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INTRODUCTION

1. Shrimp is cultivated in the coastal regions of Bangladesh because its saline water is best for Bagdha (Tiger prawn) shrimp cultivation. The main element of a coastal environment, the high and low tides are present here; and the level of salinity is high here. Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Pirojpur, Barguna, Jhalokathi, Patuakhali, Barisal, Bhola, Feni, Chadpur, Laxmipur, Noakhali, Chittagong, and Cox's Bazaar are considered coastal districts. Shrimp cultivation takes place in each of these districts, more or less.

Shrimp cultivation is mainly done in three ways: cultivate only shrimp in a *gher*; cultivate paddy and shrimp together in a *gher*; and cultivate salt and shrimp together. The salinity level in water in some places of Satkhira, like Syamnagar Upazilla, is 8-9 times higher and, compared to paddy cultivation, shrimp is much more profitable. The rest of the land in Satkhira, and land in Khulna and in Bagerhat is used for paddy and shrimp cultivation together. Shrimp and Paddy cultivation in the same land is still the practice here. Shrimp cultivation takes place from February through July.

2. The impact of shrimp cultivation is easily seen when one visits affected villages in Bangladesh.

The desert...

Villagers of Shabeberabad and Chunkuri can be found loitering around Poddarganj Market. They have no work to do – shrimp farms in the locality have rendered their fields barren. Of the 2,500 acres in Shabeberabad, 1,600 acres are used to cultivate shrimp.

There are no playgrounds left for the Shabeberabad's malnourished children; celebration of bonbhojon (a communal feast) has ceased; women walk 3 hours to collect a potful of drinking water. Fisherfolk have lost their livelihood as well: the fish in the Chunkuri river have died and local canals have been usurped by shrimp-farmers. The high salinity of the soil has killed all vegetation – scrub and small clumps of coarse grass stubble the land.

Harekrishna Halder is a rickshaw-van driver. One of nearly 40 van drivers in the village, all of whom lost their arable fields to shrimp farmers. Harekrishna and his friends are preparing to go to Gopalganj to work as labourers. He still remembers the time when, a few years ago, people from Gopalganj-Faridpur would come to Shabeberabad to work.

Many people, however, are unable to afford a rickshaw-van, or even get a simple job in the shrimp ponds. They are globalized farmers. Shabeberabad is their desert.

THE VERY DEAR, CORRUPT TRADE

1. The government and the shrimp traders have remained vocal of the “success” of this sector, ignoring for years the environmental, human rights, and law & order issues related to it. Eager to bring even larger tracts of land under shrimp cultivation, they loudly announce the increase in export earning. Not surprisingly, they ignore the other figures that have also increased – the salinity of once-arable land, the number of malnourished citizens, the number of loan defaults, the party-affiliated thugs who terrorize entire localities...

A few facts and figures

According to Export Promotion Bureau, Bangladesh exported shrimp worth Tk.2045.2 crore in the fiscal year 2003-2004, which was 6% of the total export income.

Readymade garments worth Tk.26149.2 crore has been exported in the same year, which is 75.9% of the total export income. The big shots involved in this all-corrupt industry control much of Bangladesh's politics.

Jute, the golden fiber contributes a mere 4.29% to the export income – down from 89.9% in 1973. The sector is riddled with corrupt officials. Jute farmers get no incentives from the government.

The amount of total shrimp export is not from shrimp farms or ghers alone. More than 15 percent of the amount is harvested from wild catch or from the sea. Almost all the owners of these shrimp processing industries are involved with the mainstream political parties.

A hundred shrimp exporting companies have offices and factories on the bank of the Rupsha River.

2. Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association is the organization of these owners and officials. This Association has submitted the Vision 2010 and Beyond project proposal to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia. If the project is implemented, shrimp export will bring in Tk.10,000 crore per year, claim the shrimp business people.

The benefits that shrimpers already get...

In 1991, the Bangladesh Government recognized hatcheries and aquaculture as industries and included them in the investment topshil. Since then, these owners:

- 1. Are getting loan money in low interest from public or private banks*
- 2. Enjoying discount in infrastructure development or electricity.*
- 3. Paying less tax. 10% less than other exports.*

The people whom the government practically disowns...

- 1. Migrant workers of the documented, official sector send home Tk.10199.12 in the year 2000. This already equals what Vision 2010 wants to achieve!*
- 2. Undocumented migrants also send in huge amounts too – no one knows how much, though educated guesswork results in a figure equal to the official figures.*

WHO CULTIVATES SHRIMP... IN WHOSE LAND

1. In Bangladesh, shrimp is cultivated using traditional techniques. However, semi-intensive cultivation of shrimp is done in some places, especially Cox's Bazaar. According to a government survey on fisheries resources, Bagdha (tiger prawn) and Galdha (sweet-water prawn) was cultivated on 203,071 hectares of land in 2003-04.

Modus Operandi

It was the night after Christmas in 1992. A group of 50 armed thugs attacked Holdibunia village of Mongla upazilla in Bagerhat District. Following the attack, which was show of strength, one SM Amzad Hossain and his brother Farid Hossain, shrimp cultivation was forcibly begun on agricultural land. A standard modus operandi exists:

- 1. File a few false cases against few villagers.*
- 2. Force some of the to work for them in return for dropping the case, and,*
- 3. Cripple the local police administration with political influence.*

They kept the land under their possession until the new government sworn in during the 1996. The administration assisted them openly. SM Amzad Hossain is a top listed shrimp trader. He owns five shrimp processing factories.

The villagers of Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira have dozens of such stories to tell... Unemployed and deprived of their lands, they are usually happy to oblige since they have all the time in the world and, quite literally, nothing more to lose...

2. The incidents of villagers' eviction and outsider forcibly assuming control of *ghers* coincide with political changes in Bangladesh. A large part of the *gher* owners in Paikgachha, Daacope, Rampal and Mongla packed up and left the area when the Ershad regime was ousted. When the Awami League came to power in 1996, the local MP had an active role in ousting the outsiders cultivating shrimp. It is then that the people of Holdibunia village of Mongla Upazila ousted Amzad with his group. The forceful shrimp cultivation started in Malgazi village of Mongla Upazila again when the Four-Party Alliance came to power in 2001.

3. Traditional, semi-intensive and intensive shrimp cultivation

A few figures

- 1. During fiscal year 1988-89, land amounted to 108,000 hectare with a production of 18,625 metric ton.*
- 2. During fiscal year 1998-99, land increased to 141,353 hectare with a production of 90,076 metric tons.*
- 3. In 2002-03 production was 100,804 metric ton. No increase of land was recorded.*
- 4. In 2003-04 shrimp was grown on 203,071 hectares of land and the production rose to 114,666 metric ton.*

The district level or central fisheries officers could not explain the sudden increase of 60,000 hectare land in the last year of account. This was perhaps the land used for Galdha cultivation, which was not accounted in the official documents in the previous years.

Galdha – fresh water shrimp

Galdha is a species of shrimp that thrives in sweet water. Faltita area of Fakirhat Upazila in Bagerhat District was well known for Galdha cultivation and its trade. People of the Faltita region have traditionally used paddy fields as ponds for Galdha cultivation. A farmer can make a pond in 40 decimals of land in a paddy field of 100 decimals or an acre. The farmer puts Galdha fries in the pond. The remaining 60 decimals are kept for rice cultivation. In rainy season, the entire field is flooded and becomes a seasonal gher. Several surrounding regions like Khulna, Narail have adopted the Faltita method afterwards. The people living in Dumuria in Khulna District, Kesbopur in the Jessore District and Kumri in the Narail District have begun cultivating Galdha in this fashion.

In 1997 the total number of Galdha cultivating districts was 22 with 22,357 farms or *ghers* occupying 11,607 hectares of land. Now the area under Galdha cultivation in Khulna and Bagerhat alone exceeds that amount. Galdha is cultivated in fresh water and does not need large *ghers*. The average size of Bagda farms is 3.35 hectare and that of Galdha is 0.4 hectares.

The people of Faltita in Bagerhat used to exclusively cultivate Galdha. However, due to an increase of salinity in the area, people have begun cultivation of Bagdha as well. Conversely, many Bagdha *ghers* in Kaliganj, Shyamnagar and Satkhira proper have been changed to Galdha *ghers* because silting of canals has blocked the entry of saline water into the area (Fourth Fisheries Project-1).

POLICY, LAW AND PROJECTS OF THE GOVERNMENT

1. The second five-year plan (1980-1985) has bestowed industry-status on shrimp cultivation. There is no separate government policy on shrimp farming. Since, it is a sub-sector of the Fisheries Sector, the policies of the Fisheries sector guide the shrimp industry as well.

The Fisheries Policy, 1998 – Objectives

- 1. Develop and increase of production of fish resources*
- 2. Increase employment to eradicate poverty and development of the socio-economic situation of the fisherfolk*
- 3. Meet the animal protein needs of the people*
- 4. Increase foreign exchange through export promotion*
- 5. Maintain the ecological balance, protect biological diversity and develop health*

2. The policy maintains that shrimp is of special importance in the national economy and it encouraged using newer technology to increase production. The Policy has a number of noble provisions...

The Fisheries Policy, 1998 – Recommendations

- 1. Formation of thana, district and national level committees on shrimp*
- 2. Protection of biological diversity protected in coastal and polder areas*
- 3. Encourage traditional shrimp cultivation methods and reforestation schemes*
- 4. Halt on the expansion of shrimp cultivation in the mangrove and Sundarban area*
- 5. Recognition of shrimp cultivation as an industry and extension of industry-specific economic benefits to shrimp cultivators*
- 6. Encourage and facilitate the establishment of hatcheries*
- 7. Focus on hygiene and quality-control in exported shrimp*

3. The shrimp business got international attention long before government policy on shrimp was enforced and, spurred by enormous export market demands, expanded in the midst of many irregularities including misappropriation and forcible annexure of land.

The government and donor agencies continued enhancing shrimp trade and its cultivation ignoring environmental issues, human rights violation, the economic disaster from the mis-utilization of arable land and health issues. These irregularities have existed since the 80's and still remain.

To cut or not to cut...

The Coastal Embankment Project was implemented during the 60s decade to protect the croplands in coastal regions from saline water. The shrimp cultivators illegally cut the embankments in the eighties to redirect saline water into fields in violation of the Embankment and Drainage Act. In 1985, the government issued permits to shrimp cultivators allowing them to breach an embankment dam.

4. The Shrimp Mahal Management Policy was surrounded by controversy since its pronouncement in 1992. Under this Policy, land deemed suitable for shrimp cultivation would be declared a “Shrimp Mahal”. Such land would be leased for the exclusive use of shrimp cultivation and, once leased, could not be used for agriculture. Vast tracts of agricultural land – khas land – were summarily declared “Shrimp Mahal” areas and were subsequently leased to shrimpers under this policy.

The government implements many projects to empower the shrimp sector besides enacting such laws and policies. The appendix has a list of projects that the government has implemented to establish the shrimp sector (Fourth Fisheries Project-1).

At the private level Grameen Bank, CARE and BRAC have shrimp projects. Worth mentioning are the Chokoria shrimp project of Grameen Bank, Galdha project of CARE and Shrimp hatchery project of BRAC.

EMPLOYMENT VERSUS ENDANGERED LIVELIHOOD

1. The main actors in shrimp production are fry collectors, fry *faria* (middleman or agent), *aratdar* (wholesalers), workers and employees in shrimp hatcheries, fry nursery owner, *gher* owner, workers at a *gher*, owners and workers of a depot, a fry-commission agent and shrimp agents. Transport workers transport the shrimp over land and water. In processing zones, huge assemblies of people work to prepare the shrimp - separating heads, cleaning, grading, measuring, packaging and freezing are the main tasks.

According to the government, shrimp cultivators and processing factory owners, the shrimp industry has provided employment to thousands of people. The government count says that more than 100,000 shrimp collectors, mainly women and children, trawl the coastal rivers and canals. Solving the equation of two persons to each hectare of shrimp-land leads to a figure of 400,000 people, mostly men, directly involved with the shrimp industry in the pre-processing stage. Besides, 150,000 people contribute indirectly in different stages of the industry—processing factory, depot, hatchery, nursery, *arat* and landing centers, fry-collecting equipment, and transportation. In total, this industry has employed 650,000 people.

The United States of America (USA) is the primary consuming country of Bangladesh shrimp. This country has special interest in the Bangladesh shrimp sector and has assisted and encouraged shrimp production and its trade in this country.

USAID arithmetic

USAID estimates that 520,000 persons were engaged in shrimp fry collection in 2005. The government estimates that fry collectors had caught 1,500,000,000 shrimp fries in the same period from different coastal regions of Bangladesh. This translates to 2,885 shrimp-fry per collector. Fry sells at 1Tk., and, thus, the annual income of each fry collector was less than Tk. 3,000. Though USAID claims “vast employment” in the sector, this income – 8Tk. Per day – is not “employment” by a wide margin

USAID informs that there are 39,000 Bagda farms and 110,000 Galda farms in the country and if each farm employs three persons on an average, 750,000 persons have a shrimpin’ job. The 3-per farm guess is an ill-informed one. Freshwater Galda farms, which far outnumber the saline-water Bagda farms, are small. They are less than half-a-hectare on average. The owner tends to these farms and hires extra labour only when the gher is first prepared. Sometimes, labour is also hired when the gher is harvested.

Arithmetic of the guesswork kind has led USAID to estimate that 1,200,000 are employed by the shrimp industry earning, on an average, a daily wage of 80Tk. Field research has shown that the averaged wage is never more than Tk 60.

Two types of workers work in these factories. Some factories employ directly and pay a monthly wage while others pay on daily basis. The base of this type of employment is a verbal agreement. Although they work as permanent workers, they do not have a written appointment letter. The other category of workers are those who work for a third-party

labour contractor. They do not have any contact with the factory-owners. Women form the majority of contract workers in this processing factories. Men are paid Tk. 50 (around \$.71cents) daily. Women are paid Tk. 40Tk (around \$.57 cents).

Employment truths...

1. *The factory owners do not provide any recruitment letter to the workers.*
2. *Any worker may lose job without any notice.*
3. *The hours of work are never fixed and increase, without overtime pay, when large consignments of shrimp arrive.*
4. *None of the factories have a weekly holiday.*
5. *When a worker needs leave, she or he has to work for 24 hours in advance or quit the job.*
6. *A worker earns Tk.1,500 each month on an average.*
7. *None of the factories have trade union or workers' association.*

The negative impacts of shrimp cultivation are well known. The shrimp exporters and organizations like USAID do not factor in the detrimental effects and deduct for costs.

The costs...

1. *Production of rice has decreased due increase in soil salinity*
2. *Coconut trees, palm, dates, have died. The trees that survived are barren.*
3. *Vegetables and fruit gardens in homes have withered*
4. *The grazing fields are denuded of grass...*
5. *Drinking saline water has killed most cows and goats.*
6. *Homestead poultry has dwindled.*
7. *Dairy product (milk) has decreased.*
8. *River fish populations have thinned considerably.*

The victims of shrimp industry pay these costs everyday and will continue to bear these costs for the rest of their lives..

The ADB, referring to information of 1996 by the World Food Program, states that:

1. In the Upazillas of Mongla, Sharankhila, Shyamnagar, Rampal and Daacope, poverty is “very high”
2. In Botiaghata, Koira, and Kaliganj, poverty is “high”.
3. The access to drinking water and use of sanitary latrines in these Upazillas is below the national level.

The shrimp industry is active in these upazillas. Where are all the profits going?

ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY IGNORED

- 1.** The 710-kilometer (km) coastal belt that spans 15 districts between Teknaf and Raimongol of Bangladesh is unique for bio-diversity. The largest Mangrove forest in the world, better known as the Sundarbans, is in this coastal region. Shrimp has been cultivated in the Sundarbans with assistance from the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and government initiatives by clearing the jungle in Cox's bazaar. The commercial cultivation of shrimp in the greater Khulna region has directly attacked the Sundarban biodiversity. The Sundarbans in Bangladesh is the single largest mangrove patch in the world. Its expanse is 6,017 sq. kilometer. It is home to 245 species of fauna and 334 species of flora including the endangered Royal Bengal Tiger. UNESCO declared the Sundarbans a World Heritage Site in 1997.
- 2.** Shrimp cultivation or monoculture of a single species cannot be environment friendly anywhere. Bangladesh is not an exception. The residents of these regions suffer the consequences. The issue of the environment is new to them; only a few journalists of Khulna and Dhaka, some NGO officials, and a few researchers and university teachers consider the issue important. The region's fish population has plummeted and the diversity of species has dwindled to alarming levels in the shrimp cultivation areas. When asked, anyone in Khulna, Satkhira or Bagerhat will tell you that the canals and rivers do not have as many fish as before because of the "net pullers" – the fry collectors.
- 3.** Shrimp fries are collected from Nature ruthlessly. From 120,000 "net pullers" in 1990, there are now 430,000 people engaged in this ecologically disastrous activity. According to a research finding only 2% of a catch is economically viable to the industry and the rest (98%) is thrown away. To catch a single Bagda fry, one kills 14 other kinds of shrimp, 21 species of fish and 1,600 zooplankton (Moral et al). The FAO estimates that one destroys hatchlings of 50 species to catch 1 Bagda fry. These include shrimp of several other species, and fish like Paisha (parshey), Cheuwa, Tengra, and Bekti (USAID).
- 4.** For years, the Forest Department has been giving written permission to catch shrimp fries in Sundarban although it is a reserved forest. A government notification circulated on 9th September 2000, prohibits fry-collection activities in coastal and estuarine waters. Since people invest money in the fry business in the Sundarban, officials in the Forest Department accept bribes in return for allowing clandestine fry-collection.

Fry collection teams cut trees for supporting their nets. Poaching of deer in the region is also common.

The Sunderbans – historical records

1. There were 18,500 acres of reserved land and 2520.45 acres of protected forest in the Chokoria Sundarbans of Cox's Bazar District. (Gazette notification, 1903)
2. The British Government leased 3,910 acres of land in this Sundarban to 262 landless people in 1929. It is then that the downfall of the Sundarbans began (Gain).
3. The Bangladesh Government of 1977 leased 563 acres of land to Mohammad Giashuddin for developing a shrimp and duck farm.

4. The government gives over 5,000 acres of land in Rampura mouza to the Department of Fisheries for shrimp cultivation in 1978. The Department leased that land to 39 influential people (Moral).
5. The implementation of the Brackish Water Shrimp Culture component of the ADB financed Aquaculture Development Project was started in 1982. The Department of Fisheries leased the 11 acres land of 115 plots to different individuals.
6. The implementation of the World Bank and UNDP Shrimp Culture Project started in 1986. Plots of 10 acres each were leased to 468 persons for ten years at the rate of Tk.1,500 tax per year.
7. Grameen Bank was leased 30 plots at that time.
8. The ADB project ended in 1988 and the World Bank project in 1993. The Chokoria Sunderban was literally without any tree at this time. The 800 hectares mangrove cut under the project area has devastated the breeding grounds of fish and shrimp fries.

DECREASE IN FOREST-FISH-LIVESTOCK RESOURCES

Back to the desert

Amiya Sagar Gain is Shabeberabad's village-doctor. The mud walls of his houses are falling apart because the saline soil does not bind adequately. The yard of his house is heaped with soil that has oozed from the cracks in the wall. Shrimp ponds bound the east and south of his house. The family pond is saline and the fish in it have died. Earlier, many freshwater fish like parsey, bhетки, bhangan, tengra, pangas, datney, phasysa, beley, guley or cheua thrived in the river and canals surrounding Shabeberabad.

Due to shrimp cultivation, 64 ponds have been rendered saline in Shaberabad village alone. The women of this village have to travel a long distance to fetch drinking water. The nearest freshwater ponds are three hours away and women walk this distance everyday, in the sweltering heat, to fetch all the water they can carry – two pitchers.

1. The other debating issue is the permanent damage to the soil due to the high dosage of chemical used in shrimp *ghers*, especially the ones in which Galdha is cultivated. Before introducing galdha fries in the *ghers* a poison manufactured by ACI called “Rottenol” is applied into the water. The packet label reads, “Destroys killer and other fishes”.

The Galdha cultivators in Foltita Bazaar of the Bagerhat district use three products manufactured by Novartis. It was obvious that shrimp *ghers* are a major source of income for these companies.

The shrimp diet... éscargots

Snail is used as a main feed for shrimp gher in Foltita bazaar of Bagerhat and Kumri village of Norail district. The cultivators have other options but shrimp grows fast on snails – and every one (including the shrimp) knows this. This has given rise to another business – snail hunting.

No one needs to procure permission to catch snail. Some people catch snails all day from small boats in the lowland water bodies in Gopalganj, Faridpur and Madaripur. The catch is brought to the galdha gher in motorboats and lorries. The women split the shells and the flesh is sold, by the kilo, in the bazaars of Foltita. Scientists say that the egg and larvae of snail are a major food source for fish. A large number of birds feed on snail. Naturally, the birds and fish populations in the region have decreased.

On being asked why she had converted her rice field into a gher, Firoza Begum answered, “Shrimp is ten times more profitable than rice. Small farmers are profiting. Rice production still on. If shrimp fails we will go back to rice.” She hasn’t heard anything about the land becoming sterile. The Upazila fisheries officers or her sons have not told her about it. By the time farmers like Firoza Begum realise that their land is worthless for agriculture, it would have been too late.

STATUS OF WOMEN

The broad impact of shrimp cultivation on people is obvious. When analyzed in the light of gender-stereotypes, it is found that women bear the brunt of blow the shrimp cultivation delivers upon society.

Shrimp cultivation and women

1. *Shrimp cultivation has destroyed sources of drinking water in hundreds of villages. Women collect drinking water for the family.*
2. *Availability of firewood and cow dung has decreased in shrimp cultivation areas. Women are responsible for collecting firewood and preparing cowdung cakes for fuel. They need to travel further to gather these supplies.*
3. *Women are responsible for cooking at home. Many ingredients of the staple diet in Bangladesh – rice, fish and vegetables - are in short supply*
4. *Women have lost an important source of income since homestead poultry cannot drink saline water.*

Women are largely involved in 3 stages in the chain of shimping process: they collect shrimp fry, they are hired to weed gbers and contracted to work on the cleaning and packing assembly line of a shrimp processing factory. The industry does not provide women job with a monthly salary or a fixed income.

Discriminatory practices

1. *Chores at home do not allow women the time to travel to the shrimp market. Therefore, they sell their catch on location it. Naturally, the middleman can dictate a price lower than the prevailing market rate.*
2. *Women are paid less than men in weeding in gbers. For other pond operations like digging or dredging, while men are paid between Tk. 50-60, women are paid between Tk. 30-40. Shrimp processing operations like cleaning and gutting earn women Tk. 25-30. Men earn Tk 30—40.*
3. *They are not allowed medical leave*
4. *They face physical, verbal and often sexual abuse by security guards, managers and male co-workers*
5. *They loose are hired and fired at will...*

Between 30,000-50,000 workers work in processing factories. Eighty percent of these are women. This figure is often quotes by government in attempts to “highlight” the positive impact of the shrimp industry – a case where statistics are twisted for petty means.

The twist...

Very few workers in shrimp factories are permanent. Third-party contractors recruit workers and they take a daily contract for work at a factory and keep a lion's share of the work done. Contracted labourers have no rights as industrial worker, they may not form unions, they are paid no overtime and work for wages much lower than the stipulated minimum. This is not employment. It is brutal exploitation.

HUMAN RIGHTS – THE MOST IGNORED ISSUE

1. The deforestation of the Chokoria Sundarban for the purposes of shrimp cultivation began during the regime of Major General Ziaur Rahman in 1977. The present scenario of shrimp cultivation in Bagerhat, Satkhira and Khulna Districts began to take shape during the regime of Hussain Mohammad Ershad from 1982 to 1990. Peoples' rights, constitutional and customary rights collapsed during the military regime.
2. Allegations of forcibly cultivating shrimp on others' land are common even today especially in areas populated by citizens who belong to religious-minority communities. There are also allegations of default on *hari* payments, of not removing saline water from the *ghers* on time and so on. The administration, police and local government turn a blind eye towards these victims.
3. Government policy for landless people establishes their right to *khas* land. Regardless, people forcibly occupying *khas* land in coastal regions - especially fringe land - to cultivate shrimp. The Sundarbans are not the property of Bangladesh Government alone. This complex ecosystem and its treasures of flora and fauna belong to human society.

The law stipulates that a *gher* may be made in an area if 85 per cent of the landowners agree. The voices of the remaining 15% who disagree are ignored. They get no compensation for their ruined farmland – not even compensation by way of lip-service in the law. The government does not care for those who would rather farm crops than grow shrimp.

4. There is no assurance of rights for workers in shrimp *ghers* or processing factories. The number of day laborers far exceeds the numbers required and the shrimp industry takes ruthless advantage of the skewed demand-supply statistic. The workers have no space for negotiations for an appointment letter, wages, terms and conditions of work, or allowances. They are not allowed to form trade unions to stand up for them.

Government apathy

The Government of Bangladesh is not interested in protecting the right of 1,000,000 workers in the shrimp industry. Instead, it has signed many of in a clear violation of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

Bangladesh Government has signed CEDAW (Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) but is quiet on the issues of oppression and violation of women's rights in the shrimp industry.

The governments of consumer countries – the EU and the US – do not speak of the environmental damage and the state of the shrimp-workers' rights, health and well being. They do not say, "we boycott Bangladeshi shrimp because is produced at the cost of local ecology and workers' health."

THE ANTI-SHRIMP CAMPAIGN: CURRENT CONTEXTS

There have been anti-shrimp campaigns from several quarters. The political opposition within the government was central among these. Local leaders of left wing political parties protested against shrimp cultivation and tried to mobilize campaign activities. Nijera Kori, and other Dhaka-based NGOs began a resistance campaign. However, only Nijera Kori is still active in this endeavor. Success stories are few and far between.

Batiaghata

People of Batiaghata successfully ousted an illegal gher in 1984. Gani Biswas had dug an illegal shrimp pond on a 700-bigha area in Kaemkhola and Hulla village at the south of Batiaghata Union Council. Because of this gher, the sesame and rice fields began turning saline. The affected people protested unsuccessfully against the Gani group, which often tortured protestors. The protest continued and campaign activities, meetings and protest rallies were organized. After a point, the local administration, which had been ignoring their rights, acceded to their demands. Gani was ousted and shrimp-farming ceased in Batiaghata.

Daacope

Local people in Daacope Thana dismantled gher on 900-bigha of land in Sreenagar village (1986); 500-bigha gher were reclaimed in Jaliakhali in 1987, and in 1989 in Kakrabunia. The owners of the farms in Sreenagar were outsiders; a village leader owned the gher in Jaliakhali; women played an active role in ousting a retired army officer who owned a gher in Kakrabunia.

Shrimp martyr

Govinda Dutta, a teacher at the Kapalia High School, martyred himself for the anti-shrimp campaign. One Atiar Khan, a resident of Dumuria, established a 500-bigha shrimp gher in Dumuria of Khulna District and another in Bhainarbeel of Jessore. To make the gher, Atiar built a dam in Duhuri that resulted in water logging in 10,000-bigha of land. It flooded the houses in several villages. Atiar ignored the public demand for dismantling the dam. This created a spirit of protest and resistance among the affected people. Around 10,000 people of Dumuria, Keshobpur, Abhoynagar, Daulatpur, Monirampur and Phultala thana marched toward Duhuri on 22nd July 1988. A conflict started when thugs of Atiar's gang fired on the rally. While still under fire, the protestors managed to destroy the dam. Fifty people were injured. Govinda Dutta laid down his life.

Korunamoyee Sardar

The anti-shrimp campaign comes to focus internationally after Korunamoyee Sardar was killed on 7 November 1990, during the countrywide movement to oust the government. Wazed Ali Biswas was a leader of the ruling political party that was to be overthrown from power. The massive public outcry – from the media, from political parties, from NGOs, from civil society – resulted in the incident receiving the attention of the international media.

After the death of Korunamoyee two issues were added to the campaign agenda: stopping shrimp farming on public land and the issue of environmental damage. Initially, the slogan of the campaign was, “*Jomi jar, gher tar*”, which means that a *gher* should belong to the owner of the land.

Worth mention here is that the anti-shrimp campaign was only against *Baghda* or saline water shrimp cultivation. The cultivation of the sweet water shrimp or *Galdha* is fast increasing. There has been hardly any mobilization against cultivation of *Galdha*.

What now?

Noni Gopal Mondol, an activist, explained the situation thus: I am ethically against shrimp cultivation. I know the environmental harm it causes. The reality is different to where I stand ethically. We fought against outsiders cultivating shrimp. Now the owners of the land are doing it. It brings them economic gains. I cannot stop them. Instead, I try to make sure he is getting the hari regularly or can do it safely. The people know if they do not cultivate shrimp, outsiders will do. I stopped outsiders from cultivating shrimp in my area but I cannot stop shrimp cultivation.

A concern remains whether the movement against shrimp cultivation on public land (*Khas* land) is firmly rooted. Landless people rightfully deserve the use of public land. All they want is the piece of land. They lose their rights to cultivate on their land if shrimp cultivation takes place. Conflicts between the police-supported shrimp cultivators and landless people have occurred many times. People have died while fighting for their rights. However, the scales are tilted in the favour of those who wish to cultivate shrimp. Their ponds effectively render the entire region saline leaving farmers with no option but to cultivate shrimp themselves. Many farmers desperate to find means of survival, are lured by the temporary financial returns of shrimp-cultivation.

“People have accepted shrimp cultivation,” says Achintya Biswas, a noted activist. “They enjoy the economic gain. The issue of environment does not bother them yet. Many don’t understand it or even try to...”

ANNEX F

Table 1

Exportable Item	Year 1972-73 Income from Export%	Year 1981-42 Income from Export%	Year 1990-91 Income from Export%	Year 2003-04 Income from Export%
Jute made goods	51.4	46.5	16.9	3.24
Raw jute	38.5	16.3	6.1	1.05
Lather	4.6	10.1	7.8	2.78
Tea	2.9	6.1	2.5	0.21
Chemical goods	0.9	1.1	2.6	1.59
Frozen food	0.9	8.5	8.3	5.13
Readymade garments	0.0	1.1	42.8	46.53
Nit ware	0.0	0.0	7.6	28.25
Other	0.9	10.4	5.4	11.22

*Source: Bangladesh Export Statistics 2003-2004, Export promotion
Buras*

Table 2

Year	Total Export (M-Ton)	Income from Export (In Taka)
1995/96	25225	1106.39
1996/97	25742	1188.91
1997/98	18630	1181.48
1998/99	20127	1162.21
1999/2000	28514	1612.15
2000/01	29713	1885.15
2001/02	30209	1447.76
2002/03	36864	1719.88
2003/04	42943	2152.77
2004/05	46533	2281.59

*Source: Bangladesh Export Statistics 2003-2004, Export promotion
Buras*

Table 3

Country	Income from Export (In Taka)	Percentage of income from export
USA	7,509,001	35.10
Belgium	5,556,435	25.97
UK	4,727,861	22.10
Germany	1,328,233	6.21
Japan	1,157,042	5.41
France	284,486	1.33
Other country (20)	831,554	3.88

*Source: Bangladesh Export Statistics 2003-2004, Export promotion
Buras*

Table - 4

Year	Foreign Remittance (In Taka)	Income from shrimp Export (In Taka)
1996/97	5685.30	1188.91
1997/98	6709.15	1181.48
1998/99	7513.18	1162.21
1999/2000	8827.87	1612.15
2000/01	10199.12	1885.15

Source: BBS, 2005 and Export Promotion Bureau

Table -5

Year	Area of Land (Hectare)	Total Production (M- Ton)
1988/89	108,000	18,625
1998/99	141,353	90,076
2001/02	141,353	97,604
2002/03	141,353	100,804
2003/04	203071	114,666

Source: Dr. Abul Barkat and BBS

Table -6

District	No. of Bahda gher	Area of Bagda Gher	No. of Golda Gher	Area of Glada Gher
Khulna	9,600	38,743	36,500	14,377
Bagerhat	18,057	43,208	34,261	16,216
Shatkhira	10,213	44,929	655	696
Total	37,870	126,880	71416	31,289

Source: Report of Three District Fishery Officer for 2005

Table -7

District	No. of Glada Gher in 1997	Area of Golda Gher in 1997 (Hector)	No. of Golda Gher in 2005 (Hector)	Area of Golda Gher in 2005 (Hector)
Khulna	2089	1638.46	36,500	14,377
Bagerhat	18105	5183.40	34,261	16,216
Shatkhira	58	65.44	655	696
Norail	474	249.79	4000	3605
Total	20726	7137.09	75,416	34,894

Source: Fourth Fishery Project -1 and yearly report of from District for 2005

Table -8

SL	Name of the project	Implementation Period of project	Major Donor
01	The Bay of Bengal Programme	1982-1987	FAO/SIDA
02	First Aquaculture Development Project	1979-1986	ADB
03	Second Aquaculture Development Project	1987-1994	ADB
04	Project on Socio-Economic Development of Coastal Fisheries Community	1988-1993	FAO
05	Shrimp Cultural Project	1985-1992	IDA
06	Third Fisheries Project	1990-1996	WB
07	Fisheries Extension and Training Project	1991-1995	ODA
08	Disease Prevention and Health Management in Coastal Shrimp Culture Project	1994	FAO
09	Case studies on Shrimp Aquaculture in Bangladesh	1999-2000	FAO/WB
10	Shrimp Landing and Services Centre Project	1995-1999	GOB
11	Strengthening of Coastal Fisheries Management Project	1997-2002	GOB
12	Empowerment of Fisheries Communities Project	2000-2004	FAO
13	Bagda Shrimp Culture Technology Extension Project	1999-2004	GOB
14	Golda Hatchery development and Culture Technology Extension Project	1998-2005	GOB
15	Shrimp Culture Implementation and Development Programme	1999-2002	French Government

Note: GOB (Government of Bangladesh)