

**A Study on the present status of IAS-II
Comparison group**

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Executive Summary

The Research and Evaluation Division (RED) of BRAC has over the years been making efforts to evaluate the impact of Rural Development Programme (RDP) on its members through impact assessment studies (IASs). RED has already conducted two such evaluations : IAS-I and IAS-II. A third IAS is now underway. The panel comparison group, for IAS , had been formed during the first IAS to measure the effective impact of RDP interventions making comparison between this group and RDP beneficiaries group. The present report attempts to provide a few necessary inputs to IAS-III by examining the present status of the comparison group that would be required for the study.

Although selection of comparison household group is of vital necessity for impact assessment studies, it has been found that impact studies have been perennially plagued by the lack of availability of appropriate non-beneficiaries. This is because NGO penetration has been pervasive. The reasons for this are the phenomenal growth of micro credit and proliferation of NGOs.

The objective of the study was to examine the present status of IAS-II comparison group and find out whether household members were still living in their villages and whether they were involved with any GO/NGO programmes as well as to look into the reasons for joining with these programmes.

The present report was based on a survey that was conducted on 239 comparison households spread in 10 upazilas and 10 districts. It showed that 95% (228) were still living in their respective villages which meant that migration was quite low. The survey also revealed the extent of NGO membership status of the comparison households and found that 55% households were involved in various GO/NGO development programmes since 1996. Almost half of the households out of 55 % were involved with Grameen Bank, 15% joined BRAC followed by Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB), Proshika, ASA and several other smaller NGOs. Data on length of involvement of the members involved in different GO/NGO programmes have pointed out certain defects in the selection of comparison group for IAS-II by showing that 21% of the members were already involved in GO/NGO programmes when the IAS started. This weakness limited the impact assessment to some extent. It was found that 41% households did not join GO/NGO programmes. However, 29% out of these were earlier associated with GO/NGO programmes. Reasons that were cited by households who never joined GO/NGO programmes include worry and tension of these households fearing failure in repaying loan installments and lack of scope for investment. Only 4% households numbering ten were not found owing to migration to other villages or cities in search of work or other reasons to survive and 1% households heads died during the period.

The Present Status of the IAS-II Comparison Group

Introduction

BRAC's efforts in reducing poverty primarily through its core programme, Rural Development Programme (RDP), have been assessed by two impact assessment studies (IAS) conducted by the Research and Evaluation Division (RED) of BRAC. The first Impact Assessment Study (IAS-I) was conducted in 1993-94 to assess the impact of RDP and measure the success of the rural development program in raising the socio-economic status of participants as well as to identify the shortcomings of the programme and its sustainability. The broad objectives of the IAS-II were more or less the same as its predecessor. An additional dimension which had been added was its focus on the poverty reduction impact of the programme by measuring poverty and its correlates. The impact of the programme on seasonal economic vulnerability and coping of participants had been measured. In keeping with the objectives of IAS-I as well as IAS-II the objectives of IAS-III are going to determine the impact of RDP on the socio-economic well-being of participants and sustainability of VO development and institution building. The study also aims at measuring the impact of RDP on poverty level changes in socio-economic indicators including related environmental aspects.

In general, impact studies on beneficiaries of development programmes derive conclusions by making a comparative study between two sets of data : one set of data contains information about beneficiaries who are subject to programme interventions and the other set containing information on non-beneficiaries, i.e. the control. Here panel data may be explored as typically thought of as information obtained by interviewing a given sample of respondents - a panel - at two or more points in time. Information from an experiment in which subjects are repeatedly observed may be similarly regarded as panel data. The principal difference between time series and panel data is that observations are usually taken on a single entity (individual, country, corporation and such) at a relatively large number of time points, while in the latter the observations are on many entities but at relatively few times – almost always four or less. In time series analysis, the time point is the unit of analysis (Ostrom, 1978) while for panel analysis it is the individual.

Progress of non-beneficiary households over time shows what would have been the progress of the beneficiary households without programme intervention, which in other words mean making the two sets of data comparable. However, in making such comparisons, impact studies have severely faced the

difficulties in finding and retaining appropriate non-beneficiaries at different points of time especially in our country as micro credit is pervasive. This is particularly true for Bangladesh, where growth of micro credit has been very fast. The reasons for this have been, on the one hand, a phenomenal growth of micro credit and on the other, a tremendous increase in the number of NGOs. Because of these factors, it would be difficult to find households that have not been influenced directly or indirectly by GO/NGO programme interventions. It is all the more difficult to find such a control group for collection of panel data over a long period.

In IAS-I 2250 households of which 1500 were BRAC RDP household members and 750 were non-BRAC households were surveyed and in IAS-II the total sample population household survey consisted of 1700 households with 1250 BRAC participants and 250 comparison households selected at random and another 200 'Success' households purposively selected. Twenty five area offices were selected at random, with 10 panel AOs from IAS-I and fifteen non-panel AOs. In the case of comparison group, the IAS-II selected five panel households from each of the five non-BRAC villages under each of the ten selected AOs. These villages were located on the outskirts of the command area of each respective AO. The households selected from each AO falling in the target group household category and having not joined any NGO development activities prior to the interview were selected as comparison sample households.

In the light of these information, the present exercise seeks to investigate the status of the comparison group of IAS-II and decide whether and how far these group of households can be effectively utilized for an impact study. The investigations conducted show to what extent households in the comparison group have remained isolated from joining any GO/NGO programme. Based on this finding, IAS-III can decide whether the data is worthy of retention for use or there is a need to seek alternate options.

Study Objectives

BRAC has been working since early 1990's to evolve an impact assessment system (IAS) for its rural development program (RDP). And then in 1993-94 the IAS-I and 1996-97 the IAS-II were administered by Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC. During the IAS-I there formed a comparison group with non-BRAC members to measure the material and social well-being of RDP participants. After three years, sample selected from the study the status of comparison group was studied in 1996. Again in

1999 in preparation for IAS-III 2000-2001 this Division once again conducted a survey on the comparison group to observe the current condition of that group formed in 1993. So the broad objective of the present survey has been to briefly investigate the overall status of the comparison group of IAS-II.

The specific objectives of the study have been to :

- i) identify the comparison households
- ii) investigate the present status of the comparison households in terms of their relationship with GO/NGO programmes and
- iii) document reasons for the utilization of loan money and unwilling to join any GO/NGO programme of the households.

Methodology

The present survey was carried out on 239 IAS-II comparison household members but two hundred and fifty households were included as samples for data collection used in IAS-II. The survey mainly used a structured questionnaire. However, in-depth inquiries were also made in a number of cases. The survey questionnaire sought information on household conditions including migration, death of household members included in the list of samples since the IAS-I survey period and involvement of these household members in GO/NGO programmes.

Findings

The survey which was conducted on the panel comparison households shows that out of 239 households, 95% (228) are still living in their respective villages. Migration was found to be quite low. This shows that there has not been any large-scale migration. Only 4% percent households left their villages and settled elsewhere. One household with a lone member was found dead.

However, the NGO membership status of the comparison households has changed substantially. The present study shows that a majority of the households i.e., 55% (131) households have become involved in various GO/NGO development programmes (Table 1). Details are presented in appendix-1.

Table 1 : Distribution of Comparison Households According to their Involvement in GO/NGO Programmes in

Different Areas

Area	NGO involvement (%)	No NGO involvement (%)
Magura	15 (62.5)	9 (37.5)
Dinajpur	15 (79)	4 (21)
Dhanaidah	13 (57)	10 (43)
Motlab-2	06 (25)	18 (75)
Nalitabari/Nonni	13 (57)	10 (43)
Dapunia	07 (35)	13 (65)
Katiadi	19 (79)	5 (21)
Amdia	15 (63)	9 (37)
Kawalipara	18 (75)	6 (25)
Chapainawabgonj	10 (43)	13 (57)
Total	131 (55%)	97 (41%)

Among those who have changed their status 45% (59) households were involved with Grameen bank and 15% (20) households with BRAC for a long time. The following table shows the percentage of comparison household members involved in different GO/NGO programmes (details in appendix-2).

Table-2: Percentage of Comparison group household members involved in different GO/NGO Programmes

Name of NGOs	Percentage
BRAC	15%
Grameen Bank	45%
Proshika	9%
ASA	5%
BRDB	10%
DSW	4%
Others	14%

The panel Comparison group was selected in 1993-94 as non-NGO membership households . But most of the households have been involved with the various development program since the commencement of IAS-II and even before. The following table will give details.

Table 3 : Length of Membership of Households Involved in Different GO/NGO Programmes

Name of Area	Duration of membership (Years)				Total
	(0-4)	(5-8)	(9-12)	(13 -16)	
Magura	4	8	3	0	15
Dinajpur	8	6	1	0	15
Dhanaidah	7	5	1	0	13
Motlab-2	5	1	0	0	06
Nalitabari/Nonni	10	2	0	1	13
Dapunia	4	2	1	0	07
Katiadi	10	9	0	0	19
Amdia	4	2	3	6	15
Kawalipara	1	6	6	5	18
Chapainawabgonj	7	2	1	0	10
Total =	60	43	16	12	N=131
	46%	33%	12%	9%	

Table-3 depicts length of membership of households involved in different GO/NGO programmes. These households have been grouped into five categories based on their length of membership (in years) in these programmes. Out of a total of 131 households, length of involvement of 46% households vary between (0-4) years; 33% households have membership between (5-8) years and 12% households have membership between (9-12) years. Length of membership of 9% households vary between (13-16) years and above.

Documentation of the length of membership of households involved in different GO/NGO programmes have profound implications for selection of comparison group. As shown above 46% households became involved in the GO/NGO programmes with membership length varying between zero to four years. This implies that these comparison households got involved in the GO/NGO programmes after selection of the comparison group for IAS-II. Thus this group has to be dropped from the comparison group that would be required for IAS-III.

However, data on other categories of membership length show defects in selecting the comparison group for IAS-II. The table shows that 33% households fall in the (5-8) years membership category. These households must have joined these GO/NGO programmes between 1992 to 1995 Selection of

comparison group households for IAS-II was done in 1996. If not a majority, at least a significant number of households in this category must have joined the GO/NGO programmes prior to the commencement of IAS-II. The table also shows that 54% households have membership in NGOs between (5-16) years and above. It is apparent that there have been some flaws in selecting the comparison group.

Despite this defect there might be some positive implications. Major findings of IAS-II show that the impact of RDP on the beneficiaries was positive on the whole and the reference point being the distinction between BRAC members and comparison households. The comparison households were thought to be non-involved with GO/NGO programmes. Findings of the present report mentioned above show that a significant portion of the comparison households were involved with GO/NGO programmes. However, involvement of a significant portion of the comparison households with GO/NGO programmes do not prove the findings of IAS-II to be wrong. In fact the findings of the present report reinforces the IAS findings. It shows that despite many comparison households being associated with GO/NGO programmes, improvement in the lives of BRAC members was far greater than the non BRAC members. The present report suggests that if those comparison households who were associated with GO/NGO programmes did not join then the difference would have been much greater. It implies that IAS-II to a certain extent under-reported the impact of RDP.

Utilization of loan by GO/NGO involved comparison group households

Among the comparison households those who were involved with GO/NGO programmes accessed loan for use in productive purposes. They utilized their loans for purposes such as for purchase of cow or goat, to carry out small businesses, buying *grameen paribahan* and fish cultivation. On the other hand the remaining households spent their loan money for non-productive purposes such as land purchase, for family consumption during the lean season, getting sisters married and others also including here. Among the different types of use of loan money, 18% households used it for conducting small business, 9% for buying *grameen paribahan* and 10% for buying cows and other purposes. In the case of non productive uses of loan money one percent bought a little amount of land, 8% households consumed their money because of illness of household earner or due to other problems faced by the family. Fourteen percent households utilized money for leasing land for cultivation, 15% households repaired

their houses and there were also other uses of various kinds. Regarding these the table below shows details.

Table-4 : Households members' utilization of loan

Productive purpose		Percentage
1	Purchasing cow	10 (13)
2	Carry out business	18 (23)
3	Buying grameen paribahan	9 (12)
4	Land lease in	14 (18)
5	Land mortgage in	5 (7)
6	Fish cultivation	1 (1)
6	Land purchase	1 (2)
7	Consumption	8 (11)
8	Getting sister's married	6 (8)
9	Housing	15 (19)
10	Others	13 (17)

The investigations also contain information about rest of the comparison households. 41% (97) households so far did not join any GO/NGO programme. However, 29% (28) out of 97 households were previously involved with GO/NGO programmes shown in the following table. Four percent households borrowed from money-lenders and another 4% from Krishi Bank. And sixty three households never got involved in any development programme since IAS-I (Details in appendix 3).

Table 5 : Percentage of Comparison group households previously involved in different GO/NGO Programmes

Name of NGOs	Percentage
BRAC	25%
Grameen Bank	32%
BRDB	18%
ASA	14%
Others	11%

The table presented above was found that twenty nine percent households heads were previously involved with various GO/NGO programmes for a long time like the NGO membership households but in present these households left the programme intervention . And this will be more clear from the following table -5

Table-6: Length of membership of previously GO/NGO involved household and their percentage

Duration of membership (Years)	Percentage
(0-2)	29 (8)
(3-5)	53 (15)
(6-8)	18 (5)

n=28

The table presented above described households previously involved in GO/NGO divided into three categories according to their length of membership. Out of 28 households 29% were members for 0-2 years; 53% households between 3-5 years and 18% were for 6-8 years.

So it is clear that out of 28 households 29% got involved in GO/NGO programmes during conducting IAS-II although this group was as comparison group. The rest of 53% and 18% households took the economic advantages during IAS-I or before. So there might raise question about the control group used over time in Impact Assessment Study.

Reasons for reluctance to join GO/NGO programmes

The present survey has found that there are some hard core poor and also some households in the comparison households group who did not join any GO/NGO programme and are still reluctant to get involved. Reasons for their reluctance have been documented in the survey. 43% households felt tension in repaying weekly installment, 23% households said that there was no scope for investing loan money, 13% respondents said that they did not need loan and 6% admitted that their husbands did not like their wives going out of their houses. About 11% respondents cited various reasons. These include the following : inadequacy of loan money, interest rates charged by different GO/NGO programmes

being high and unnecessary delay in getting loans from NGOs. One male respondent pointed out that his income from agricultural activities was not enough to cover repayment of NGO loan installmen (table-7).

Table-7: Percentage of households not joining the NGO/GO

Reason for not joining in NGO	Percentage
1. Don't need	13 (11)
2. Problem/tension in repaying	43 (35)
3. No scope for investment	23 (19)
4. Husband's unwillingness	6 (5)
5. Illness of household head	4 (3)
6. Others	11 (9)

(n= 82)

Conclusion

As discussed earlier, the purpose of the present survey was to look into the status of the comparison households and see if there has been any significant change. Findings pointed to significant changes that have taken place within the comparison households. More than 50% of the GO/NGO-free households in the course of about four years since 1996-97 have joined GO/NGO programmes and a significant number of them have taken loans and other services due to its large scale expansion . It will be difficult to find villages where GO/NGO programmes have not penetrated. It is therefore time that research on impact studies need to think more about finding appropriate control group or seek other avenues.

The above findings by showing significant changes in the characteristics of the comparison households have reduced the utility of its retaining for further studies. This implies that with the progress of time it will be really difficult to retain these comparison group to compare with the other group used in IAS-I and IAS-II and work with it for IAS - III.

The present report also briefly discussed an interesting area that could be investigated for future studies. A significant number of comparison households refrained from participating in GO/NGO programmes. They have mentioned various reasons for their reluctance to join these programmes. These have implications for future activities of NGOs in terms of programme design and coverage.

Appendix-1

Present status of IAS-II Comparison group

Area name	Village name	Union	In village	NGO Involvement		No NGO involvement		Out of Village
				No	Length of membership(av)	No	Previously involvement	
Magura	1.Ishakhada	Hajipur	5	4	5	1	0	0
	2.Mirjapur	Do	5	4	6	1	1	0
	3.K. Kuchindi	Kuchindi	5	0	0	5	0	0
	4.Saidubi	Do	5	5	4	0	0	0
	5.Ulinagar	Do	4	2	5	2	0	0
Kawlipara	1.Kalampur	Sutipara	5	3	8	2	1	0
	2.Sutipara	Do	5	4	6	1	1	0
	3.Goaldi	Sombag	5	4	11	1	0	0
	4.Kashipur	Do	4	3	12	1	0	0
	5.Fukutia	Do	5	4	12	1	0	0
Amdia	1.Kurial	Bholab	4	4	13	0	0	0
	2.Bholab	Do	5	4	14	1	1	0
	3.Nagardi	Do	5	4	4	1	1	0
	4.Damerbhawla	Mohisasura	5	1	1	4	2	0
	5.Rajab	Ghorashal	5	2	6	3	0	0
Katiadi	1.Betal	Moshua	5	4	5	1	1	0
	2.Ramdi	Do	5	4	4	1	1	0
	3.Charipara	Asmita	5	5	3	0	0	0
	4.Asmita	Do	5	4	3	1	1	0
	5.Bhitadia	Do	5	2	3	2	2	0
Dapunia	1.Lkhnipur	Dewkhola	5	1	5	4	3	0
	2.Sonakhali	Danikhola	5	0	0	4	2	1
	3.Bhatipara	Dewkhola	4	1	2	3	1	0
	4.Chamarbazail	Balian	4	3	6	0	0	1
	5.Teligram	Do	5	2	2	2	2	1
Nalitabari	1.Jogania	Jogania	5	2	3	3	2	0
	2.Gollarpar	Balughata	4	2	1	2	1	1
	3.Balughata	Kalaspur	5	4	1	1	0	0
	4.Dasgara	Rupnaryan	5	3	1	2	1	0
	5.Banpara	Nalitabari	4	2	11	2	2	0
Matlab-2	1.Gazra	Kalakanda	5	4	2	1	0	0
	2.Sailamdo	Changarchar	5	0	0	5	0	0
	3.W.Lalpur	Shatnol	5	2	2	3	0	0
	4.N.Sikirchar	Changarchar	5	0	0	4	0	1
	5.Gipur	Do	5	0	0	5	0	0

Continued.

Dinajpur	1.Bolaipur	Shankarpur	5	3	5	0	0	2
	2.E.Mohonpur	Do	5	4	4	0	0	1
	3.Paskur	Do	4	3	4	1	1	0
	4.Mohespur	Do	4	4	7	0	0	0
	5.Shalki	Do	5	1	1	3	0	1
Dhanaidah	1.Nasirampur	Maspara	5	2	1	3	0	0
	2.Pukurparchil.	Kadamchilan	5	1	6	4	1	0
	3.Dangapara	Duari	4	3	4	0	0	1
	4.Jamaidhigha	Nagar	5	2	7	3	0	0
	5.Belgachi	Kadamchilan	5	5	4	0	0	0
Chapai n.	1.Chalkpara	Chapainawab	5	0	0	5	0	0
	2.K.Gobindapur	Ranihati	5	3	4	2	0	0
	3.Ghugudima	Gobratola	5	3	2	2	0	0
	4.P.Hayathpur	Gorapakia	5	1	9	4	0	0
	5.Thakurpalash	Jhilin	4	3	2	0	0	1
Total			239	131		97	28	11

Grand total = 239

GO/NGO involved=131 (55%)

No GO/NGO involved=97 (41%)

Migrated =10 and dead=1 = (5%)

Previously involved=28 (29% out of 97)

Again households taken loan from money lender=3 (4% out of 97)

Pertinent with krishi bank=3 (4% out of 97)

Appendix-2

Area wise distribution of GO/NGO involvement of the comparison group

Name of Area	BRAC	ASA	GB	PROSHIK A	BRDB	*Others	Multiple membership
Magura	0	1	7	0	0	7	4
Chapai	0	0	6	3	0	1	0
Kawalipara	1	0	15	2	0	0	3
Amdia	1	1	10	0	1	2	2
Katindi	5	4	5	0	2	3	3
Dapunia	2	0	1	0	4	0	2
Nlitabari/Nonni	4	0	1	4	1	3	3
Matlab-2	4	0	0	0	0	2	0
Dinajpur	2	0	8	0	0	5	0
Dhanaidah	1	0	6	0	5	1	1
Total	20	6	59	9	13	24	18
	(15%)	(5%)	(45%)	(7%)	(10%)	(18%)	(14%)

Others NGO include SRLJONI, DSW, KARITAS, PROAS, DHAMCO,
FDP, ROSA, VORDO, BOHUMUKHI, ADI, DSW.

Appendix-3

Previously involved households with GO/NGO programs of comparison group

Name of Area	BRAC	G.BANK	ASA	PROSHIKA	BRDB	SOCIAL Welfare	Total
Magura	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Kawalipara	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Amdia	0	0	2	0	2	0	4
Katiadi	1	1	0	1	1	1	5
Dapunia	2	3	1	1	1	0	8
Nalitabari	4	1	1	0	0	0	6
Dinajpur	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Dhanaidah	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	7	9	4	2	5	1	28
	(25%)	(32%)	(14%)	(7%)	(18%)	(4%)	100%

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