



RURAL LAND MANAGEMENT IN BANGLADESH: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Fahria Masum

Summary

Based on a theoretical discussion from global perspective the paper describes present rural land administration and management structure in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a land scarce country with high-density population. As most of the people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture and allied activities, proper rural land management is crucial. The paper presents an overall view of rural land management in Bangladesh and reveals that the current land management system is almost obsolete. Land administration system is conventional and characterised by inefficiency and corruption. Some of the major problems facing the country in managing rural land are: outdated and inadequate land related policies and land laws, inequality of land ownership and landlessness, as well as increasing conflicts over land. The study also looks at some potential measures taken by the government to improve the country's land administration and management system. Finally the paper provides a set of guidelines to deal with present land management challenges.

Keywords

Land management • land administration • rural areas • Bangladesh

1. Introduction

Despite the relative decline in the economic importance of agriculture in rural regions, 'rural' does not mean economic decline [OECD 2010, p. 7]. A lot of examples tend to support the conclusion that economic growth is not sufficient to reduce hunger, and that growth in agriculture and rural sector of developing countries has a much greater impact on reducing poverty and hunger than do urban and industrial growth [Fuleky 2009, p. XVII]. For a country where unemployment rate is very high, rural areas – particularly those having good transport network and proximity to cities – can generate employment and income opportunities. Therefore, economic and social development of rural sector is not only a pre-requisite for better rural livelihood, but also it has a great impact on country's prosperity.

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with more than 160 million population. The country's 66 per cent of total population (2015) live

in rural areas. Although agriculture now accounts for less than 20 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), the farm sector still employs about 44 per cent of the labour force [IFAD 2015]. Therefore, overall progress of the country depends to a great extent on country's rural development. However, rural areas in Bangladesh face enormous challenges. Though according to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) rural poverty rate has been reduced significantly from 35 per cent in 2000 to 26.4 per cent in 2016, extreme poverty still continues to be a rural phenomenon (14.9 per cent in 2016). As the rural population of Bangladesh increases, landlessness among people dependent upon agriculture is a growing problem. This critical development challenge calls for adoption of a comprehensive, pro-poor rural development approach.

Rural land management is one of the major aspects of integrated rural development. It provides strategic focus to the implementation of rural development strategies and identifies the policies, institutions and options to accelerate the adoption of rural development strategies and pro-poor growth in rural areas. Management of rural land not only provides food security but also has economic impact on various sectors. However, despite the growing importance of rural land management in country's economy, this sector in Bangladesh has not received enough attention. As a policy field, rural land management is still very weak, and it suffers from inefficiency both at policy formulation and implementation level.

2. Land Management: An Overview

2.1 Land and importance of its management

Land is a basic place of human activities. Therefore, humankind has always had close association with land as a basis of food, shelter and livelihood [UN-FIG 1999]. A review of the dynamic humankind-land relationship can be classified into four broad phases [Ting and Williamson 1999]:

- From human settlements during agricultural revolution, through to the feudal system which tied human beings to land in a physical way. Land was the primary symbol and source of wealth.
- The industrial revolution begun a process of breaking that strong physical tie to land, by turning the latter into more of a commodity.
- The post-World War II reconstruction and the population boom saw an awareness of land as a scarce resource that was not sufficient for the needs of the growing world population, which was becoming increasingly mobile.
- The 1980s have seen a different twist in the concern for the scarcity of land. The focus has turned into wider issue of environmental degradation and sustainable development as well as social equity.

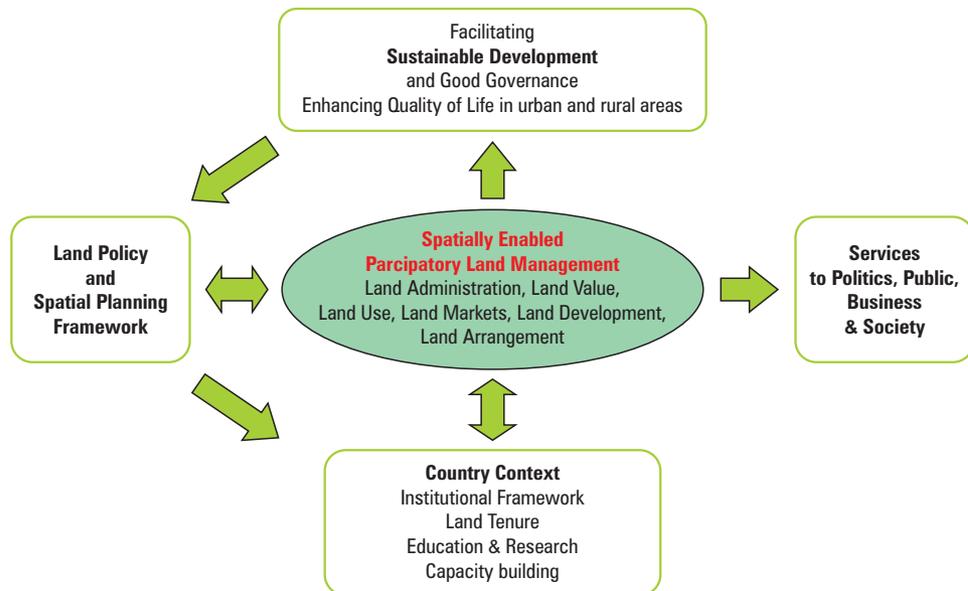
This changing relationship between humankind and land lies at the core of the struggle for sustainable development. From the planning perspective, land represents a mosaic that ought to be regulated in order to ensure conformity and balance of built environment [Ratcliff 1976]. The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance

of Tenure (VGGT) recognize that *the eradication of hunger and poverty, and the sustainable use of the environment, depend in large measure on how people, communities and others gain access to land, fisheries and forests*. Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on Land further emphasises the importance of land in human life and necessity of sustainable use of land and forest, combat desertification and land degradation. In spite of growing importance of land, general land related inefficiencies associated with majority of the developing countries include absence of land policies, tenure insecurity and conflicts over land, inadequate land management capacity and corruption in land sector, which cause serious problems to these countries. Therefore, the complexity of a sustainable development process cannot be understood and implemented without the proper appreciation of land question.

2.2 Land Management and Land Administration: A Conceptual Overview

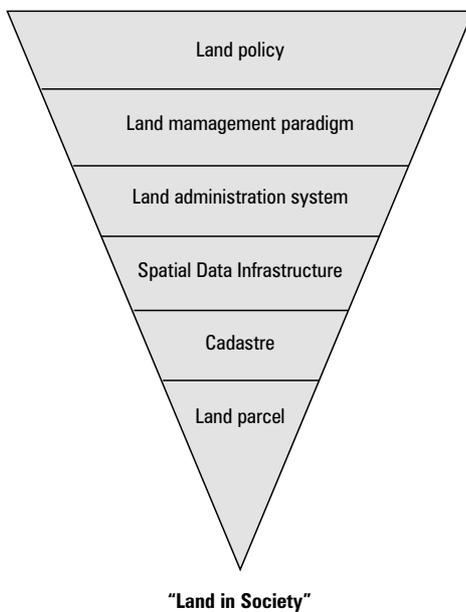
There are many concepts related to land (i.e. land governance, land policy, land management, land administration, land use and development), which refer to the systems and processes associated with managing land. As underlying meanings of most these terms are almost identical, and as they often share similar objectives (e.g. providing access to land, tenure security), confusion exists over using these terminologies. Though the term land policy (i.e. guidance and direction in the manner land is accessed, used and controlled) and land administration (i.e. formal system of registration of land and property rights) received an acceptable conceptual understanding, there is no generally accepted definition of land management as it is influenced by country context (existing tenure rights and socio-economic or political goals) (Figure 1). Therefore, different institutions and researchers define land management from different perspectives. However, in a broader sense, land management encompasses all activities associated with the management of land and natural resources that are required to achieve sustainable development [Enemark 2006]. It is the process by which the resources of land are put into good effect [UNECE 1996]. According to Magel [2003], it is the central in the planning process comprising the complex task of land surveying, appraising, redistributing and administering; it applies to both rural and urban land. However, based on a thorough analysis of different definitions, Mattson and Mansberger [2017, p. 18] suggested that land (use) management is the work related to the use of land resources within the current policy guidelines, while taking into consideration the legal framework for a specific land area.

In some jurisdictions, land management and land administration are synonymous and in others, they are treated as different [Nkwae 2006, p. 7]. Henssen [1994, p. 3] interprets land management as being almost equivalent to land administration as defined by others, with only one addition of planning. But, in distinguishing land administration from land management, Dale and McLaren [1999] argue that land administration is a part of the overall process of land management. According to Williamson [2001, quoted in Steudler and Williamson 2002], land administration as a discipline offers a range of strong, effective and technical tools for land management. Between land



Source: [Magel 2009] adapted from Expert Group Meeting 9–11 November 2005, University of Melbourne

Fig. 1. Land Management Vision



Source: [Enemark 2006]

Fig. 2. Hierarchy of land issues

policy and land administration, a coordination role is played by land management. In many jurisdictions, land administration is closely related to or facilitates land use planning and valuation/land taxation systems, although it does not include the actual land use planning or land valuation processes [UNECE 1996].

According to Enemark [2006], conceptual understanding of land issues may take a form of a hierarchy of levels where land administration system comes next to land management paradigm, which implements policy strategy (Figure 2). However, as the organizational structure of land management/land administration varies from country to country, at implementation level this hierarchy can be obsolete. As a local need approach, instead of creating a hierarchy of levels, both land administration and land management system can implement the strategies of land policy as parallel independent systems. Depending on historical circumstances of a country and its policy decisions, land administration system can be an independent system with its own core objectives. Depending on how different components are combined, various systems of land management may also emerge.

3. Land management and land administration in Bangladesh

Land Administration in Bangladesh has a long history that dates back to systems developed by the Hindu rulers of ancient India; furthermore, it still carries the heavy imprint of the elaborate system of land surveys and registration for revenue collection purposes introduced by the British [CARE Bangladesh 2003, p. 6]. The present day administration of land splits into following four different functions, divided between two Ministries (ibid.):

- Cadastral surveys are undertaken by the Directorate of Land Records and Surveys (DLRS) in the Ministry of Land (MOL);
- Administering *khas*¹ land and managing vested property, updating maps and land records, collecting Land Development Tax (LDT) and implementing land reform legislation and tenants' rights are the functions of The Land Reform Board (LRB), under MOL;
- Arbitration in matters of *khas* land, changes in records, plot demarcation and taxation, which cannot be resolved at lower levels, are served by The Land Appeals Board under MOL;
- Recording land mutations arising through sale, inheritance or other forms of transfer and collection of the Immovable Property Transfer Tax are conducted by the Department of Land Registration in the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

¹ Khas land is a large category of land that includes surplus land above the land ceiling law, land owned historically by the state throughout the colonial period and under Pakistani rule, alluvial land, land without an owner, surplus or unused land, land acquired for the public interest, or auctioned land that has been distributed to landless families with 99-year-use right [Shamsuddoha et al. 2014].

Despite wide use of the term ‘land management’ in research and policy discussion, there exists no fixed definition thereof. Therefore, the term land management is used casually in many setting with varying content. From global perspective, though there is a visible difference between ‘land management’ and ‘land administration’ (discussed in section 2.2), the term land management is often used in Bangladesh to denote ‘land administration’ or ‘land administration and management’. According to Islam et al. [2015] the scope of land management covers maintenance of record-of-right, quick and equitable settlement of *khas* land and alluvial accretions, rent adjustment in diluvium affected holdings, institutional financial assistance to landless and marginal farmers, speedy disposal of recovery proceedings and, above all, provision of trained revenue officials and adequate supervision of such officials at all levels. However, the term ‘land management’ is also used to refer to the process of managing the use and development of land in urban and rural areas. A few researchers [e.g. Huq and Shoaib 2013], use the term ‘land management’ in the sense of maintaining the quality of agricultural land and alleviation of soil degradation, without considering the social dimension. Therefore, there is much confusion over terminology. A degree of uncertainty exists with regard to the meaning and well-defined scope of land management, as it is context-dependent, while the understanding thereof varies between individual researchers and policy analysts for the subject matter.

Regardless of the confusion over terminology, the present practice and institutional arrangements reveal that there are two major systems that encompass activities associated with land – land administration and land use management.

- The mainstream Land Administration, as discussed earlier, deals with the administration of land ownership and quick and equitable settlements of *khas* land.
- Land Use Management provides regulatory and non-regulatory tools to ensure optimum use and development of land and to guide spatial growth. Land use planning and land zoning, the major tools of land use management, are public policy exercises. The process of land use planning started with the adoption of Town Planning Act, 1953 through master plan approach. Since then, the land use planning has been enacted in the major cities. Pourashava (Municipality) Ordinance, 1977 empowered all other municipalities to prepare master plans for their respective towns. Risk-sensitive land use planning added a new dimension to the conventional land use management approach in Bangladesh. The National Land Use Policy, issued by the Ministry of Land in 2001, sets out guidelines for improved land use and zoning regulations. However, regulation of land use is largely absent in rural areas (LANDac 2016, p. 3).

Considering present perspective in Bangladesh, it is impossible to define Land Management, Land Use Management and Land Administration in such a way that they are strictly separated. However, land administration and land (use) management can be considered as two parallel but interdependent systems, responsible for the implementation and monitoring of land-related policies. These two systems may have some overlapping functions as well. Land use management is not only about the physical

change of land; it can bring abstract changes in land ownership, taking into account prevailing legal framework, whereas land administration embraces legal issues. These two systems cannot work in isolation from one another, as land administration forms the legal infrastructure upon which land use management is enacted.

4. Rural Land Management and Land Administration in Bangladesh: The Challenges

4.1. Weak land administration system

As mentioned in section 3, two different ministries are mainly responsible for land administration and management in Bangladesh. Ministry of Land (MoL) undertakes most of the land-related responsibilities including surveys, collection of land development tax, and arbitration process, whereas the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (MLJP) records land mutation and transfer. The key problem is that often these responsible land authorities perform their function in un-coordinated manner. The diversity of ways by which land records are updated and the problems associated with each, give rise to numerous disputes in which the rich and powerful inevitably enjoy the upper hand [CARE Bangladesh 2003, p. 16]. Present land administration system in Bangladesh is conventional and characterised by inefficiency, lengthy bureaucratic process, and corruption [TIB 2015, Hossain 2015]. This inadequate and improper land registration process increases land tenure insecurity and mount difficulties in land transfer. Furthermore, from July 1, 2015, the government is taking Tk. 1000 as mutation fee for each *Khatian* (Record of Right) [TIB 2015, p. 20]. This amount is much larger than the earlier one of Tk 245 [ibid.]. According to the existing policy, registration fee is 10 per cent of selling price of the land in rural areas and 12 per cent in municipal areas (ibid.). This increased rate would discourage landowners in rural areas from following proper procedures for land registration and mutation of their land, and that would put land management and determination of land ownership in jeopardy (ibid.). Moreover, notable corruption in Registration Offices during deed registration is also one of the drawbacks of land administration system [Alam 1992 and Hossain 1995; quoted in Hossain 2015, p. 23].

4.2. Outdated and inadequate land policy and land laws

In Bangladesh land policy and laws are not adequate enough to support the country's rural land management. A study conducted by Human Development Research Centre on land-related laws of Bangladesh observed that the country has a total of 146 land related laws and most of the laws are not time-befitting or people-friendly, [New Age 2012]. Most of the laws were outdated, as they had been formulated during the British and Pakistani period. Also, the laws contradicted each other and failed to fulfil the aspirations of the people of independent Bangladesh over the last 44 years (ibid.). The country does not have a National Land Policy. Although, in 2001, the Government adopted the National Land Use Policy with an objective to improve land use and zoning regula-

tions, its implementation met with difficulties due to the lack of harmonization with cross-sectoral policies (i.e. National Agricultural Policy, National Rural Development Policy and National Forest Policies). Furthermore, the existing land use policy also falls short of providing guidance as to how cross-sectoral interests and plans relating to land should be coordinated [Gebremedhin, 2014 quoted in Hossain 2015]. Though a draft National Zoning Act and Village Improvement Act were prepared in 2010 in line with the Land Use Policy, they were not yet officially adopted [Hossain 2015]. The Ministry of Land has prepared drafts of Agricultural Land Protection and Use Act 2016, which is available for review and comments. Cabinet recently approved the draft of Urban and Regional Planning Act 2017, which aims to prevent unplanned urbanization and to protect agricultural land and wetland [Mamun 2017]. However, finalization of these acts will take time, as they have to undergo several steps in the passage of legislation.

4.3. Unequal distribution and decreasing rate of agricultural land

Structure of land ownership is highly inequitable in Bangladesh. Most agricultural land is owned and controlled by people who are not farmers, and that creates a system of intermediaries and rent-receiving vested interests in agriculture [ILC 2012]. The preliminary report of the 2008 Agricultural Census found 3.26 million rural households as landless (11.4 per cent of the total rural households) and 7.9 million tenant rural households (27.8 per cent of all rural households) [FAO-UN Habitat 2010, p. 5]. Another study shows that in rural areas 89 per cent of landowners own less than 1 ha and 39 per cent have less than 0.2 ha of land [LANDac 2016].

The ownership ceiling of agricultural land per family had been changed many times – from 33.3 acres (100 *bighas*) in 1950 to 125 acres (375 *bighas*) in 1961, then again to 33.3 acres (100 *bighas*) in 1972 [Barkat et al. 2000, quoted in Shamsuddoha et al. 2014]. The Land Reforms Ordinance 1984 further limited the ceiling of acquiring agricultural land per family down to 20 acres (60 *bighas*). Considering the increase of population and scarcity of land, even this ceiling is high, and it should be reduced further.

Table 1. Lives of disaster affected *char* dwellers

All over Bangladesh, the impacts of a wetter and warmer climate are making *char* dwellers felt among the poorest and most marginalised segments of society. In a country of 156 million people, 70 percent of whom live in rural areas, natural disasters are magnified. Some 50–80 million people live in flood-prone or drought-prone areas around the country. While statistics about their average income vary, rural families seldom earn more than 50–80 dollars per month.

“We survive on God’s blessings,” said an old man named Nurul Islam, a *char* resident, “and indigenous agricultural practices.”

34-year-old Rehana Begum who lives in Char Bazra on the banks of the Brahmaputra river, 200 km north of the capital, planted rice seedlings beside her bamboo-and-jute-woven home. “My husband had planted rice and potato on about half an acre of lowland, but the flood destroyed all our dreams” said Rehana Begum.

Source: [Haq 2014]

The demand for non-agricultural land in response to the rapid urbanization is constantly growing. In turn, the amount of cultivable land is declining as it is being converted to non-agricultural land, especially for infrastructure development, which creates further problems. It has been estimated that unless some regulatory mechanism is enforced, infrastructure might consume about 40 per cent of land by 2025 at the current rate of 20 per cent of land decline in country [Huq and Shoaib 2013, p. 131]. Another study shows that present per capita agricultural land of 0.05 hectares will decrease to 0.025 hectares by 2050 [Alam 2017]. Natural disasters such as recurring floods, cyclones and river-bank erosion are also contributing to increasing landlessness. Situation is extremely vulnerable in *char* areas (river islands formed from sedimentation). As more than 70 per cent of food production comes from rural areas, growing landlessness is adversely affecting food security in Bangladesh.

4.4. Rural landlessness and *khas* land distribution

Following the policy of 1987, in 1997 the Agricultural Khas Land and Settlement Policy was promulgated, authorizing *khas* land to be distributed for a 99-year lease period, (or for a one year temporary lease). The law does not only cover agricultural land, but also water bodies. To assist the process of *khas* land identification and its equitable distribution, government policies and the regulatory framework – especially the 1984 Land Reform Ordinance and the *khas* land management and distribution policies – provide concrete directions towards establishing national and local level committees for overseeing *khas* land identification and distribution, identification of landless persons, and a prioritization process, as well as a procedure for raising public support for securing access to *khas* land [Islam 2011]. The estimated amount of total identified (based on official sources) *khas* land in Bangladesh is 3.3 million acres with 0.8 million acres of agricultural *khas* land, 1.7 million acres of non-agricultural *khas* land, and 0.8 million acres of *khas* water bodies [Shamsuddoha et al. 2014].

Distribution of agricultural *khas* land is a major instrument of providing land to rural landless people. It has not only a potential of reducing inequalities in the society, but also it contributes to poverty reduction in the rural areas. However, the poorest part of the rural population is not always benefited from *khas* land distribution. The distribution process is not flawless and often is alleged to conduct under political patronage [TIB 2015]. Furthermore, a significant portion of the 3.3 million acres of *khas* land is not within the control of the government due to illegal occupation and encroachments [Saha 2010]. According to the findings of a study conducted by the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) found that 93 per cent of *char land* remains in the possession of land grabbers. The Ministry feels that it may be very difficult for the destitute landless in this society, surrounded by the selfish land-grabbers, to retain the land given under settlement [Hossain 2015]. According to FAO-UN Habitat [2010], *khas* land is often highly disputed and highly insecure from a legal tenure perspective. Sofar progress in redistributing *khas* land has generally been mixed due to vested interests of the landowning class, lack of political will, the inefficiencies in the way the local

and national administration are organized, and the absence of an updated, systematic and universally accepted source of information on land resource availability and land rights (p. 6–7).

4.5. Land disputes, corruptions and land grabbing

Land related dispute is quite common in Bangladesh. It is estimated that more than 3.2 million land-related cases are pending before the judiciary [Saleh 2015]. According to Transparency International, land in general is the source of almost 60 per cent of all legal disputes in Bangladesh [TIB 2015]. It is said that 80 per cent of criminal offences today stem from land disputes [Saleh 2015]. Land is an important asset for rural households. As it is also regarded as a symbol of power in rural areas, and the tendency of illegal control over land in rural area is very high. As ownership of land in rural areas is very often maintained through unregistered documents, majority of land disputes are due to this reason. A majority of those concern the landless or poor rural people, who are deprived of their right to justice because of their financial incapability. Weak and corrupted administrative system further provides fuel to this practice. Land administration ranks among the top three institutions in Bangladesh with the worst rates of bribery (71.2 per cent), based on feedback from the people who have had contact with the service [TI-FAO 2011, p. 3].

4.6. Women's access to land

Women's land right in Bangladesh is precarious. Average land holdings of male-headed households are more than twice the size of those of female-headed households [Agarwal 2012, quoted in UN Women 2014]. Though the Islamic laws of inheritance allows a Muslim woman to get access to land through inheritance (daughters inherit half the share of property received by sons under Islamic law, and women a one-eighth share of their husbands' property and one-sixteenth of their sons' property in case the sons predecease the mothers), often women don't claim their ownership right due to social practice. Furthermore, land ownership taken forcefully by husbands, sons, or brothers is also very common. Arens (2011) in her research on 'Women, Land and Power in Bangladesh' mentioned a true story of a woman whose sons are at fault (p. 1).

“Khadija, a rich peasant widow, called me into her house. She was clearly upset: «I inherited 9 Bigha (3 acres) of land from my mama (mother's brother) who brought me up, but my sons have registered my land in their names, they took my fingerprint.»”

In 1993, FAO estimated that women in Bangladesh owned just 3.5% of the country's agricultural land. Twenty years on, this share has almost certainly shrunk further, to perhaps as little as 2 per cent [The Economist 2013]. The country has made a significant progress in women's empowerment. Though the female share of the agricultural labour force also appears to have increased dramatically, now exceeding 50 per cent of the agricultural labour force [FAO 2011, p. 4], still women in Bangladesh struggle to establish their land rights due to unfavourable inheritance law and socio-cultural norms.

5. Rural Land Management in Bangladesh: The Opportunities

Though rural land management faces particular uncertainties, government has taken some potentially stark measures that may lead to positive changes. Government policy also favoured NGOs involvement in mobilizing the poor on land issues. The Land Reforms Action Programme (LRAP) also recognised the role of NGOs in *khas* land distribution. Around 200 NGOs are working to promote land rights of landless people [Shamsuddoha et al. 2014]. Samata, Nijea Kori, Uttaran, Land and Agrarian Network for Development (LAND) all made remarkable contributions to rural land issues.

Table 2. Role of NGOs in rural land issues – example of Samata

The struggle to free *khas* land became significant for a number of reasons. In response to the struggle, Samata engaged an NGO coordination council for land reform, established in 1987. This was in effect the first major NGO forum (and the predecessor to the present Association for Land Reform and Development-LARD), which brought together like-minded organizations in an attempt to deal with a specific issue. Finally, this brought to light a particular development methodology, the logic of which offers crucial insights into current development practice and theory.

In order to strengthen national, regional and local lobbying and advocacy work, Samata has been developing a training module on land and agricultural rights, which is offered in the form of training, workshops and seminars to other NGOs and interested groups. The significance of this experience lies not only in the fact that important information is disseminated, but also in that those different experiences from around the country are collected and then incorporated to enrich the syllabus.

Source: [Kader et al. 2000]

5.1. Land Zoning Project

In the light of the National Land Use Policy 2001, Government of Bangladesh has undertaken the National Land Zoning Project to ensure proper use of land resources that are under increasing threat of misuse by rapidly growing population. The main goal of this project is to develop a digital land zoning information system where digital map of each *upazila* can be found, with detailed information on land used for agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism, for rural and urban settlement, industrial, commercial and other purposes. The major areas identified by the project are agricultural zone, fisheries zone, forest zone, urban zone, commercial and industrial zone, *char* land and ecologically critical area, *haor-baor* areas, *barind* zone, tourism and historical importance areas, and forest zone. The first phase of land zoning project was undertaken in 2006, and it led to the completion of land zoning in 19 coastal districts by 2011 [Hasan 2015]. Under the second phase of the project, which started in July 2012, 301 *upazilas* of 40 districts had been taken up for land zoning [ibid.].

5.2. Digital Land Management System (DLMS)

In 2011 Bangladesh Government introduced time-befitting Digital Land Management System (DLMS) project, aiming to ensure transparent and accountable land administra-

tion and management by updating land records and making them available online to the people. The main objectives of the projects are i) to improve land management system, ii) to ensure transparent and secure land ownership, and iii) to scan and digitize land records. One of the important features of DLMS is online-based management system, which enables landowners to accomplish their land related tasks online [Talukder et al. 2014]. As part of digitising Bangladesh's land management, around 65 lakh *bhumi khatians* (records of land rights) have been scanned and indexed into a computerised system under a government initiative [The Independent 2017]. According to an official document, 18,500 map-sheets have also been scanned and indexed under the Digital Land Management project, which ended in June, 2017 [ibid.].

6. Conclusions and recommendations

In a developing country like Bangladesh, land is one of the key resources for the country's economic and social prosperity. Proper land ownership policy is vital for the majority of the people who live in rural areas and depend on subsistence agriculture. Therefore, efficient rural land administration and management is a must. But, it has been obvious that scope of rural land management in Bangladesh is narrow. Present land administration system is also inappropriate and not favourable to the poor farmers and marginal groups. Moreover, rural land management has been increasingly complicated as many multi-stake actors and multi-sectors are getting involved, while different interests paint the disadvantaged and poor people into a corner. Therefore, a comprehensive paradigm shift in policy and strategy is required, in order to resolve rural land management problems. Land management process should fulfil the requirement of comprehensiveness. This requirement refers to a variety of aspects; to satisfy not only one goal but all goals of the various interest groups in the society; or in other words, to the attainment of the general goals in the public interest [Camhis 1979, p. 30].

The efficiency and competitiveness of the rural sector depends on effective management of land tenure system. Though Bangladesh government has taken some pragmatic measures to improve land administration and management system, in order to implement these measures, public-private partnership is necessary. The study recognized that rural land management should fulfil the criteria of 3Ps: policy (favourable legal and institutional framework), planning (plan and procedure to achieve goals) and public (peoples' participation).

The study, based on a desktop-based research, has operated at a broad scale without careful attention to the details of rural land administration and management. Nevertheless, the study offers some suggestions as a basis for further discussion.

- Government policy has an important role in rural land management. Favourable land laws must be undertaken not only to protect rural/agricultural land, but also to treat rich and poor equally to improve access to land by poor.
- Pro-poor land registration system should be introduced, which will have impact on both tenure security and land dispute management. In response to the increas-

ing rate of land disputes, there should be also land tribunals in each district of the country accessible to rural people.

- Climate change is one of the major challenges of our time. In response to the growing importance of climate change and in reducing disaster risk, Land Use Policy 2001 should be revised accordingly. It needs to be updated in order to accommodate changes in land use types. Furthermore, participatory rural land use planning as a tool for disaster risk management should be introduced.
- Encroachment of rural/agricultural land for building infrastructure should be strictly prohibited.

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Dr. Fahria Masum
Land Management Consultant
Connollystrasse 26
80809 Munich, Germany
e-mail: masum@landguidance.com