

LIFE HISTORY OF PIARI BEGUM

Shiree Q2 Research on Extreme Poverty in Bangladesh					
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CMS 5 (s) Document Type	Life History				
Interviewee name	Piari Begum	Sex	Female	Age	33
Livelihood	<p>Just before shiree intervention:</p> <p>Piari produced dusters made from cock feathers but she had not enough earnings from this and was struggling to manage capital.</p> <p>Earlier she migrated with her 4 young children to Dhaka from Laxmipur, leaving her husband because her husband sold their assets and destroyed their savings through gambling.</p>				
Well- being Status before Intervention	Working extreme poor				
Marital status	Married. They have 4 children- 3 sons (12 and half, 6, and 3 and half years) and a daughter (8 years).				
Union, Upazilla And Zilla	<p><u>Current Address: East Rasulpur, Kamrangirchar, Dhaka</u></p> <p>Permanent Address: Upazilla: Sadar, District: Laxmipur (a district of Chittagong division)</p>				
Dates of Interview	27/10/2010, 05/12/2010, 23/12/2010 for baseline data				
Keywords	Working poor, early marriage, gambling, escape from husbands gambling through migration to Dhaka, duster producing and selling,				

INTRODUCTION

Piari's story underlines the difficulty faced by a single mother of 4 young kids living in a Dhaka slum. Whilst in her native place, she suffered sharp downward mobility and asset selling at the hands of a husband addicted to gambling. He even sold their home. She reacted by secretly migrating with the kids to Dhaka with the support of her brothers, who helped her secure a home, obtain first a labouring job but then gave her the know-how and materials to set her up in the duster business. But they couldn't help with cash, and with 4 children and heavy high costs of living in the slum, she faces sharp capital constraints: it was very difficult to both maintain the families' consumption needs and high rents of Dhaka and have the capital for her business. Without capital for her business, it's difficult to run it, yet the family is completely dependent on her income.

Piari is thirty three years old and has been living at Kamrangirchar for last 3 and half years with her 4 children- 3 sons (12 and half, 6, and 3 and half years) and 1 daughter (8 years). During the visit of baseline information (Oct 20 2010) it was found that after receiving intervention, Piari is producing and marketing dusters as a wholesaler. Cock feathers are the major input used to make the dusters. Such dusters are in high demand in Dhaka city. (Some products are also even being sold outside Dhaka and abroad.)

Their daughter Shampa (8 years) is living with Piari's parents at Laxmipur and their eldest son Sumon (12 and half years) helps in his mother's business and the youngest two, Tauhid (6 years) and Sakib (4 years) also live with them at Kamrangirchar.

Piari has no institutional education and was married to a farmer's son when she was only 13 years old. According to Piari, "We had a big home made by tin; cowsheds with full of cows, but all of them were destroyed my husband through gambling" he eventually also sold the family home. Piari migrated at Kamrangirchar escaping from her husband and the drain on their income. With the support of her brothers, Piari started duster production and selling. But after maintaining 5 member's family, Piari was struggling to manage the capital she needed to run the business effectively. At that stage, DSK officials found Piari as a vulnerable woman headed family who was struggling to survive with her 4 children.

WELL-BEING AT THE TIME JUST BEFORE THE SHREE INTERVENTION

Just before shree intervention, the household was in working extreme poor. But as a 5 member female headed family including 4 young children, she was struggling to maintain her family and continue her business. She had monthly income approximately taka 3,000 which was not enough for maintaining a five members' family in Dhaka.

QUALITATIVE MONITORING OF SHREE INTERVENTIONS: CMS5 (S) LIFE HISTORY AND INTERVENTION TRACKING

Diet	Often unable to manage three full meals per day.
Urban living – Rent capability	Taka 1,000 per month plus an additional 100 for electricity and 100 for gas. It is a single room.
Livelihoods	Before DSK-Shiree interventions, the household was mainly dependent on Piari’s income from duster production and marketing. On an average monthly income was taka 3,000 which was not enough for 5 members family in Dhaka. She left her husband at the village due to his bad habits of destroying income and assets through gambling.
Income	She had monthly income approximately taka 3,000 which was not enough for maintaining a five members’ family in Dhaka.
Assets	Except some raw materials for producing dusters (such as cock feathers, bamboo, cane sticks and wires) they had no other productive assets. But she had received technical and raw material supports from her brothers as they are also involved in same business.
Labour capacity per dependent	1 person – Piari – supported the 5 member family.
Well-being	The household was a “working extreme poor” as Piari had only earning source from duster production and marketing. But she was struggling to run the business due to lack of capital.

LIFE HISTORY NARRATIVE

CHILDHOOD

Piari (33 years old) was born in 1977 at Laxipur Sadar upazilla under the greater district of Noakhali of Chittagong division. Her father had a business of making and selling dusters Dhaka city. She was brought up in the village. The family were relatively ok. They ate well and had no obvious deprivation. All three of her brothers all went to school but she did not. This is likely to be because the family were in a relatively conservative geographical area and female education was not encouraged.

EARLY MARRIAGE LIFE OF PIARI

In 1990, Piari was married with Babul when she was only 13 years old. Babul was a farmer's son and his economic condition was good. According to Piari, "We had a big home made by tin; cowsheds with full of cows, but all of them were sold by my husband for gambling". By the time she was 27, she had given birth of 2 children.

Husband's bad habit of gambling – selling assets then their home

After selling most of the family assets, especially livestock, through gambling, Babul sold their house in 2005. Then Piari took shelter to her father's home. Some days later Babul also came to her and started to live together at the house of Piari's parents. At that time, Babul started a new business. He purchased some plastic toys and raw materials from Dhaka, prepared some new items at home and sold them in the nearby various markets. But situation didn't change because most of his income still was consumed through gambling. In the mean time, Piari had given another 2 children.

Secret migration to Kamrangirchar

As her husband bad habit of gambling didn't change over a very long time, Piari started to look for a new way of living considering her children's future. At one stage she shared her difficult situation with her brothers, who were residing in Kamrangirchar for a long time. They had a good business of duster making and selling. Actually duster production and selling is a family business of Piari. Her father had this business for 40 years at Nawabgonj in Dhaka and in the last seven years after returning to Laximpur, he established a small factory of duster making. Her two brothers are also continuing the similar business at Kamrangirchar.

One day in 2008, when Babul was in a village-fair, Piari shifted to Kamrangirchar with her 4 children. Her brothers helped her to rent a separate room at Kamrangirchar, provided some utensils, cooking pots, beds and some other materials to start a new home.

Starting of business with assistance from her brothers

After migrating to Kamrangirchar, Piari started as a labourer in her brother's production but it was not enough to meet the needs of her 5 member family. Except for cash, her brothers provided her with some raw materials such as cock feathers, cane sticks and wire to start a separate business. Her brothers also provided two experienced workers for a short time to ensure technical support. But the costs of looking after her four children meant that she had to run her business using very limited capital. She tried to keep all her children together but childcare was also

proving difficult. So she sent her daughter to her father's house. The decision to send the daughter instead of the son was partly pragmatic – it is considered easier to keep a son in the slum. It was at that stage that DSK officials found Piari as a vulnerable female headed family who was struggling to survive with her 4 children.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Although she was married in a well up farmer's family, but due to her husband's bad habit of gambling they lost most of their assets. The addiction to gambling of Piari's husband was the major cause of their extreme poverty.

As a consequence, the five member family was fully dependent on the income from Piari's labouring and then her duster business. She had very little capital. Although she received technical and material support from her brothers, she was struggling to run her business because of little capital. There are also everyday expenses. Her income was 3,000 Taka and she had to pay regularly 1,200 for rent leaving only 1,800 for food and clothes and other basics.

Life history map of Piari Begum (33 years old)

