

Report  
On  
Sulla Integrated Programme

Jan. 1985 to Dec. 1985

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## 1. INTRODUCTION:

BRAC started work in Sulla, of Greater Sylhet District, with the refugees returning from India after the Liberation War. The original work was establishment of a relief and rehabilitation organization in February 1972. Later BRAC became clear that relief and rehabilitation that supported the beneficiaries was not helpful for total development. From this premise BRAC started its 2nd Phase in the Sulla Project. During the 2nd Phase, from November 1972 to December 1975, integrated rural development activities consisting of a number of sectoral programmes such as agriculture, fisheries, functional education, co-operatives, community centre development, health care, family planning, and vocational and human development training activities were initiated and implemented.

After evaluation, BRAC discovered that the activities in the 2nd phase had provided little benefit to the landless who were the majority of the community.

Lessons from the 2nd Phase prompted BRAC to become more realistic and responsive to the actual development needs and problems of the poorest people. In its third phase of operation BRAC changed its approach from integrated community development to an approach targeted to the landless "to those who had no assets and must sell their labour daily". Identification, mobilization and organization of these people become the focus of activity.

BRAC continues to provide support and services to build the people's capacities and organizational skills to deal with their life problems. The Sulla Project has now reached a stage where landless organizations have been formed in most of the villages of the project area. The landless group members are achieving more and more self reliance. Measures have been undertaken to transfer responsibilities from BRAC to the landless organizations. A Central Landless Conference, which is a central forum of village organizations, was formed in 1980 and a Secretariat a group of people employed by the Conference, was set up for organizational work in 1982.

This report briefly covers the performance of BRAC's Sulla Project during the year 1985.

## 1. INSTITUTION BUILDING:

### 1.1 Village Organization:

The Project area comprises 7 unions of three upazila (Sulla, Derai, Baniachong) in which there are 163 villages. Organizations

of Landless men and women have been established in 85 of the 163 villages. The coverage is 21% of the total target population. The number of groups and group members are shown in the table below.

VILLAGE ORGANIZATIONS/GROUPS

| Camps       | Villages covered | V.Os |        |       | Group Members |        |       |
|-------------|------------------|------|--------|-------|---------------|--------|-------|
|             |                  | Male | Female | Total | Male          | Female | Total |
| Markuli     | 22               | 15   | 15     | 30    | 403           | 338    | 741   |
| Ghungirgaon | 24               | 22   | 16     | 38    | 465           | 463    | 919   |
| Anandapur   | 15               | 12   | 11     | 23    | 317           | 262    | 579   |
| Daudpur     | 24               | 10   | 23     | 33    | 345           | 885    | 1230  |

1.2 Central Conference and Union Forums:

The Central Conference was started in 1980 for establishing greater solidarity among the landless. The following are the objectives.

- To co-ordinate the V.Os
- To assist the V.Os to obtain government services
- To mobilize local resources
- To combat corruption through greater unity
- To establish the legal rights of landless class
- To assist groups with their problems.

The Central Conference is a regular forum occurring 8 times in a year. The participants are 4 representatives from each Union selected by Union Forums. The Union Forums are made up of representatives from each V.O. of the respective Unions. Two advisers from the BRAC advisory committee also attend the conferences.

The village organizations receive the decisions taken by the Central Conference and try to implement them.

There is a Central Landless Secretariate under the supervision and control of the Central Conference.

The Central Conference not only takes important decisions with regard to the landless, but also takes necessary steps for the implementation of decisions. It sets up committees and sub-committees, gives responsibilities to the secretaries, seeks co-operation from BRAC, etc. Under the system there is no scope for the Central Conference to dominate the village organizations.



The important activities undertaken this year were: a) appointment of three secretaries—one for general programme, one for the health programme and the third for other sectoral programmes. b) increase in number of area workers, c) loan emergency fund for emergency situations in 2 groups, d) fund generation for secretariat, e) khas land (government owned land) leaseing, f) convention, g) Bangladesh Rural Development Board loan, h) increased cooperation with the government to obtain services, i) tree plantation, j) flood relief programme (FRP), k) tube-well, l) food security programme, m) health activities.

### 1.3 Advisory Committee:

An advisory committee of leading group members was formed to advise V.Os, the Union Forums and Central Conference for appropriate effective and mature discussions and about ways of taking decisions so that these reflect the will of the landless.

The advisory committee is formed of 2 selected representatives from each union, which results in a total membership of 14. The duration of this committee will be 2 years. They sit 15 days before each meeting of the Central Conference.

This year the Advisory Committee was active in helping form important decisions of the Central Conference and also played an active role in V.O. and Union Forums.

### 1.4 Secretariat:

The Central Landless Secretariat was formed in March '83 with the following objectives.

- Communicate with groups for implementing the decisions of Central Conference.
- Maintain liaison with government and non government officials
- Arrange and manage Central Conference meeting. Advisory Committee meetings and Union Forums.
- Communicate decisions of different forums and other important information to village organizations.
- Yearly budgeting, record keeping, reporting
- Take necessary steps as per decisions of Central Conference.

A BRAC worker was deployed to the Landless Secretariat for one year (March '83 to Feb. '84). From March '84 the Central Conference appointed their own secretary. With the expansion of its functions

and volume of work the Central Conference felt the need to increase the number of workers of the secretariat, accordingly, the Central Conference appointed 2 more secretaries and 11 area workers in 1985. The eleven area workers were selected from committed cadres of the village organizations and they are part time workers.

All expenditure of Secretariat, Central Conference, Advisory Committee meetings and other forums are managed by the village organizations. A central fund is generated for these purposes with the contribution of 2 seers of paddy from each group member per year.

In 1985 the secretariat performed the following activities:

- Arranged and managed all forums
- Maintained links with government officials for lease of khas land.
- Maintained liaison with all groups for organizational purposes
- Was involved in BRAC's F.R.P. '85 Programme (land levelling, embankment and tree plantation).
- Involved in sinking 40 tube-wells for drinking water
- Supplied necessary papers and forms such as court fees, application forms to groups for khas land leasing, etc.
- Distributed HYV seeds to group members
- Undertook some business activities from their own funds. These were; drying fish, rice & fertilizer trading.
- Influenced an upazila chairman to arbitrate in favour of a village landless groups.

#### 1.5 Funds:

There are two levels of funds a) Village level and b) Central level.

1.5.1 Village level: Village level funds are shown in the table below.

| <u>Camps</u> | <u>Savings</u>    | <u>Reserve</u> | <u>General</u> | <u>Health</u>  |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Markuli      | 1,28,554/-        | -              | 4,000/-        | 934/-          |
| Ghungirgaon  | 89,567/-          | -              | -              | 1,027/-        |
| Anandapur    | 30,705/-          | -              | -              | 331/-          |
| Daudpur      | 74,622/-          | -              | -              | 986/-          |
|              | <u>3,23,448/-</u> | <u>-</u>       | <u>4,000/-</u> | <u>3,278/-</u> |
|              | =====             | =====          | =====          | =====          |

1.5.2 Central level:

| <u>Fund</u>      |            | <u>Sources</u>  |
|------------------|------------|---|
| General fund     | - 67,776/- | Individual contributions and contributions from labours'. |
| Emergency fund   | - 63,676/- | Contributions.  |
| Health fund      | - 13,318/- | Loan from general fund and profit of medicine sale.       |
| Agriculture fund | - 2,001/-  | UNICEF seeds sale   |

2. Economic Activities:

2.1 Loans from Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) and Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB):

In 1985 BRAC did not disburse any loans to any groups so as to make the village organizations less dependent on BRAC. Therefore, emphasis was given to local resource mobilization. From January - December 1985, 19 village organizations took loans from BRDB and BKB against 19 economic schemes. (Faddy cultivation - 8, paddy trading, rice husking - 10, power pump operation-1).

| <u>Camps</u> | <u>Amount of Loans</u> |
|--------------|------------------------|
| Markuli      | 1,50,000/-             |
| Ghungirgaon  | -                      |
| Anandapur    | 16,125/-               |
| Daudpur      | <u>2,00,000/-</u>      |
| Total:       | 4,11,125/-             |

2.2 By Own fund:

14 village organizations undertook 14 economic schemes from their own fund. (1 Small trading, 1 Paddy cultivation, 11 Food Security Programme and 1 Power pump).

2.3 Food Security Programme:

This year 11 V.Os undertook a food security programme to face the food crisis period (2 months) and present exploitation by the elite. The programme maintains a paddy storehouse (Golla) from equal contributions of paddy from each member. During the lean months paddy from the Golla are distributed among the members with small amount of interest which is collected at harvesting period. Statistical figures of this programme are shown below:

| <u>Camp</u> | <u>Quantity of Paddy</u> |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| Markuli     | 107 mds.                 |
| Ghungirgaon | 48 "                     |
| Anandapur   | 56 "                     |
| Daudpur     | <u>145 "</u>             |
| Total:      | 356 mds.                 |



This programme has been most useful for Sulla Project. Although there was a plan to undertake this programme in all V.Os it could not be achieved owing to early floods, which destroyed crops over flooding which destroying homesteads, livestock, etc. and hail storms.

### 3. Health Programme:

#### 3.1 Health:

To make the poor aware about preventive health care and to minimize exploitation by quacks, a health programme has been developed. For preventive health care some necessary activities were taken such as health education meetings, vegetable gardening and pure drinking water supply, etc. One member from each V.O. is trained on 10 common diseases for treatment. This member is called a Shasthya Shebok/Shebika (or S/S). A fund is generated by the V.O. through members' contributions for storage of medicines. Members buy medicines from the S/S and S/S buys medicines from the landless secretariat store at fair prices.

In 1985 the establishment of a self managed health programme was continued. Statistical data on the health programme are given below:

| Camps       | Villages covered | No. of qualified S/S | No. of S/S |          |           | Patients treated |              |
|-------------|------------------|----------------------|------------|----------|-----------|------------------|--------------|
|             |                  |                      | Male       | Female   | Total     | Fund             |              |
| Markuli     | 5                | 27                   | 4          | 2        | 6         | 583              | 934/-        |
| Ghungirgaon | 7                | 38                   | 4          | 3        | 7         | 1,287            | 1,027/-      |
| Anandapur   | 2                | 24                   | -          | 2        | 2         | 236              | 331/-        |
| Daudpur     | <u>10</u>        | <u>31</u>            | <u>4</u>   | <u>9</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>1,410</u>     | <u>986/-</u> |
|             | 24               | 120                  | 12         | 16       | 28        | 3,516            | 3,278/-      |

During 1985 it was found that most of the qualified Shasthya Sheboks (S/S) have become inactive. The causes of inactivity are: wrong selection of health cadre, lack of initiatives of S/S, organizational complexity, lack of proper follow up and supervision and and lack of awareness.

A plan is underway to strengthen the Health Programme so as to overcome the above problems. For this purpose a survey has been completed and a new training module was prepared.

A change in the health programme was made in 1983 with the opening of a central medicine store by the landless organizations under the management of the landless Secretariat. Three sub-centres

were opened this year. The Groups' health workers take medicine from these centres. With the expansion of activities a health worker has been appointed under the Secretariat for overall management of the health programme.

In 1985, 186 health education meetings on preventive and curative health activities were held with 2,710 participants, 11 Primary School forums were held with 594 students.

### 3.2 DAI Training:

Dai/(midwife) training continues and traditional practices and superstitions are slowly being replaced by safer modern methods.

| Camp        | Working Villages | Dais identified | Dais Trained | Dai Kits Distributed | No. of birth attendants delivering |             |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
|             |                  |                 |              |                      | Live birth                         | Still birth |
| Markuli     | 22               | 74              | 38           | 28                   | 271                                | 19          |
| Ghungirgaon | 24               | 95              | 25           | 16                   | 213                                | 8           |
| Anandapur   | 15               | 63              | 17           | 14                   | 160                                | 4           |
| Daudpur     | <u>24</u>        | <u>90</u>       | <u>43</u>    | <u>32</u>            | <u>190</u>                         | <u>15</u>   |
|             | 85               | 320             | 123          | 90                   | 834                                | 46          |

### 3.3 Tuberculosis Programme:

In Anandapur camp a mini laboratory has been set up for testing sputum samples. Medicines and chemicals are supplied by the government (T.B. Control Board). The table below gives the picture from January to December 1985.

| Camps       | No. of Patient's Sputum tested. | Positive cases found | Patients under treatment | Dropout  | Patient  |
|-------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------|----------|
| Markuli     | 3                               | 1                    | -                        | 1        | -        |
| Ghungirgaon | 66                              | 9                    | 6                        | 3        | 5        |
| Anandapur   | 4                               | -                    | -                        | -        | -        |
| Daudpur     | <u>17</u>                       | <u>3</u>             | <u>3</u>                 | <u>-</u> | <u>-</u> |
|             | 90                              | 13                   | 9                        | 4        | 5        |

### 3.4 Tubewell:

Forty tubewells obtained from UNICEF for preventive health care were installed this year. The installation cost and labour were provided by the groups.



4. Flood Rehabilitation Programme 1985 (F.R.F.):

4.1 Embankment:

An embankment of 15,000 feet in length was constructed in Markuli camp area which will protect 5,000 acres of land from early flood. Total amount spent was Tk.3,14,800.64, with 371 group members involved in this work.

An agreement was made with the beneficiaries that a fund of Tk.15,000/- will be raised for maintenance of the embankment. But only Tk.2,700.00 was generated this year.

4.2 Land Levelling:

Fallow lands of group members were levelled under this scheme. Total lands levelled are:

| <u>Camp</u> | <u>Land</u>   | <u>Group members involved</u> | <u>Amount spent</u> |
|-------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Daudpur     | 9.70 acres    | 320                           | 52,518.82           |
| Anandapur   | 8.07 "        | 160                           | 39,138.46           |
| Ghungirgaon | 7.07 "        | 200                           | 43,173.43           |
| Markuli     | <u>1.35 "</u> | <u>70</u>                     | <u>10,826.66</u>    |
|             | 26.19         | 750                           | Tk. 1,52,152.37     |

4.3 Energy Saving Ovens:

For demonstration of energy saving ovens a preparation scheme was undertaken under F.R.F. '85. Statistical data are given below:

| <u>Camp</u> | <u>Oven making Workers</u> | <u>Oven made and supplied</u> | <u>Amount</u>            |
|-------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Markuli     | 18                         | 502                           | 13,430/-                 |
| Ghungirgaon | 21                         | 545                           | 15,310/-                 |
| Anandapur   | 10                         | 403                           | 11,150/-                 |
| Daudpur     | 20                         | 292                           | 7,550/-                  |
|             | <u>69</u>                  | <u>1,742</u>                  | <u>475/- (Misc. Exp)</u> |
|             |                            |                               | Taka: 47,915             |

4.4 Land Raising:

Under this scheme 3 ponds were prepared for fish culture. Total amount spent was Tk.15,768.79. The number of group members involved were 40.

4.5 Plantation on Roadsides:

Landless organizations undertook tree planting on land lease's of the newly made (by BRAC) embankment at Markuli from the Union

Parishad, and the Derai-Shymarchar road at Daudpur from the Upazila Parishad. Trees were planted on both sides of the embankment and roads, 15 landless organizations will be the owners of these trees and will take care of them.

| Road/Embankment | Length   | No. of trees planted | Amount spent     | Group members involved |
|-----------------|----------|----------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Road            | 5000 ft. | 1685                 | 37,760.00        | 72                     |
| Embankment      | 9000 ft. | <u>3046</u>          | <u>68,260.00</u> | <u>69</u>              |
| Total:          |          | 4731 Tk.             | 1,06,020.00      | 141                    |
|                 |          | ====                 | =====            | =====                  |

In all the above schemes under F.R.P. '85 the group members were the labourers. These labourers contributed 10% of their wages to the Central Conference. Tk.54,921.00 was raised through their contributions. The Landless Secretariat also played an important coordinational and logistics role.

#### 5. Mini Nursery:

The soil of Bangladesh is suffering from over exploitation, especially erosion due to deforestation from the cutting of fire-woods. The Sulla Project is now encouraging tree planting and is providing education on reforestation to the village groups. There were some problems at the starting of this programme. Under Secretariat direction seeds were sowed for germination in 21,446 bags, but the germination was very poor. Only 6,300 germinated. These were distributed to the groups.

#### 6. Vegetable Gardening:

For vegetable gardening the landless secretariat distributed different varieties of winter vegetable seeds worth Tk.3,166.00.

#### 7. Internal Resource Mobilization:

Landless organizations occupied 97 acres of khasland (abandoned land owned by government) this year. Process for occupying more khas land is going on. Some groups are in conflict with local elites about the issues of khas land. (see examples below)

#### 8. Field Organization and Personnel:

The BRAC Staff working in the Sulla Project operate from a number of field "camps". Markuli camp is the main office, and sub-offices are at Daudpur, Anandapur and Ghungirgaon. Co-ordination is



maintained through regular staff meetings. There are now 12 BRAC staff members. Their job is to organize and develop the village groups, provide training opportunities and generally support the activities of the Union Committees, the Central Conference and its Secretariat.

## 9. Conclusion:

The Central Conference is held regularly in an organized way. There is an Advisory Committee to make the system strong and dynamic. The Landless Secretariat which has been formed for implementing the decisions of the Central Conference is expanding. The number of workers under the Secretariat (secretaries, area workers, health workers) are increasing according to the need. It is hoped that the functions of the Secretariat will continue to expand slowly and effectively so that the landless organizations will be able to bear their responsibilities and thus reduce their dependency on BRAC.

### 9.1 Group Solidarity and Social Action:

Group solidarity among the Sulla groups is often demonstrated during incidents of conflict. The resolution of these conflicts is the test of the effectiveness of rural institution building and the ability of organized groups to become power blocks recognized by the traditionally more powerful class. The following two events illustrate group solidarity and social action in the occupation of khasland.

9.1.1 Talghori is a village under Daulatpur union of Baniachong upazila. It is a Hindu village. Total households number 250, while the target households number 150. The landless have housing problems as the elite own most of the land. A great deal of khas land lies around the village. For a long time the landless were requesting the elite to give them some land for their homesteads because they knew that it is impossible to have land without cooperation from the elite (they did not know that the landless have a legal right to khas land).

BRAC organized a landless group in 1980 with 24 households. They became aware of their rights. They again requested the elite to give them the khas land. Through countless delays the landless came to understand that the elite would never cooperate. They applied to the Circle Officer (C.O. Revenue) for lease. They brought a surveyor and identified khas land. Then the elite told them to select land for housing. Accordingly, they showed them the area



they wanted for their housing. But the elite did not agree because these lands were already occupied by them. Finding no other alternatives, the group took a decision on October 26, 1995 to make houses on that particular land. The next day early in the morning the group built 17 houses. The elite filed two cases against the group, but their case was proved false by police enquiry and the landless kept the land legally. Altogether 4 acres of lands were occupied by the group. A new area of 17 houses named GHARJANAGAR is made. The confidence level of the group has become higher through this action. Now, they are in the process of occupying more lands for cultivation. They will be successful.

This event is an inspiration for other landless in Tolghori and other villages.

9.1.2 Charyan - Nayastpur is a Hindu village under Habibpur union of Julla Upazila. A landless group was organized by BRAC in 1979 with 60 group members. Due to leadership problems disintegration was observed. This group was reorganized in 1981 with 78 members. The group thought about leasing some khas land. They leased 5 acres of lands successfully facing some protection from elite. This success inspired them and they took lease of 62 acres of khas land in 1985. The elite were alarmed and decided to apply force against the landless. They took lease of 7 acres of the same plot by influencing the U.R.O. They went to take possession with the help of the police, but the group resisted and 4 group members were arrested. With the influence of other groups and the U.P. member the police released the 4 members. In a 'salish' it was decided that the group will relinquish 2 acres and the group did. After some days the elite class violated the decision of the 'salish' and went to possess more land. The Group filed a case against them at the police station. After enquiry, the police declared that the elite will not get more than 2 acres. It was observed that the group's solidarity was very strong. The elite realized it and were afraid, so they decided not to move further against the group with this issue. The landless are now cultivating the lands freely.

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