

**Gram Shahayak Committees:  
A Profile Study**

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A mid term survey of health and health seeking behaviour on the CFPR/TUP baseline survey sample was carried out in April-May 2004. Along with this survey, a brief profile questionnaire was developed and administered on the GSCs operating in the sampled villages. In this way, the profile of a total of 160 GSCs was collected. The district wise distribution of the surveyed and total GSCs is given below:

**Table 1: District wise distribution of surveyed GSCs and total GSCs**

District	No.(%) of total GSCs surveyed	Total GSCs in district	Surveyed GSCs as a % of total GSCs
Nilphamari	30 (19%)	70	43%
Rangpur	62 (39%)	186	33%
Kurigram	68 (42%)	151	45%
Total	160 (100%)	407	39%

According to the official outline of GSCs, each should have a membership of seven constituting of the following:

GSC Position	Number
Chair	1
Secretary	1
Cashier	1
Member	3
Advisor	1
Total	7
Villagers	3
From Palli Samaj (where available)	2
From TUP	1
PO-TUP (SD)	1
Total	7

According to our survey data, 98% of the GSCs had the required 7 members. However, 90% of the GSCs did not have any Palli Samaj membership, while 22% of the GSCs did not have any TUP membership.

We obtain the following profile of the GSCs surveyed on various dimensions.

**Table 2: Some key GSC profile variables**

<b>Variables (% of GSCs...)</b>	<b>%</b>
Having TUP in membership	78%
Having members with current LG affiliation	34%
Having members with ever LG affiliation	53%
Having member(s) with SSC or more education	89%
Having member(s) with HSC or more education	75%
Having member(s) with BA/BSc or more education	28%
Where none of the members have any other local committee participation	18%
Reporting to have had discussion on helping other poor people in the village	75%
Reporting to have helped other poor people in the village	43%
Reporting to have mobilized resources from rich people in the village	63%
Reporting to have mobilized resources from jokat/fitra	23%
Reporting to have mobilized resources during harvest time	30%
Reporting to have mobilized resources from local haat/bazars	27%
Reporting to have mobilized resources during Eid	25%
Reporting to have mobilized resources from GoB/NGOs	11%
Reporting to have mobilized resources from city elite	24%
Reporting to have mobilized resources from committee members	70%

The general profile of the GSCs that emerge may be summarized in the following manner.

- The GSCs have been formed with people having quite dense social networks. Over half of the GSCs had members having experiences of union parishad responsibilities either as Chairman or Ward members. Only 18% of the GSCs consisted of members who did not have membership in any other local committees, such as school committee, madrasa committee, mosque committee, etc.
- The GSCs include quite educated people from the village. 89% of the GSCs had one or more members with SSC or higher levels of education, while three quarter of the GSCs had one or more members with HSC or higher level of education. On average, each GSC had amongst its members, a total of over 40 years of education.
- The GSCs are not only working towards helping the programme selected ultra poor, but many are already discussing and some already have taken actions to help other poor people in their villages. Three quarter of the GSCs reported that they have had discussion in their meetings on helping other poor people in the village not covered by the TUP programme while over 40% of the GSCs reported that they have helped them.

Some frequently reported ways in which the general poor in the villages have been helped by GSCs include, helping with family planning advice, health awareness and education (34% of the responses), resolving conflict (24% of the responses), accessing government and NGO benefits (16% of the responses).

- The GSCs are mobilizing resources from a diverse range of sources. On average, a GSC reported to have mobilized a range of resources from over 7 sources. The most frequently reported sources include mobilizing from the GSC members themselves (70%), other well-off people of the village (63%), seasonal sources, such as harvest period (30%), religious festivals (25%), local hat/bazaars (27%), and from well-off people of the village who live in the city (24%).

The average age of the GSC members is just over 40 years and the average years of education of GSC members is about 7 years. The primary occupational profile of GSC members we obtain is as follows suggesting that the GSCs have drawn its membership predominantly from agriculture based occupation and high-end non-farm professional occupations, such as business and salaried jobs, which is consistent with the educational profile we obtain of the GSC membership.

Occupation	%
Agriculture	44%
Business	20%
Salaried job	15%
TUP asset rearing	12%
Local professionals	4%
Labourer	3%
Student	2%

We saw above that GSCs mobilize resources from a wider range of sources including own contribution by GSC members themselves. The following table provides average cumulative information (up to March 2004) on a number of variables related to the activities of the GSCs.

**Table 3: Key cumulative achievements of GSCs**

Variables per GSC	Values
Average cumulative cash mobilized (in taka)	4115
Average cumulative in kind mobilized (in taka)	2028
Average cumulative number of houses built/repared	5
Average cumulative number of latrines installed	4
Average cumulative number of tubewells installed	2
Average cumulative per capita expenditure on treatment of TUP members (in taka)	219

### Differences across districts

The following table provides district wise information along with statistical significance of difference among districts of the variables for which we reported aggregated figures above.

The percentage of GSCs with member(s) having 'ever local government participation' is significantly lower among Rangpur GSCs. However, Rangpur GSCs membership on average appears to be more educated than that of GSCs of other districts. Though significantly

higher proportion of Kurigram GSCs reported to have discussed the issue of helping other poor people in their respective villages, the difference in terms of actual action is not significantly different across the districts.

**Table 4: Some key GSC profile variables disaggregated by districts**

Variables (% of GSCs...)	Kurigram (1)	Nilphamari (2)	Rangpur (3)	Sig. of F stats
Having TUP in membership	79%	87%	73%	NS
Having members with current LG affiliation	14%	17%	9%	NS
Having members with ever LG affiliation	39%	47%	22%	**
Having member(s) with SSC or more education	82%	90%	96%	**
Having member(s) with HSC or more education	61%	80%	86%	***
Having member(s) with BA/BSc or more education	47%	53%	63%	NS
Where none of the members have any other local committee participation	23%	23%	10%	NS
Reporting to have had discussion on helping other poor people in the village	85%	68%	68%	**
Reporting to have helped other poor people in the village	49%	39%	38%	NS
Reporting to have mobilized resources from rich people in the village	79%	79%	44%	***
Reporting to have mobilized resources from jakat/fitra	23%	43%	16%	**
Reporting to have mobilized resources during harvest time	31%	50%	22%	**
Reporting to have mobilized resources from local haal/bazars	33%	36%	18%	*
Reporting to have mobilized resources during Eid	25%	43%	18%	**
Reporting to have mobilized resources from GoB/NGOs	16%	7%	7%	NS
Reporting to have mobilized resources from city elite	34%	39%	9%	***
Reporting to have mobilized resources from committee members	61%	60%	82%	**

We observe a number of differences among the GSCs across districts in terms of their resource mobilization strategies. Rangpur GSCs rely significantly more on internal mobilization from its own members, while Nilphamari GSCs have mobilized resources from a wide range of sources relative to GSCs of other districts—for instance, 43% of the Nilphamari GSCs reported resource mobilization from jakat/fitra while the corresponding figure for Rangpur and Kurigram GSCs is 16% and 23% respectively. Similarly, Nilphamari GSCs were much more likely to be reporting mobilizing resources during harvest time compared to GSCs of other districts.

The following table repeats the GSC activities table above disaggregated by districts. Cumulative cash mobilization per GSC for the Nilphamari GSCs is somewhat higher than it is for the GSCs of other districts. This result corresponds well with the finding above that Nilphamari GSCs have mobilized resources from a wide range of sources relative to GSCs

of other districts. Nilphamari GSCs also appear to be more active in terms of installation of latrines and tubewells.

**Table 5: Key cumulative achievements of GSCs disaggregated by districts**

Variables (% of GSCs...)	Kurigram (1)	Nilphamari (2)	Rangpur (3)	Sig. of F stats
Having TUP in membership	79%	87%	73%	NS
Having members with current LG affiliation	14%	17%	9%	NS
Having members with ever LG affiliation	39%	47%	22%	**
Having member(s) with SSC or more education	82%	90%	96%	**
Having member(s) with HSC or more education	61%	80%	86%	***
Having member(s) with BA/BSc or more education	47%	53%	63%	NS
Where none of the members have any other local committee participation	23%	23%	10%	NS
Reporting to have had discussion on helping other poor people in the village	85%	68%	68%	**
Reporting to have helped other poor people in the village	49%	39%	38%	NS
Reporting to have mobilized resources from rich people in the village	79%	79%	44%	***
Reporting to have mobilized resources from jakat/fitra	23%	43%	16%	**
Reporting to have mobilized resources during harvest time	31%	50%	22%	**
Reporting to have mobilized resources from local haat/bazars	33%	36%	18%	*
Reporting to have mobilized resources during Eid	25%	43%	18%	**
Reporting to have mobilized resources from GoB/NGOs	16%	7%	7%	NS
Reporting to have mobilized resources from city elite	34%	39%	9%	***
Reporting to have mobilized resources from committee members	61%	60%	82%	**

How does the profile of the different positions of GSCs vary with each other? The Table above explores this question through a number of variables. The chairpersons of the GSCs tend to be older, more educated, and better off reflected by their occupations. They are also more likely to be having experience of holding local government positions and more involved with various other local committees.

#### Differences across GSC memberships

Variables	General			Difference
	Chair (1)	Other office bearers (2)	members (3)	
Age (years)	49	40	39	[1,2] [1,3]
Education (years)	8.7	8.6	4.7	[1,3] [2,3]
Agriculture	47%	39%	36%	[1,3]
Professional job	22%	26%	13%	[1,3] [2,3]
Business	23%	26%	16%	[2,3]
Ever LG involvement	27%	13%	10%	[1,2] [1,3]
Current LG involvement	10%	9%	7%	-
Past LG involvement	17%	4%	3%	[1,2] [1,3]
Local committee involvement	69%	51%	26%	[1,2] [1,3] [2,3]



## Determinants of resource mobilization

What are determinants of levels of resource mobilized by GSCs? One would expect a range of variables that would affect this outcome. To address this question, we carry out separate OLS regression analysis on two types of resources mobilized—cumulative cash and cash value of in-kind resource.

Table 6: OLS regression estimates of dependent variable, 'cumulative cash mobilized'

Variable	Beta	t-stats	Sig
<b>Resource mobilization strategy</b>			
Most important source 'rich people in area' (1=yes, 0=no)	0.23	2.48	***
Most important source 'jakat/fitra' (1=yes, 0=no)	-0.05	-0.83	
Most important source 'harvest' (1=yes, 0=no)	0.09	1.19	
Most important source 'hat/bazar' (1=yes, 0=no)	0.12	1.69	*
Most important source 'GSC' (=yes, 0=no)	0.03	0.28	
Total number of sources reported	0.20	2.24	**
<b>Socio-economic profile</b>			
Proportion of members having business and salaried occupations	-0.07	-1.09	
Proportion of members having degree or higher level of education	0.19	0.19	
<b>Social capital</b>			
Proportion of members having ever UP membership	-0.08	-1.16	
Proportion of members having other local committee membership	-0.03	-0.40	
Whether Palli Samaj member in GSC (1=yes, 0=no)	0.14	2.15	**
Whether GSC helped other poor in the village (1=yes, 0=no)	0.06	0.91	
<b>Others</b>			
Total number of TUP in village	0.30	4.28	***
Cash value of cumultive in-kind resource mibilized	0.21	2.88	***
Age of GSC in months	0.07	0.98	
<b>Adjusted R squared=0.39</b>			

There are a number of variables that affect the level of GSC's resource mobilization. In terms of resource mobilization strategy, GSCs that reported mobilizing from rich people in their village as the most important source have significantly higher levels of cash mobilized than those who did not use this as the most important source. GSCs reporting mobilizing from hat/bazaars as the most important source also have higher levels of cash mobilized. In general, the greater the number of sources that the GSCs reported to be using to mobilize funds, the higher the level of cash mobilization. In this sense, it is not so much the sources used but more the diversity of the sources that seem to matter.

The socio-economic variables of GSC memberships do not appear to be important in explaining the level of cash resources it has been able to mobilize. Though not statistically significant, interestingly, the proportion of GSC members reporting occupations that require more external orientations, such as business and salaried jobs, impacts negatively on cash resources mobilized. This could be because members with such externally oriented

occupations need to spend time frequently outside the village and thereby not that available to attend to the activities of the GSCs adequately.

The only significant social capital/network variable is whether the GSC has a palli samaj member—those that do are significantly more successful in mobilizing cash resources. This is a finding that has important implications for future strategy of GSCs, not least because only 10% of the GSCs surveyed had palli samaj members in them. Though not significant, the other two variables in this theme, namely, proportion of members in GSC having ever UP membership and proportion of members in GSC having other local committee membership, both have negative association with the outcome variable. This also is important for the programme, as we find above that those having ever UP membership and local committee participation are more likely to hold more important GSC positions.

Interestingly, the age of the GSC does not seem to matter. This could however be simply because most of the GSCs in our sample have been formed around the same time implying very little variation among GSCs in this variable. There appears to be a strong relationship between cash and in kind resource mobilization—GSCs that have been more successful in mobilizing one also appears to be more successful in the other. Interestingly, we observe a positive density effect on the outcome variable in the sense that the total number of TUP members in the village positively impacts on the amount of cash mobilized by the GSC. This again is relevant for the programme to consider in their future expansion strategy of the programme.

**Table 7: OLS regression estimates of dependent variable, 'cumulative cash value of in-kind resource mobilized'**

Variable	Beta	t-stats	Sig
<b>Resource mobilization strategy</b>			
Most important source 'rich people in area' (1=yes, 0=no)	-0.15	-1.39	
Most important source 'jaka/fitra' (1=yes, 0=no)	0.07	0.95	
Most important source 'harvest' (1=yes, 0=no)	0.03	0.41	
Most important source 'ha/bazar' (1=yes, 0=no)	-0.10	-1.24	
Most important source 'GSC' (=yes, 0=no)	-0.06	-0.59	
Total number of sources reported	0.31	3.08	***
<b>Socio-economic profile</b>			
Proportion of members having business and salaried occupations	0.11	1.38	
Proportion of members having degree or higher level of education	0.03	0.35	
<b>Social capital</b>			
Proportion of members having ever UP membership	-0.01	-0.17	
Proportion of members having other local committee membership	0.07	0.87	
Whether Palli Samaj member in GSC (1=yes, 0=no)	-0.10	-1.30	
Whether GSC helped other poor in the village (1=yes, 0=no)	0.10	1.28	
<b>Others</b>			
Total number of TUP in village	0.00	-0.05	
Cash value of cumulative cash mobilized	0.27	2.91	***
Age of GSC in months	-0.09	-1.16	
<b>Adjusted R squared=0.22</b>			



The estimation model we used to examine the determinants of cash mobilization performance of GSCs does not perform very well when it is used to determine the variables affecting in kind resource mobilization. The adjusted R squared is much lower (0.39 against 0.22) and the number of variables that turn out to be important is far fewer. The only two variables that appear to be significant are the total number of sources used by the GSC to mobilize resources, and the variable reflecting the interdependence of cash and in kind resource mobilization. This implies that despite this interdependence, the variables that explain the performance of the GSC's cash resources mobilization are different from those that explain its success in mobilizing in-kind resources. This needs to be further studied.

### Determinants of GSC spreading its activities and concern

Another interesting trend we find from our survey data is that some GSCs are already discussing and taking concrete steps to extend their support beyond the TUP members in their village. What are the determinants of such action? For this, we carry out a binary logistic regression analysis where the dependent variable is 1 if the GSC reported taking actions to help other poor people in their village and 0 otherwise.

**Table 9: Logistic regression estimates**

Variable	Wald	Sig
Total resources mobilized by GSC	8.73	***
Proportion of members having degree or higher level of education	4.09	**
Proportion of members having ever UP membership	0.19	
Proportion of members having other local committee membership	0.29	
Whether Pall Samaj member in GSC (1=yes, 0=no)	0.65	
Proportion of members having business and salaried occupations	0.34	
Age of GSC in months	1.20	
Total TUP in village	0.27	
Whether TUP in GSC (1=yes, 0=no)	3.88	**
% predicted correctly	67.10	

Total cumulative resource mobilized by the GSC is an important determinant of whether the GSC is expanding its support mandate or not. This is easy to understand--- GSCs that are more successful in mobilizing resources have more resources at their disposal to help a wider group than those that have lower levels of resources. However, the causality can work both ways--- GSCs that discuss and take actions to expand their support base may also be more likely to be successful in mobilizing resources. GSCs having a greater proportion of its members with high levels of education are also more likely to provide support to a wider poor community. Most interestingly, however, is the effect of having TUP member(s) in GSC as members---GSCs that have such membership composition are also more likely to expand their support base than those that do not. According to our survey data, 22% of the GSCs did not have TUP member(s). As one of the central pillars of future strategy on GSCs is to develop these as village level poverty alleviation committees, this affect needs to be better understood.