

### Name : Difference of priority

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Simson, an officer of Bangladesh Baptist Church Shangha ( BBCS ),( Shangha means association), stressed to 73 years widow Santi Roy saying, " For your illegal act of having a house on BBCS's owned land, what will you do if you are in police custody ? " Santi politely replied, " so what, even in police custody we will have somewhere to live and eat"

I was with BBCS when they established a community development wing called Social, Health and Economic Development Board ( SHED Board) and was the head of BBCS's primary school program financed by World Vision of Bangladesh under sponsorship program. British Missionary Society ( BMS ) is the predecessor of BBCS , and BMS, German Missionary Agency- Liebenzeller Mission and World Vision of Bangladesh, all have disappointments over BBCS proven corruption records. BBCS now have been suffering from fund shortage and their priority to strengthen institutional and organizational improvements are praise worthy though. Bangladesh Government everytime is very cooperative and sympathetic to BBCS and may be for the fear outside criticism not to deal minority properly, they failed to take any reproval role.

BBCS has now an agenda to fund raising by selling of unused land and in Barisal they selected a plot at Barisal Baptist Mission to sell to outside by an advertisement published in a national daily. That attracted attention to the Baptist Community people and in Barisal a committee launched to rehabilitate shelterless Baptist Community people and I have been selected as covenantor. I was that time busy to work for SWEET in the internet. When selling of land by BBCS was in the final process, some 15 shelterless Baptist Community people captured a portion of that land to be sold and built 15 tin-shed huts. BBCS finally reported this issue to Barisal police administration for proper legal measure. We earlier explained to BBCS " leaving many Baptist community people shelterless, how can BBCS sell unused land for fund raising ! As Baptist people, we have first to demand ownership for the shelterless ones of that unused land " We operated a wide range of advocacy to explain our legal position to police administration and finally the Superintendent of police reported both the party by saying " Both you party claim the ownership of unused land and if you have any grievence against any, you can go to the civil court to settle the dispute and only on the verdict by court asking to vacat or plunder the new inhabitants, we can take action" BBCS didn't go to court . BBCS is organized and influential in church level and after that we had to face many ambush attacks.

We have rehabilitated 4 widows Baptist family, details on demand and one family whose husband deserted her . These women force are the real force to this rehabilitation process.

It is almost 8 months before we have 15 destitute homeless Baptist families rehabilitated on the part of unuse d land in Barisal city.

The major success is here that BBCS now showing many positive signs and gestures emphasizing that they are also very sincere and interested to rehabilitate homeless Baptist Community people on unused mission land.

Thanks BBCS for your noble plan.

Note : Photographs of homeless people, their new homes and description can be available to any workshop participant on request

## Success story based on disaster and gender :

Name : The Honey Bee queen

Abdul Mannan Khan of the village Rajapur, Barisal, Bangladesh, lost his home and arable land by river erosion in 1969 and then Khodeja was only 2 years baby. The disaster stricken family shifted to a nearest town, Faridpur, only to return to a slum at Barisal town where Khodeja still lives with her family that now she has with 3 sons and a daughter and husband Hanif still weak.

I first saw Khodeja preparing rice cakes just by the open road side of a busy road in our locality with a small earthen oven and some cheap utensils. One rice cake called " Dhupi Pitha " ( rice cake boiled in steam, which is so delicious with white coconut flesh and molasses from plum juice ) attracted my attention to her. It was 1996 and I learnt Khodeja's husband Hanif very sick in the hospital with a painful duodenal ulcer, and had to confine in the bed for more than 5 years before Khodeja with a great struggle managed a good amount of lum-sump money as a charge for a successful operation which cured Hanif but left him weaker than he was before. Hanif earlier used to be a rickshaw puller got Khodeja married in 1983. Hanif lost all his rural property seized by his relatives in his early days and came in the same slum. The eldest of their children is their very dearest daughter Hanufa. Hanufa later in 2000 got married and a son borne to her and has been brutally tortured by her husband and family for dowry and later in 2002 Khodeja got her daughter back to settle to a divorce and legal action is now being taken against her husband.

When Hanif got on feet after operation, within that time Khodeja's diligent hands put her settled in a small road side tea stall with special rice cakes and all she does , working beside the hot furnace all the day long until it almost 10 p.m. Now her laborious hands put the family to a path that all GOs and NGOs in Bangladesh have been working for, to change lives of women by claiming their equal rights with men. Khodeja is a model and I am a regular visitor of their tea stall. Whole the family swarms around the honey bee queen. Now , Khodeja's 2 sons are studying in high schools and the youngest in the kinder Garten school. The family now has 3 rickshaws to let to rent to other rickshaw pullers and they now possess a piece of land just on the other side of river. None thought Khodeja what is women equal role with men but now the weak Hanif just cooperates Khodeja in the stall all day long.

'Good journey, on - Khodeja - on, more success are to knocking your door.'

Note : Photographs of Khodeja and family members and her tea stall can be available

Water management systems, both government and private level, in Bangladesh can enable reduction in disasters significantly. If you go through the news relating Bangladesh, you will find flood is now the headline news almost half of Bangladesh is now submerged under water maximum by the water flowing in various rivers through India. It is now rainy season in this region and also a part of India has been affected majorly by flood. Almost 20 million people now directly affected by flood in Bangladesh and the capital city of Dhaka has also stricken by flood water. Especially districts of Sylhet, Sirajgonj and other northern and mid region of Bangladesh has gone under water and in some cases water level has gone up to 8 feet high. Epidemic has already broken out in various parts of affected area as the tubewells and water supplying pipelines have been infested with unclean flood water. Despite flood's disastrous situation, Bangladesh normally suffer from major water problem throughout the year as most shallow tubewell water in Bangladesh is intoxicated highly with arsenic contamination and surface unclean water leads to major public health problems.

SWEET is very concerned about these problems relating to water and we are in touch with a reputed organization SWAPHEP to utilize their idea, programs and experience as it has been found applicable to the needs of Bangladesh water situation and disaster. Mainly NGOs both in local, national and international level have actively been working to reduce the water related disaster problems in Bangladesh and Bangladesh Government has major emphasis and programs to this enormous problem. Recently I have heard the concerned minister saying that the budget is lower such as of 4 billion Bangladeshi Taka per year for the whole spectrum of water resources and management that the Government can not able to meet the actual requirement in even a small percentage. A newer approach and research is needed in relating to water related disaster in Bangladesh to mitigate and that can majorly call upon the total development process of Bangladesh.

Greetings  
Paul and Helen