

LIFE HISTORY OF JARIGHOS BEGUM

Shiree Q2 Research on Extreme Poverty in Bangladesh					
Author	Md. Moshir Rahman				
Institution	Concern Worldwide				
Household ID					
Interviewee name	Jarghos Begum	Sex	Female	Age	75
Union, Upazilla and Zilla	Shelborosh, Dharmapasha, Sunamganj				
Livelihood before the intervention	Beggar, dependent on others				
Well-being Status	Extreme Poor				
Marital Status and household composition	Divorced and living with her two disabled daughter and grandchildren				
Union, Upazilla and Zilla	Shelborosh, Dharmapasha, Sunamganj				
Dates of interview	19 th March 2012				
Keywords	Divorced, Disabled, destitute, high dependency ratio, dowry				

INTRODUCTION

Jarighos Begum (age 75) is a destitute woman who lives in Dharmapasha upazila under Sunamganj district. She was born into a working extreme poor household and though improved her situation through marriage, her husband died in the mid 60s.

With her husband's and father's assets sold, partly in order to pay for her daughter's dowries, she was forced to beg to survive. Her daughter, who is now paralyzed, was abandoned along Jarighos' grandchildren, and Jarighos now begs to support all four of them.

QUALITATIVE MONITORING OF SHIREE INTERVENTIONS: CMS5 (S) LIFE HISTORIES

WELL-BEING JUST BEFORE THE SHIREE INTERVENTION

Prior to involvement with the shiree programme the household's wellbeing was as followed:

Indicator	Just before the intervention
Well-being category	Destitute (category 1)
Diets	One and a half meals per day, dropping to one or even no meals in the lean period. Generally the menu is pantha, vegetable smash and sometimes pulse.
Livelihoods now) in terms of contribution to that years' income For other principal adult member	Begging and dependent on others
Productive assets now rank them in terms of value (e.g. land, livestock, rickshaws),	None
House and homestead: ownership, condition of tenure, condition of house.	No homestead land , lives on a tiny hut provided by others with a wet muddy floor

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH (1937-1949)

Jarighos was born in 1937 and was her parent's only child. Her father was a day labourer, with no cultivable land, and only four decimals of homestead land. It was very difficult for her father to maintain the family as he was the only earning member, they had no productive assets and relied on a low income.

The family survived on around a meal and a half a day. In the lean period this dropped down to one meal or sometimes nothing at all. The meals were also low quality, consisting mostly of rice and cheap vegetables. Jarighos was never able to attend school.

EARLY MARRIED LIFE AND EARLY ADULthood (1951-1965)

In the 1950s, in a bid to reduce the burden on his family, her father arranged Jarighos a marriage to a man named Anu Miah from her own village. Jarighos was only 13 years old. Anu was a marginal farmer who had three decimals of homestead land. He also cultivated his own 100 decimals of land and harvested 50 -60 mounds of paddy for the whole year. His land was flooded for six to seven months a year and so the land was only suitable for a single crop.

After her marriage Jarigos went to live with her husband's family and well-being improved. Her husband's household was able to afford sufficient food, and the house was in better condition with comparatively large rooms.

A growing dependency ratio

Shortly after her marriage Jarigos became pregnant. In 1952 her first child was born but he died within his neonatal period. Jarighos gave birth to another two boys in 1954 and 1956 but they also died.

In 1958 she had her first daughter and this was followed in 1961 with the birth of a second daughter. As the couple now had two daughters their expenditure increased. Although her husband's income remained the same they were still just about able to manage three meals a day.

Husband's death

In 1965, after 15 years of marriage, her husband became ill, received no treatment and subsequently died from tuberculosis. As he had previously provided for her and their children, after his death Jarigos suffered became extremely vulnerable. Her father in law made matters worse by selling all her husband's cultivable and homestead land with the aim of arranging a marriage for both her girls.

Box 1: Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis is an airborne disease which is estimated to have killed more people than any other disease in history. It is now the world's seventh largest cause of death. It killed 1.8 million people worldwide in 2009, up from 1.77 million in 2007 (SEA-AIDS, 2010c). Approximately 1.86 billion people are infected with the bacterium that causes TB.

MID-ADULTHOOD

In 1966 Jarigos was sent back to her father's house with her daughters. By this time her father's health had worsened due to his age. Despite this he welcomed them back and provided them with food and shelter. Two years later however, in 1968, her father died from old age. After his death she took shelter in her nephew's house which was in the same village, and this lasted until 1969.

Jarigos sold the four decimals of land that she had inherited from her parents to fund her daughters' marriages. She used the money to arrange her elder daughter's marriage to a hawker and her younger daughter's with a shop keeper. Jarigos thereby lost the last of her productive assets and was forced to beg to survive. She then lived on relatives' land without rent, building a hut with materials provided by her elder son in law.

Divorced, disabled and destitute

Jarighos struggled to survive through begging, yet things became worse when her youngest daughter, Moyna, began having problems with her husband. In 1983, despite being married for 14 years, Moyna's husband stopped looking after her and their two children. Not only this, but he also got married to another woman and sent Moyna back to Jarighos' house.

Her daughter is now paralyzed and has to be looked after by Jarighos. This is a huge burden for Jarighos, who is very old now and had been forced to beg even to feed just herself. Their housing is in a poor condition and they sleep on a wet muddy floor with a torn quilt and a dirty pillow under their head. There is no latrine or tube well, they drink river water and defecate in open areas. As a result her household suffer from a range of diseases through the year.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Jarighos is a destitute woman, barely surviving with her two daughters. She was born into a working extreme poor household and the death of her husband in the mid 60s combined with the need to pay dowry for her children led to her destitution and need to rely on begging. Her daughter's abandonment by her husband exacerbated their condition and Jarighos support them both.

SEASONAL LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITY MAP

	JAN	FEB	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
Begging	Low	High	High	Lean						Moderate	Low	
payment (in kind)	1 kg rice	2 kg rice	4 kg rice	support from neighbours						1 kg rice	1 kg rice	
Domestics Service work	20	15	20							15	20	
Total	20 kg	30 kg	80 kg							15 kg		

LIFE HISTORY MAP

Dates	Well-being movement	Reasons
1937-1950	2	Working extreme poor
1950-1964	Moved up to 3	Early marriage and
1965-1966	Move down to 2	Husband's death and father in law sold her husband's land and assets
1966-1969	Remains at 2	Returns to her father house
1968	Remains at 2	Father's death and movement to nephews house
1969	Move down 1	Nephew sells her father's homestead land. Forced to move out and resort to begging
1983	Remains at 1	Her daughter is abandoned by husband and sent to Jarighos begum's house
1983-2011	Remains at 1	Begs to support her disabled daughter, granddaughter and grand son

Life history map of Jarighos Begum (75)

Middle elite
Lower earning non-poor
Moderate poor
Working extreme poor
Destitute

Early marriage and husband condition was slightly well-off

Husband died due to TB and father in law sells her husband's assets

1969 - Her nephew sells her father's homestead land and they became homeless and forced to beg

Elder daughter abandoned and returns to live with her with 2 children.

1968 - Father dies and she moves to nephew's house

1966: returned to father's house

1937 1950 1965 1966 1969 1983

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