



RED Update

The quarterly newsletter of the
Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC

Volume 3, No. 2

June 2004

National Low Birth Weight and Anaemia Survey 2003 Completed

RED conducted the national low birth weight (LBW) and anaemia survey 2003 in collaboration with the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics of the Government of Bangladesh and UNICEF. The anaemia prevalence survey was conducted in urban areas of the country and also in the rural areas of the three districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The LBW survey was conducted nationwide.

The LBW survey shows that the prevalence of LBW (<2,500 g) in Bangladesh was 33.7%, while the prevalence of very low birth weight (<1,500 g) was 1%. Parents' education, father's occupation, household assets and modern amenities, type of dwelling house and sanitation were found associated with the prevalence of LBW. Mother's age and height, parity, and intake of iron tablet during pregnancy were also found associated with LBW. Pre-term delivery (<37 weeks) was also strongly associated.

The prevalence of anaemia in both slum and non-slum areas of urban Bangladesh was highest among children aged 6-59 months (56%), followed by pregnant women (41%), non-pregnant women (34%), and adolescent girls (29%). The prevalence was lowest among adolescent boys (17%). In CHT, the anaemia situation was worse. Here also, the prevalence of anaemia was highest among children aged 6-59 months (62%), with infants (6-11 months) having 90% anaemia prevalence which gradually decreased with increasing age. Adolescent boys were affected (40%) as much as girls (50%).

Study on the Profile of Indigenous People of Bangladesh Begins

RED has initiated a study on the indigenous people of Bangladesh. The study aims to collect information on all indigenous ethnic groups throughout the country to assess their development needs and plan interventions. The study will use both quantitative and qualitative methods.

CFPR/TUP Research Update

Food Consumption Survey

RED has recently carried out a food consumption survey among the ultra poor households to measure the impact of TUP programme on food consumption. The study was carried out in the TUP districts of 2002 – Rangpur, Nilphamari and Kurigram. Four hundred households were surveyed. Not selected ultra poor were included as control group. Seven-day food frequency, 3-day and 24-hour recall methods were used. To test the validity of 24-hour recall method, 10% households were resurveyed to measure actual weight of the food consumed.

Gram Shahayak Committee: The Membership Profile

The Gram Shahayak Committees (GSC) are formed with local elites to create an enabling environment for the ultra poor. What are the socioeconomic characteristics of the GSC members? How successful are they in mobilizing resources and what are the determinants of such success? These are some of the questions that were addressed in a recent research on 160 GSCs operating in the 2002 TUP villages. On average, since formation

each GSCs mobilized over Tk. 4,000 in cash and over Tk. 2,000 in kind from various sources. More than 3 TUP members were supported for medical treatment from each GSC. The GSC members were quite educated - 89% had one or more member having SSC or higher level of education. The GSCs have drawn its membership predominantly from agriculture-based occupation and high-end non-farm professional occupations, such as business and salaried jobs. The GSCs are formed with people having quite dense social networks. Over half of the GSCs had members having experiences of *Union Parishad* responsibilities.

We found that the total number of TUP members being served by the GSC was an important positive determinant of total resources mobilized, suggesting a density effect. The GSCs who are more successful in mobilizing cash resources are also more successful in mobilizing resources in-kind. Having *Palli Samaj* and TUP members in GSCs positively affects mobilization of resources and taking actions to help the poor people beyond the TUP programme.

Health Domain of the Ultra Poor: Towards an Inclusive Understanding

A study was designed to explore the health domain of the ultra poor. Qualitative research tools including free listing, pile sorting and interviewing has been used.

Study on Vegetable Cultivation by the Ultra Poor Done

RED has recently conducted a study on the vegetable cultivation under the CFPR/TUP programme in Jaldhaka and Syedpur *upazilas* in Nilphamari district. The study aimed to explore the marketing system and identify problems of veg-

etable cultivation by the ultra poor in the long run. Data were collected from the whole population (79) of own financed TUP vegetable growers who were in the 2nd cycle of vegetable cultivation. The major vegetables were cauliflower, bottle gourd, potato, beans, and brinjal out of 33 species cultivated by the TUP members. In the 2nd cycle the average land under cultivation was reduced and the marketing channel was also changed. The growers became more market oriented and more middlemen were involved in the 2nd cycle. The growers preferred mortgaged land than leasehold land.

Study on Micronutrient Supplementation Done

RED has conducted a research entitled 'Effect of multiple micronutrient beverage supplementation on adolescent schoolgirls in rural Bangladesh' with financial support from Micronutrient Initiative. The results show that the micronutrient-fortified beverage significantly improved growth and haemoglobin, ferritin and vitamin A levels within six months of supplementation. Supplementation for more than 6 months did not show any significant added benefits. The effects were pronounced in girls who were anaemic at baseline. The beverage was found not only to prevent the natural progression of anaemia in adolescent girls but also to cure anaemia and iron deficiency to a high degree. The supplement was found to have no significant effect on either school achievement or cognitive functions of anaemic or non-anaemic schoolgirls. Rather, a negative effect was seen on arithmetic part of the school achievement and percentage of wrong score in visual search in non-anaemic girls supplemented for 12 months. The beverage is, therefore, recommended for supplementation for six months.

Insecure Living: Voices of the Evicted Slum Dwellers of Kalyanpur

Intending to explore the situation of slum eviction and condition of the evicted slum dwellers RED conducted a study at Kalyanpur area in Dhaka city. The study investigated the evicted slum dwellers' coping mechanism with the

incident, their resistance against it, stance of local power structure, NGO activities during and after the eviction, standpoint of media, and evicted slum dwellers' perception towards the role of NGO and media. Participant observation, interview, and small group discussion were the key tools of conducting the study.

Education Watch 2003-04 Fieldwork Begins

The fieldwork of *Education Watch* 2003-04 has started recently. The study aims to explore the reasons behind poor achievement regarding education for all, especially in the case of access and quality of education. Six field research teams, each comprised of one researcher, two field researchers and three research assistants, are now working in six *upazilas*. Second round of work in another six *upazilas* will start in mid July 2004.

Study on Successful School Management Done

As part of BRAC's relationship as a member of the Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Education Planning (ANTRIEP) RED has conducted a study on successful school management at primary level. The findings of this study were presented at RED and also at the BAFED-UNESCO Researchers Conference at Dhaka. The study findings will be presented in the upcoming ANTRIEP seminar to be held in Manila in July.

Study on Pre-Primary School Completed

A study on the pre-primary education programme of BRAC is completed. The study findings show that learning achievement of grade I students of formal primary schools with pre-primary experience was significantly better than their peers who had no such experience. However, no such difference was observed in the test of grade II students. The teachers of formal schools, parents, and the community people praised the pre-primary initiative of BRAC. They provided some suggestions for its improvement.

Process Documentation on EIC Programme done

A process documentation on BRAC's Education for Indigenous Children (EIC) was done and the findings were presented at a seminar recently. This study documented four different stages of the programme. These include staff foundation training, school inaugural workshop, school opening session, and material development.

Workshop on Qualitative Research Held

To strengthen the use of applying qualitative research as well as to build the capacity of qualitative researchers of RED a workshop entitled "Thinking qualitatively: theory and practice of qualitative research" was held during 10-14 May 2004 at Rajendrapur. Organized by RED the workshop was attended by 24 participants – 19 researchers and five programme staff of BRAC. Dr Shahaduz Zaman, Senior Research Fellow of RED and Dr Diana Gibson of the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands facilitated the workshop.

Conference Presentation

Dr Imran Matin, Director Research presented a paper titled "Managing scaling up challenges of a programme for the poorest: a case study of BRAC's IGVGD programme" at the Global Conference on Scaling Up of Poverty Alleviation held in Shanghai, China during 25-27 May 2004.

He also gave a presentation titled "We are running the heart of the system: understanding organizational culture in practice – a BRAC case study" at a workshop on *Ethnography of NGOs*, organized by the INTRAC-Development Studies Association, UK, held in Oxford, UK on 28-29 April 2004.

Editor: Hasan Shareef Ahmed

Published by:

Research and Evaluation Division, BRAC
75 Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh
Phone: 9881265, 8824180 (PABX)
(e-mail: research@brac.net)
Website: www.brac.net

