

## Role Play Scenarios

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### Role Statements of Group A

1. I am a landlord. I own 70 acres of land. I do not have to work on my own land. I hire laborers to grow rice on 20 acres. I rent the other 50 acres to poor farmers. Each farmer pays me half of his harvest as rent for using my land.

2. I am a rich farmer. I own 10 acres of land. I work on my own land, but I also need to hire some laborers to help me grow my crops. I also rent out a few acres to poor farmers who pay me half their harvest as rent.

3. I am a middle-income farmer. I own two acres of land, two cows, and some agricultural tools. I just have enough land to grow enough food for my own family. My wife and children have to work on the farm with me. Sometimes, for extra money, I also work for richer farmers or the landlords, but they don't pay very high wages.

4. I am a poor farmer. I own half an acre of land. I cannot grow enough food to feed my family so I either have to work as a laborer or I have to rent out some land from a rich farmer or a landlord. At harvest time, I pay them half of my harvest as rent. My older children work as laborers as well, so maybe we can get through this year.

5. I am a landless laborer. I own no land. I have no cows or agricultural tools, so I have to get work as a laborer. I earn about 40¢ a day.

### Role Statements of Group B

1. I am a landlord. I live in a cement house. I own a motorcycle that cost me as much as 20 years' wages of one laborer. I have a large warehouse where I store my rice harvest. I only sell my rice when the price is high. I also own a small shop in town, where I can stay overnight in my second house. My shop is a pharmacy shop, but my most popular "medicine" is alcohol.

2. I am a poor farmer. I live in a home made of bamboo with my wife and my six children. My small piece of land does not grow enough food for all of us. Even though I also work for wages, still I cannot grow enough to feed my family properly. I have been sick for three weeks now. The doctor wants one hundred takas before he will cure me. I cannot afford to borrow more money, so I will have to sell a part of my land to buy the medicine.

3. I am a landless laborer. Once I had half an acre of land. Then two years of floods left me with no choice but to sell my land to repay the moneylender. It is difficult finding work, and the rich farmers or the landlords tell us: if you don't want to work for these wages, we can find lots of other workers who will.

4. I am the wife of a poor farmer. My five children are always hungry. We eat rice once a day with wild vegetables. We have to share 250g of rice among the eight of us, including my brother and sister-of-law. I often go without food to give more to my children. I chew on the betel nut to stop the pains of hunger in my stomach. I am afraid we shall have to chop down our only jack fruit tree to sell it as firewood, since my husband has been unable to find work this month.

## Role Statements of Group C

1. I am a rich farmer. Because of the last three good harvests, I have been able to buy a shop in town selling cloth. Many poor farmers and landless workers also come to borrow from me. I lend money to them at high interest rates. Usually they pay me back by giving me half of their harvest.

2. I am a poor farmer. I lost my land to the moneylender, so I moved my family to this small island near the coast to squat on one acre of the land. Then the landlord and his men carrying big sticks came one day and threatened to beat me up if I did not work the land for him. So now I give him half of my harvest. But last month, the cyclone came and washed away most of the island. I lost my wife and two of our children. How can I feed the other ones now?

3. I am a landless laborer. My family lives in this hut without walls. We use palm leaves to keep out the wind. In the winter it is very cold for us. We have no money to buy more clothing. We sleep on straw on the mud floor and cover ourselves with sacks. My father used to own land, but he was careless and sold off one acre just for a wedding celebration. The rest of the land was swindled from him by moneylenders. I have been sick and weak from not enough food. Now the construction bosses will not hire me as they say I'm not strong enough to do the heavy work.

4. I am the widow of a landless laborer. My husband fell ill and we had no money to see the doctor. So he died. Allah says the rich should help the poor, but sometimes I wonder if it's Allah's will or is it the work of men? Nobody can help me feed my children, and I must try to find some more work or we will starve. The landlords pay us women so little, and I don't even have enough money to buy a new sari to replace this torn one, which is my only clothing.

## Role Statements of Group D

1. I am a government politician. The big landlords and the rich farmers are my strongest supporters. They make sure I get the votes, and I help them get government loans and equipment. The poor people are uneducated and have no manners. They are poor because they have too many children and do not work hard enough.

2. I am a poor farmer. When I bring my jute harvest to the government warehouse, the manager gives all kinds of reasons why he can't buy my harvest. So we poor farmers have no choice but to sell our jute to the local merchants at 60 taka. The merchants then sell it to the warehouse at the official price of 90 taka and share their profits with the warehouse managers.

3. I am a poor farmer's wife. I have six children. My husband and I need a large family so that we have sons to look after us when we're old. Our children also earn extra income working in the fields. Now that I have enough children I'd like to stop having more. But government health workers don't like to visit poor villages. I hear that foreign countries have been giving free birth control pills, but we hardly get any from the government. And nobody teaches us how to use them properly.

4. I am a government bank manager. I approve low-interest loans to help farmers buy fertilizers and seeds. I prefer to lend to the rich farmers. They know how to fill in the forms and they have enough land as a security. They are always very friendly and take me out to lunch. The poor farmers can't be trusted. They can't even read the forms and waste my time. And if the harvest is bad, I can't get them to repay their loans.

5. I am a poor farmer's wife. My children often get sick from drinking the dirty water or not eating enough. I can't afford to take them to see the doctor and the government has very few health workers for us poor people. If I use our little money for medicine, then how will we eat?

## Role Statements of Group E

1. I am a poor farmer. In 1974, when the price of rice increased five times, more than 100,000 people starved to death. Floods also destroyed harvests in some districts. But the merchants had lots of rice which they bought and kept in their warehouses so that they could make higher profits when the price went up again. The government was inefficient and did not distribute available food to the starving people. I had to borrow money from the moneylender just to keep my family alive. Many of my neighbors even had to sell off their land at very low prices. After the famine, many of us still cannot afford to buy rice, so we live on cooked jute leaves.

2. I am a landless laborer. There are more and more of us in the country as small farmers lose their land, but the number of jobs available has not increased. So our wages have gone down. Even the meal we get at work is less. Now we get only a pound of rice, with salt, a green chili, and maybe a spoon of dal. I have six mouths to feed. I earn two pounds of rice and one taka a day; but two pounds of rice can only feed two people per day. Yesterday I did not work, so I did not eat. Finally, I had to tear our four bamboo poles from my house and sell them to buy some flour for us. How can we live like this?

3. I am a poor Bangladeshi woman. When I was 13 years old, my parents arranged for me to marry a small farmer; my parents could only afford a small dowry, so my husband is a poor farmer. I try to be a good wife, but often he comes home and beats me up when he is unhappy and cannot get work. I have nowhere else to go; what else can I do but accept my lot quietly?