

I. Executive Summary

Implementation of the Project 'Survey and Corruption' was carried out in two phases. In Phase one a 'Pilot Study' was conducted to understand the nature, form, extent and intensity and the places where corruption occur and in Phase 2 a large scale survey was conducted to provide base line information on corruption in the sectors selected for the project. The Phase 2 base line survey consisted a sample size of 2500 households and information related to services provided by various sectors, delivery of services and corruption in providing services were collected. The pilot study of Phase 1 furnished valuable guidelines on scope, conceptualization and coverage. The scope of the survey was extended from six sectors in the pilot study to ten sectors in the base line survey. The results of the survey have been discussed in the report on Phase 2 activities of the project: Base Line Survey. A summary of the findings of the survey is presented here.

Education Sector:

The baseline survey revealed that a little over two-thirds (68.2%) of the households (HHs) in Bangladesh had children attending educational institutions. The corresponding figures for the rural and the urban areas were 67.8% and 71.1% respectively. Among the HHs with children at school, 72.5% had children attending primary and kindergarten schools in the country. Further, of the HHs with children in primary schools, 5.5% reported to have faced difficulties in admitting their children at schools. Majority of the households, who had difficulties admitting children into primary school, employed various extra regular methods for admission of their children at school. The survey revealed that about 74% of these households used extra regular method for admission of their children into school. Among the various extra regular methods used, payment of donation was most prominent and used by about 41% of the HHs, followed by the use of political influence (28% of HHs) and through private tutor (10% of HHs). Payment of money for admission of children into school was reported by 3.6% of the HHs. Extra expenditure incurred, on the average, was Tk. 739 per household.

Approximately three-fourths (74.4%) of the HHs received books from primary schools and more than half (53%) of them had to pay for the books. The average payment for books was Tk. 5.30 per HHs.

Existence of 'Food for Education Programme' in the area was reported by 22% of the HHs throughout the country. Although the programme was mainly undertaken for rural areas, some urban HHs also reported its existence in their area. The respondents reported a number of irregularities and malpractice. Among the irregularities reported by the HHs were nepotism (42%), distribution of quantity less than allocated amount (58%) and eligibility not properly assessed (16%).

When views related to irregularities practiced in school were sought, about one-half (50.8%) of the households reported that extra payment was necessary for admission and examination. Difficulty getting promotion to next class or good results unless teacher was engaged as private tutor was reported by 49% of the HHs, partial to the influential was reported by 33% and deduction of scholarship money was reported by 27% of the HHs.

Measures of general opinion demonstrated a very high agreement or complete agreement (more than 45%) that there existed unethical practices in supply of primary school books and examination procedure. One out of every five believed practice of unethical standard existed in admission procedure.

There were differences in the findings by socio-economic characteristics and these were briefly discussed in the report. For details the base tables may be consulted.

Health Sector:

The findings of the base line survey revealed that 28.1% of the HHs had patients who sought treatment at public hospitals through out the country during the last one year. Comparatively, more HHs headed by women and low-income group HHs sought treatment at the public hospitals.

Approximately two-fifths (39.4%) of the HHs reported payment higher than normal registration fees at the outpatient department.

The households who had patients seeking inpatient treatment also reported irregularities in admission procedure. Normal process of admission was reported by only 41% of the HHs. Among the extra regular methods for admission into hospital, the frequently used methods were consultation with the doctor at private chamber was reported by 20% of the HHs, payment of extra money to the hospital staff reported by 18% of HHs, through hospital staff reported by 9% and through influential persons reported by 9% of HHs.

About 59% of the respondent reported that patients (both inpatient and outpatient) received medicines from the hospital. The other 41% did not receive medicines from the hospital. About one-fourth (26%) were advised to get medicines from designated stores.

One out of every five households reported to have patients who required pathological tests, x-rays and operations during the preceding year. The survey found that only 21% of these HHs had these tests done at the public hospitals and the remaining 79% had their tests performed at private clinics. Further, 62% of the HHs with patients, who had their tests done in public hospitals, made extra payments for the services. The average payment per HH for tests carried out at the government hospital was estimated to be Tk. 95 for the country. The average cost per HH for tests was higher in urban areas (Tk.171). The reasons for having the test done in private clinic were attributed to poor service in public hospitals (50%) and advice by the doctor (50%).

Measures of opinion showed that about 70% either agreed or completely agreed that there existed unethical practices in the procedure for admission into the hospital and a higher proportion (81%) held similar view regarding supply of medicines or treatment at the hospital.

Changes in the results due to variation in socio-economic characteristics and details were discussed in the report and shown in the base tables.

Judiciary Sector:

Involvement of HHs in court cases either as accused or as plaintiff was found to be 9.6% according to the results of the household survey and nearly three-fifths (59.4%) the court cases were related to land and property disputes. The other disputes reported were terrorism (10.5%), political repression (3.8%) and repression of women (3.3%).

More than three-fifths (63%) of the HHs involved in court cases reported that they had to bribe the court officials. The proportion of rural HHs paying bribe money to court officials was 63.6% compared to that of 57.1% of urban HHs. Cash for bribe was paid to the court employees by 71.3% of HHs, followed by 16.3% of HHs to opponent's lawyer. Majority of HHs (53.3%) made payments for bribe directly, i.e., in person and through the lawyers (28.1%).

Hiring witnesses was reported by 18.7% of the HHs involved in court cases. The percentage of rural HHs (19.5%) hiring paid witnesses was markedly higher than that of rural HHs (10.5%).

Pending cases were reported by 85% of HHs involved in court cases. Regarding expected time for settlement of pending cases, 53.9% of the accused/plaintiffs reported that they were uncertain about the period when settlement would be reached. And about 79.8% of them reported that delays in reaching settlement were deliberate and due to (i) lawyers' business interests (42.4%), (ii) opponent's ill motive and manipulation (53.5%) and (iii) court's high handedness (43.1%).

The survey revealed that public view of the integrity of the judiciary was extremely poor. Almost 9 out of every 10 HHs (88.5%) agreed or completely agreed that it was almost impossible to get quick and fair judgement from the court without money or influence.

Grameen Shalish:

The base line survey revealed that about 18% of the rural HHs in the country took the opportunity to settle disputes through grameen shalish. Majority of the disputes (52.2%) was related to land and property, followed by disputes related to local violence (35.4%) and marital problems (11.4%). Other kind of disputes was reported by about 9% of the HHs.

About 60% of the HHs affirmed that grameen shalish was fair and nearly equal proportions of HHs headed by men (60%) and women (63%) held the same view.

The HHs (40%) who expressed a negative view regarding fairness of grameen shalish attributed one or more of the five specific reasons for their negative view. An overwhelming majority of 93.5% of HHs thought 'grameen shalish tends to favour the rich and influential'. Grameen shalish was influenced by money and opportunities was the view expressed by 84% of the HHs and 66.7% of the HHs thought grameen shalish was influenced by terrorism. Among the steps needed for shalish to be effective, about (i) 89% of these HHs said that 'impartiality of grameen shalish be ensured', (ii) 70% of the HHs thought that 'equal representation of the parties was necessary', and (iii) 32% of HHs suggested that 'women representation in disputes involving women was a requisite'.

Police Service Sector:

The base line survey found that only 5.4% of the HHs were involved in police case during the preceding year and that involvement was evenly divided between the accused and the accuser (plaintiff). Disputes over land and property were the most frequent (26.8%), followed by complaints of terrorism (19.5%), theft cases (17.9%), repression of women (11.4%) and political repression (8.1%). About 54% of the cases filed with the police were recorded as FIR complaint and the rest 46% were recorded as GD complaint. About one-half of the complainants (49.5%) made prior arrangement with the police for disposal of their cases; majority (55%) of the prior arrangements was not to send the disputes to the court, while nearly two-fifths (38%) of the arrangements was to send the complaints to the court for disposal. About 71% of the respondents reported that police deliberately delayed sending the cases to the court.

More than two-thirds (68.1%) of the complainants reported to have payments to the police for filing complaints as FIR. Payment to the police was made directly by the complainants (40%), followed by payments through office employees (34%) and through local dalal (26%).

Requirement of police verification was reported by 7.3% of the HHs. Payment of money to the police when they visited the house of the person needing verification was reported by 38.5% of the HHs and repeated visits to police station to obtain verification was reported by 24.2%.

Public view of the police was very low and 96.3% of the HHs expressed the view by way of their complete agreement or general agreement with the assertion that it was almost impossible to get help from the police without money or influence.

Land Administration Sector:

According to the base line survey about 23% of the HHs bought or sold land during the preceding year and more than one-half (54%) of them reported payment of extra cash for registration. About two-thirds (65.7%) of the HHs reported that in order to reduce the registration costs, sale price less than actual price was shown on the deed for cash payment to the sub-registrars.

Mutation or adjudication of land and property were reported by 5.9% of the HHs. About three-fourths (76.4%) of these HHs paid extra cash for mutation to the tehsil office.

Other irregularities, such as, extra payment while paying land taxes and assesment of taxes were also reported by the respondents.

While expressing their views the public confirmed the existence of unethical practices in land administration by a large margin. About 71% of the HHs agreed or completely agreed with the assertion that it was almost impossible to complete registration of land, mutation of property and clear taxes without payment of money or influence.

Financial Sector:

According to the results of the household survey 5.6% of the HHs borrowed money from the scheduled and the agricultural banks during the year before. Nearly one-fourth (25.7%) of these borrowers reported that they received amounts lower than sanctioned amounts. Less than half (46%) of the borrowers reported obtaining loan following usual procedure, while about 45% reported getting loan through bank employees for payment of money and 9% reported getting loan with the help of influential persons and dalals.

The borrowers reported various actions by the banks for loan recovery. Most frequently used loan recovery action was to confiscate assets (55%), followed by court cases (54%), banning future sanction of loan (48%) and arresting defaulters with the help of police (42%).

About a third of the borrowers had to submit documents for obtaining loan at an extra cost. The extra cost for documents was, on the average, Tk. 219 per HH (borrower).

The presence of unethical standards in providing loan and financial assistance by the banks was confirmed by the public. About four-fifths (73.5%) of the sample HHs either agreed or completely agreed that it was almost impossible to get loan from the banks without money or influence.

Municipal Service Sector:

Wide spread corruption in municipal services was indicated by the base line survey. Irregularities and corrupt practices were reported in services for water supply, electricity connection and municipal taxation.

(a). Water Supply

The base line survey found that only about 44% of urban dwellers in the country had municipal water supply. About 23% of the HHs reported difficulty getting water supply line; of these HHs about 17%

reported payment of extra money, 16% reported repeated visits and 12% reported long wait and red tape in getting water line.

About 73% of the HHs with water supply reported receipt of water bills regularly and 97% of them reported payment of the bills regularly. Nearly a third (32%) of the urban HHs stated that reduced water bill was obtainable by arrangement with the meter reader.

When asked for their views, 60% of the urban HHs with water supply strongly agreed or generally agreed that it was almost impossible to get water line without money or influence; and about 45% of the HHs with water supply held a similar view on getting correct water bill.

(b). Electricity Supply

Approximately 4 out of every 5 urban HH in the country reported to have electricity connection. Just fewer than 30% of these HHs did not face any difficulty getting electricity connection to their house. The remaining 70% of the HHs faced various difficulties; among the difficulties faced, about 33% of the HHs paid money for electricity connection and accessories, 21% reported to make frequent visits, 12% reported undue delays and 40% reported other unstated difficulties.

Regular receipt of electricity bills were reported by 63% of the HHs with electricity connection and 72% of them reported regular payment of bills. About 12% of the HHs with electricity connection reported non-receipt of bills regularly. Also, about 30% of the HHs reported that reduced electricity bill was obtainable by arrangement with the meter reader.

About two-thirds (67.2%) of the HHs confirmed prevalence of unethical practices in delivery of electricity supply and another 46% confirmed the existence of the same in the billing system.

(c). Holding Tax

Municipal assesment of holding tax on house and property was acceptable to 56% of urban HHs and the rest 44% considered the assesment excessive. Unacceptability of tax assesment resulted in delayed payment of taxes. The excessive assesment was reduced by 53% of the HHs through the Review Board and the other 47% had their assesment reduced by arrangement with municipal staff on payment of money.

When asked for their views on the assertion that it was almost impossible to get correct assesment of holding tax without money or influence less than half (45.1%) of the HHs, despite a high proportion of HHs unhappy with assesment, lent support to the assertion. About 16% of the HHs contradicted and the rest either had no comments or did not answer.

(d). Business and Trade license

Base line survey indicated that about one-third (35%) of the urban HHs were involved in some business or trade and about 56% of them had trade license. About one-half of the license holders reported difficulty getting trade licenses, such as, payment beyond normal fee (49%), repeated visits to municipal office (40%) and other difficulties (18%). About 65% of the urban HHs expressed the view that it was almost impossible to get a trade license without money or influence. Only 8% of the HHs contradicted the implying contention, while the rest had no comments.

Public Transport Sector:

The survey found that 73% of the HHs had persons travelling by train, 55% of the HHs had persons travelling by bus and 18% of the HHs had persons using the steamer service. About one-fourth (23%) of the HHs reported difficulty procuring tickets; approximately 73% of them reported to have paid extra money for buying tickets, 42% of the HHs had to buy tickets in advance and 36% bought tickets through dalals (brokers).

Only about 3% of the HHs travelled in their own vehicle and crossed river using the ferry service. Long wait due to shortage of ferryboats was the complain of two-thirds (65.8%) of the ferry service users. About 58% of the complainants reported that early crossing was possible on payment of cash to the BIWTA staff.

News Media- News Paper Sector:

The base line survey revealed that three-fifths (60%) of the HHs in the country kept themselves abreast of the news published in the daily newspapers either by reading or through other means. Awareness of events through newspapers was much higher in urban areas (82%) than in rural areas (57%). More than 95% of the HHs, readers and non-readers were of the opinion that newspapers should be factual and impartial in furnishing the news.

When asked for their views, by a very large margin (83.5%) the readers and those who kept themselves aware of news thought that newspapers were professionally unethical and partisan. They expressed this view by agreeing or completely agreeing with the contention that the owners and the management of newspapers for partisan interest inflates or deflates news of events. About 3% only contradicted the contention and the rest 13% made no comment.

Public Perception of Corruption:

Public view was sought on what activity constitutes corruption. The base line survey revealed that among the choices put before them, 'misuse of position and power' was perceived as corruption by the highest proportion of respondents (76.0%), followed by 'negligence of duty' (75.7%), 'activity outside normal procedure' (67.7%) and 'while on duty taking money for personal gain' (57.8%). 'Misuse of power and fund for personal gain' (56.4%) and 'misuse of fund' (50.6%) were also perceived as corruption.

Thana Police Service was pointed out for corruption by the highest number (97%) of respondents (HHs) and the Judiciary by the second highest (89%) number of HHs. Thus, the two main arms of administration had the honour (!) of being identified for corruption by highest number of the respondents. The other public offices in order of choice of the respondents were Sub-Registrar's office, Land Record office, Tehsil office and Scheduled Banks, etc.

Thana Police Service was also identified as the most corrupt public office and was the choice of the 58% of the HHs, followed by the Judiciary which the choice of 19% of the HHs as the most corrupt office.

The respondents were almost unanimous (97%) in their view that considering the functions and responsibilities assigned the thana police station was either important or highly important public service organization (which was ironically viewed as the most corrupt office).

When asked for their view on what were the causes of corruption the respondents stated as follows: 'Desire to get rich overnight' was viewed as the main force by the highest number (76%) of HHs, followed by 'Moral degradation' (58%), 'No accountability' (51%) and 'Inadequate salary' (32%).