Does the person who does the shopping also get the information?**

*Yes, they also get this information, especially now that some shops circulate product information, discount and offers.*

**Do you discuss in your household the safety of food products?**

*Yes, we are aware about food safety issues and discuss them at home.*

### **Care for safety of food**

**Are you worried about safety? And is your spouse also worried?**

*Yes, we are both are worried.*

**Is there a difference between your or your wife's concern? No, we share the same concerns.**

## **21 Female Consumer: Sifafera Begum**

**Age:** 27 years

**Date:** 20 October 2018

**Location:** West Rampura, Dhaka

**Interviewer:** Md. Mahidul Islam

Sifafera Begum was approached for the interview when she was shopping in a supermarket

**Do you use processed products of mango and tomato?**

*Yes, for example: Mango pickles, Juice, tomato ketchup*

**Do you buy this in a shop? Yes**

### **Shopping and decision-making**

**Who does the shopping in your household? Do you go for shopping, or your husband? Or a servant?**

*Both, me and my husband*



**Who decides what will be bought?**

*Both, me and my husband*

**If you buy mango and/or tomato processed products, how do you make your choice? Do you care about the brand?**

*Yes, we do care about the brand: we usually use Ahmed's/Pran's tomato ketchup*

**What if you come home with a different brand?**

*We usually don't change brands, because we do not know if the new product is good or bad. Also, as we buy a bulk amount for a month, we do not experiment.*

**Information about food products**

**Where do you get information from?**

*Family practice and experience: we use those products that were already used by my mother/mother in law.*

**Does the person who does the shopping also get the information?** *Yes, from family members.*

**Do you discuss in your household the safety of food products?**

*Yes we do. We always check expiry date of processed food items we buy, and destroy the container after consuming the product.*

**Care for safety of food**

**Are you concerned about food safety? And is your wife or husband also concerned?** *Yes, both of us are concerned.*

**Is there a difference between your or your wife's concern?** *No.*



*The nursery of tomatoes of Sharin Sultana, Bidirpur*

## ANNEX 9: Indigenous farmers

### Adivasi agriculturalists in the project area

During our field work in Rajshahi district, we came across two ethnic groups who are basically agriculturalists or farmers, only sometimes occupied with other work due to lack of resources. Over the centuries they lost their access to much of their land. Some of them still farm as *bargadars* (sharecroppers). In both ethnic groups, men are the basic tillers of the land who plough and prepare the fields, while women do all the other work, often on their own, and sometimes together with their menfolk.

These two ethnic groups are the Oraon and the Santhal.

#### Oraon

In one of the farmers' group which had just been organized a day before we met them, 8 Oraon women had been included. They could not yet say much about being a member, but they told us about their agricultural work: they do all the agricultural work, apart from land-preparation, which is the work of men. In the book 'Adivasis of Bangladesh', 2011,



edited by Philip Gain, we find the following information about the Oraon:

According to a folk legend, a boy and a girl were born from an ascetic, holy man's blood, who told them:

*"You shall be cultivators. Clear this jungle and make agriculture your occupation. Your granary will be full of grains. And when people of different castes approach you for alms, give a handful of grains to every supplicant."*

The Oraons are a patriarchal society. Sons inherit property, and only if they have no brother will the daughter inherit it. So, very few women own land. There is no custom of dowry or bride-price among the Oraons. An Oraon man or woman is completely governed by his or her community, which is largely co-operative and democratic, but hierarchical. The community is overall peaceful, and its people have a strong sense of dignity and connection to their values, and to honesty, hard work, punctuality and responsibility.

Land is the most important resource of the Oraons, and presently about 30% of them own land. Earlier that was much more, but many of them have lost the land by betrayal of people of neighbouring communities. Most Oraons are farmers, either cultivating their own land or sharecroppers, or working as day labourers. Only when there is no work in agriculture, do they look for other work, such as in construction.

Most Oraons cannot afford to send their children to school once they are 10 years or older. The children are usually enrolled in missionary schools, if such schools are available.

(Uttam Kumar Das, Debendranath Oraon, in 'Adivasis of Bangladesh', Philip Gain ed, 2011, pp 226-233).

## Santhal

During our field work we also spoke with a group of Santhal labourers, where the men and women worked together. They are not the members of a farmers' group, even though some are owning land and cultivating tomatoes. Also from the book: 'Adivasis of Bangladesh', 2011, edited by Philip Gain, we found the following information about them:

Like the Oraons, the Santhals are also an agricultural ethnic group. The British employed them for clearing forests and for the Indigo production. That is how they came to settle in the Barind tract, including Rajshahi,

in large numbers between 1880 and 1920, playing a vital role in the extension of agriculture in the area. Because of the Zamindari system, they lost ownership of land and had to



cultivate on the basis of sharecropping. Their contribution to the Bangladeshi Independence War in 1971 was enormous and of crucial importance.

The Santhals have nuclear families, with the man as head. If he dies, the woman is the head of the household till her eldest son is grown up. Marriage is between two villages, not just between two families. Santhal don't practice dowry, but a small bride price is paid in most cases. The religion is similar to Hinduism, but there is no caste system. Nowadays 50% of Santhals are Christians. Their main source of income is agriculture. Husband and wife often work together, transplanting seedlings, breaking earth clods, reaping and harvesting paddy. Women work as planters, and both genders help in threshing. However, only men plough the fields as this work is considered a social taboo for women. Due to poverty, the Santhals tend to work for very low wages for tasks that require heavy manual labour.

This tribal community migrates often due to a sense of insecurity. They have faced riots, wars, cultural instability, poverty, anxiety, cultural insecurity, etc., in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, they are not resentful, and never expect to get anything from non-Santhals. They are always prepared for any onslaught. They never beg for shelter in Muslim or Hindu villages. The element of freedom in their culture is praiseworthy (Ali, Ahsan. 'Adivasis of Bangladesh', Philip Gain ed, 2011, pp 210- 225).

## ANNEX 10: Land units calculations

3 bigha = 1 acre (bigha is not the same everywhere in Bangladesh)

1 acre = 0,4 hectare (ha) = 4047 m<sup>2</sup> (acres are not the same in USA and UK)

1 ha=2,47105 acres = 10000 m<sup>2</sup>

For Practical purposes:

2,5 acres = 1 ha

7,5 bigha = 1 ha

1 bigha = 20 katha

1 katha = 67m<sup>2</sup>

1 decimal = 0,01 acre = 40 m<sup>2</sup>

1 bigha = 1349 m<sup>2</sup>

	bigha	decimal	acre	Hectare ha	katha	square meter m <sup>2</sup>
1 bigha =	1	33	0,33	0,13	20	1349
1 decimal =	0,033	1	0,01	0,004	0,66	40
1 acre =	3	100	1	0,4046	60	4047
1 Hectare ha =	7,5	2500	2,47	1	150	10000
1 katha =	0,05	1,7	0,017	0,0067	1	67
1 Square meter m <sup>2</sup> =	0,00075	0,025	0,00025	0,0001	0,015	1