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Land Tenure Systems of Rice and Jhum based Farming Systems in  
Chittagong Hill Tract, Bangladesh: A Case Study in Baghaichhari muk  
village, Khagrachari District

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Bangladesh の チッタゴン丘陵における稲と焼畑を基幹としたファームシステムにおける土  
地所有と貸借様式—カグラチヨリ県バガイチュリムク村の事例研究

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**1. Background and Objectives:** The rice-based farming systems as well as Jhum or shifting cultivation-based farming systems are significantly important for providing food security of the ethnic communities in Chittagong Hill Tract(CHT), where our study village is located. However, the previous studies on farming systems in CHT did not give importance to the rice-based farming systems among the ethnic minorities, who are considered as Jhum cultivator in general. However, in reality, at present, the ethnic minorities are much depending on the rice-based farming systems. In the plains of Bangladesh, the rice-based farming systems have developed the localized characteristic land tenure systems. However, few studies on this topic have been conducted in CHT. Therefore, the present study was conducted to describe the existing land tenure systems in rice-based farming systems in the study village.

**2. The Study Site and Research Methods:** This study was conducted in Baghaichhari muk village, 51 No Dighinala Union, of Dighinala Upazila, in the CHT region of Bangladesh. The regular field surveys were done during the cropping seasons of two years from 2003 to 2004. All 247 households in the study village were interviewed by questionnaire. In addition, interviews using a semi-structured questionnaire and field observations were also conducted.

**3. Results and Discussion:** In Bangladesh, three kind of land tenure system, namely renting (leasing), mortgaging and share-cropping were common, but, in our study village, renting (leasing) and mortgage system are prevalent as below.

**Renting systems:** Under this system the two types were observed in the study village based on the time of payment of the land rent.

**Agrim бага (Advance payment system):** Landowner and tenant made a legal agreement in front of the headman or village leaders. The land owner rent out his land when the land was unprofitable for him to cultivate because of shortage of draught animal or man labor or input for production. The tenant had money for the investment in crop production and he wanted to cultivate more land than he owned. He would have a considerable profit if he had a good harvest. The tenant had to pay the rent in kind or in cash in advance to the landowner for cultivating a piece of land. For example for 40 dec(1dec=1/100 acre) of land for one season tenant paid 1500-2000 Taka(68Taka=100Yen ,2009.2) or 25-30 Ari (250-300 Kg) of paddy to the land owner. The amount of rent varied depending on the fertility of land, easiness to access of water, and etc.

**Khola бага (Late payment system):** In this system the amount of money for land rent was almost the same as in advance payment system, except that tenant had to pay the land rent to the landowner after the crop harvest. The landowner preferred the advance payment system because the money could be used in advance for his own expenses. Besides, in late payment system, in some cases there would be a risk of low crop production or crop failure, and then there would be no guarantee of getting either

money or crop after harvest from the tenant. According to the survey, some farmers were practicing this land tenancy system in this study village. It was observed that there was a relationship between farm size categories and land tenure systems. In the small farm size category more farmers were to be found practicing the rent-in (in cash) system compared to the rent-out (in cash) system. However, in the medium and large farm size categories, the rent-out system was practiced more than rent-in system. The reason might be that the landowners had more lands than the resource-inputs. They had some difficulties in cultivating their land because of shortages of labor or draught power or high price of inputs. Landowner liked advance payment more than late payment system, while the tenant preferred late payment system. Depending on the economic situations of landowner and tenant, they agreed to accept one of these two systems after negotiating with each other.

**Mortgaging systems:** Mortgage systems commonly practiced in the study village could be grouped into two according to their payment system. In this system the payment was done in cash.

**Khoy bondok (Reduced payment):** The landowner needed urgent money for some reasons. In that context, a legal agreement was made between the landowner and tenant. The tenant had to pay a certain amount of money to the landowner to get the temporary ownership of the land for a certain period of 3 to 5 years. For example, the tenant paid money in advance in cash down to the landowner for using his land of 40 dec for five years. It meant that the payment of the rent was 1000 Taka per one year. When the contract period was terminated, the landowner would get back his land without repaying the money back to the tenant.

**Thede bondok (Fixed payment):** In this system the economic situation was the same for the legal agreement between landowner and tenant. After negotiating with each other the amount of rent and period of time were set up. The landowner had to return the whole amount of money to the tenant after the completion of the contract. For example, the tenant paid 2000 Taka to the landowner for 40 dec of land for a temporary ownership of one or two seasons on years. In some cases, the landowner repaid the money back to the tenant only when he could afford to do so with out time limitation. The fixed payment system was not found in the study village at the time of survey. Farmers practiced this system only when they needed the money in an emergency for health treatment, school payment and business investment etc. In some cases, when the landowner could not return the money to the tenant, until the long period of 4-5 years, he might lose his land according to the terms of the contract.

**Table 1 Relationship between farm size categories and land tenure systems in the study village**

Farm size categories (ha)	Numbers of household	Rent out				Rent in			
		Cash		Inkind		Cash		Inkind	
		Advanced payment	Late payment	Advanced payment	Late payment	Advanced payment	Late payment	Advanced payment	Late payment
Landless	12 (5)								1 (10)
Small	163 (66)	15 (9)	1 (1)	2 (1)	3 (2)	55 (34)	2 (1)	5 (3)	6 (4)
Medium	61 (25)	15 (25)	-	4 (7)	2 (3)	14 (23)	2 (3)	1 (2)	3 (5)
Large	11 (4)	3 (27)	-	3 (27)	-	1 (9)	3 (27)	-	1 (9)
Total	247 (100)	33 (13)	1 (0.4)	9 (4)	5 (2)	70 (28)	7 (3)	6 (2)	11 (4)

Source: Household Survey, 2003-2004

Note: Figures in parentheses indicates percentages

**Table 2 Relationship between farm size categories and mortgage systems in the study village**

Farm size categories (ha)	Numbers of households	Mortgage in		Mortgage out	
		Constant repayment	Reduced repayment	Constant repayment	Reduced repayment
Landless	12 (5)	-	-	-	-
Small	163 (66)	-	2 (1.2)	-	3 (2)
Medium	61 (25)	-	2 (3.2)	-	4 (7)
Large	11 (4)	-	-	-	-
Total	247 (100)		4 (2)		7 (3)

Source: Household Survey, 2003-2004

Note: Figures in parentheses indicates percentages