Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh (Phase II) Project: Baseline Report

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Contents

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AACO	Assistant Accountant-cum-Computer Operator
AVCBII	Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh (Phase II)
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
DC	District Court
DRM	Dispute Resolution Mechanism
EU	European Union
IPA	Innovations for Poverty Action
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Perception
LGD	Local Government Division
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial
Shalish	Bengali name for traditional informal courts conducted by village leaders
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer (Administrative head of the Upazila Administration)
UP	Union Parishad (lowest tier of government in Bangladesh)
USD	United States Dollar
VC	Village Court
WB	World Bank

Executive Summary

Lack of access to justice is evidently a problem in rural Bangladesh, with long waiting time at formal courts, which are also complicated and expensive to use. Informal dispute resolution mechanisms are common, but often lack the power to make and enforce fair decisions. To address this issue of access to justice, the Government of Bangladesh passed Village Courts (VCs) Act, 2006[1] that empowers Union Parishads (UPs) to resolve disputes up to BDT 75,000 (~USD 1,000) in the Village Court (VC) in a simpler and inexpensive manner. However, since the enactment of this act , the actual frequency of formation and use of the VCs have been low. To improve the functionality of the VCs, the Local Government Division (LGD) piloted the Activating Village Courts Bangladesh (AVCB) Project in 351 unions (2009-2015) with technical support from the UNDP and financial support from the EU. Based on the success of the pilot project, LGD is implementing AVCB Phase-II project in 1,080 unions with the financial and technical support from the EU ,UNDP and Government of Bangladesh.

While the initial assessments of the first phase of the AVCB program have been positive, little is known about the causal effects of the program since we do not know the counterfactual for how UPs that received the AVCB program would have evolved in the absence of the program. Therefore, the project has planned to conduct an impact evaluation of the project. There will be pre-post surveys in all the divisions of Bangladesh, except Dhaka and Chittagong where a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) will be implemented.

This baseline report presents the pre-program status on justice seeking behaviour, knowledge, attitude and perception of community people and service providers about VCs and its functions. From January to April 2017, data was collected on disputes, dispute resolution and the functioning of VCs from a sample of UPs in the area that will receive the Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh (AVCB) program (the project area) as well as from some UPs that will not receive the program (the control area). The data comes from households, UP officials, representatives and UP administrative records. The major findings are reported in the following sections.

1. Experience with disputes

Disputes are common in rural Bangladesh – 16% households have an unresolved dispute and 13% have resolved at least one dispute in the past 2 years. 43% of all unresolved disputes and 40% of all resolved disputes fall within the village court jurisdiction. Weighted average of the monetary value associated with relevant disputes is approximately BDT 2,72,000. Overall, 49% of all disputes reported a monetary value below or equal to BDT 75,000. These disputes can potentially fall under the VC jurisdiction depending on their nature. In terms of geographic variation, the southern part of the country appears to be more dispute-prone than other parts of the country.

Most of the disputes are related to land, which is consistent with the rural livelihood pattern of our sample. More than 40% of our sample households reported agriculture as their main livelihood. Cases that fall within the VC jurisdiction, 58% of those are land related. Verbal fights and physical fights without bloodshed are also common among cases that fall within the VC jurisdiction. Both men and women are more involved in land related disputes irrespective of VC's jurisdiction. Among the cases that fall outside the VC jurisdiction excluding land disputes, men are more involved in physical fights with bloodshed and women are more involved in marital issues (28%) and verbal fights (14%). Among the household characteristics, the age of household head and the ownership of land are positively associated with households having disputes. This indicates the importance of training modules designed by the AVCB to provide special attention to land dispute resoultion. The demand for VC can also be increased if VC can undertake family disputes, which people would like to resolve locally.

2. Justice seeking behavior
Shalish (an informal adjudication/mediation conducted by village leaders) is by far the most common Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM). Respondents in the baseline claimed that 85% of the

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[1] This Act replaced the Village Court Ordinance 1976.

resolved disputes were resolved in the *Shalish*. VCs were used in 2% of the cases and district court in 13% of the cases. The likelihood of seeking a resolution of an existing dispute decreases by 29 percentage point if the dispute is related to land. In contrast, the likelihood of seeking resolution of an existing dispute increases by 16 percentage point if the dispute falls within the VC jurisdiction. This reveals the relevance of functional VCs in increasing demand for seeking dispute resolution. The likelihood of choosing *Shalish* as the DRM increases by 6 percentage point if the respondents are in good terms with the UP chairman. People perhaps expect to have a favorbale adjudication process in *Shalish* if they are in good terms with powerful people like the UP chair. Higher monetary value of the dispute is associated with lower probability of using *Shalish* and higher probability of using a district court.

While the use of VC is not common yet for dispute resolution (14 disputes out of 891 resolved by VCs), the cases that were claimed to have resolved in VCs did not properly follow the VC Act 2006 (Amended in 2013). Among 14 resolved disputes- three were of nature that do not fall within VC's jurisdiction. One respondent also claimed to have paid lawyer fees which is not allowed in as per the VC Act. Most of the respondents claimed either they did not pay court fees or paid higher amount than legally required.

3. Comparative efficiency of and satisfaction level with DRMs

Shalish and VCs are, on average, faster and much less expensive than the formal justice system; however this might be because they resolve less complex cases than the formal judiciary. The median dispute resolved in *Shalish* as well as in VC took only half a month to resolve. Average time taken to resolve a dispute in *Shalish* is less than 6 months. For village courts, it is less than 3 months (3.4 months in project areas and 0.6 months in control areas). On the other hand, cases resolved by the formal judiciary tend to take much longer. The average resolution time in the district court is 53 months or 4 and a half years. The median value of resolution time in a district court is 16 months.

Cases resolved in district courts (DC) tend to be very expensive as well. The cost are partly due to the fees paid to the court and lawyers but also in terms of transportation and the opportunity cost of time spent. When totalling up all these costs, the average cost of resolving a dispute in the DC is nearly BDT 90 thousand or 2.5 years of expenditure per person of an average household in our sample. Furthermore, a majority, BDT 60,578, of this cost is a direct monetary cost, i.e. lawyer and court fees, and transporatation cost. This means that the DC is not an affordable alternative for the majority of the disputant households. On the other hand, *Shalish* and VCs are more affordable. Average costs in *Shalish* is around BDT 4 thousand or a little more than the monthly expenditure per person. Average cost in VC is arpound BDT 3 thousand. Consequently, *Shalish* and VCs may increase access to justice for the poor. Approximately 43% of the housholds who used the VC as DRM are from below the poverty line. 18% of the housholds who used *Shalish* and 15% of the housholds who used DCs are from below the poverty line.

The different DRMs perform very similarly in terms of generating satisfaction. Users across all DRMs have reported moderate satisfaction. This is surprising, especially given the long resoultion time and high costs of the district courts but it is possible that people expect these long resolution time and high costs and therefore do not feel particularly dissatisfied when experiencing them.

When asked where respondents would go in the future to resolve four types of hypothetical petty disputes, more than 70% respondents chose *Shalish* across all dispute types. More than 20% chose VCs on the other hand. People who chose *Shalish* and VCs as the preferred DRM did so as these DRMs were considered cheaper, quicker and localized. On the other hand, those who chose district court mentioned that the process of district court was easy to understand and verdicts were fair. Respondents who did not choose *Shalish* considered it as biased and nepotistic. Those who did not choose VC and DC considered those as expensive. This reveals that people may have some misconception about the cost of seeking justice through VCs.

4. Knowledge about VC
Only 9% of the respondents heard about VCs. This explains why people may have a misconception about the cost of resolving dispute using VCs, and why they may not prefer VCs for seeking justice.

12% of the male respondents heard about VCs compared to 7% of the female respondents. While 11% of the non-poor respondents heard about VCs, only 4% of poor respondents heard about it. In other words, awareness about the VCs are lower among the people who can get the most benefit from VCs, i.e. women and the poor. Even those who heard about the VC had very poor knowledge about the VC system. About 93% of the respondents who heard about the VC could not give a single correct answer to eight quizzes asked about the VC system.

29% of those who heard about the VC believe that VC reduced petty crimes and 61% believe that VC reduced all types of crimes. Also, 80% of them believe that the VC reduced the likelihood of going to the district court.

5. UP officials' preference for and actual engagement in different DRMs

78% of the disputes that UP chairmen resolved in the past three months were resolved in Shalish and 17% were resolved in the VC. For UP members, 87% of the disputes resolved in the past three months were in Shalish and 10% were in the VC.

Among UP officials and representatives who heard about the VC, 72% preferred Shalish to resolve petty disputes and 26% preferred the VC. When asked why Shalish was preferred, the most common response was that it was an easy process and that disputes could be resolved quickly. Among those who chose the VC, the most popular responses were that it was an easy process, that disputes could be resolved quickly, and that the VC was bound by law. Most of them think that both Shalish and VC are capable to enforce decisions. 53% of the UP officials and representatives who heard about the VC also think that VCs reduced petty crimes. 40% believe that VCs also increased communal harmony.

6. UP representatives and officials' knowledge on the VC system

UP representatives and officials are much more knowledgeable about the VC than the general population. However, only 58% of the representtaives and officials could spontaneously said they knew what a VC was and even after given a hint, only 80% said so.

The lack of knowledge was concentrated among the UP members and more specifically among the female UP members. While only 6% of the UP chairs did not know what a VC was, 18% of UP members and 55% of female UP members coult not tell what a VC was and did therefore not take the knowledge quiz test.

None of the UP representatives and officials managed to answer all questions correctly. Among the different types of UP officials and representatives, UP secretaries and UP chairs were the most knowledgeable groups while female members were the least knowledgeable group. Overall, knowledge on VC formation, jurisdiction, and the use of lawyers in VC appears to be good. Knowledge about fees, decision making and appeal process seems weak.

Among those who took the knowledge quiz test, the most common place to have learned about the VCs was directly from a UP chair (51% of the respondents learned about VC from the UP chairs). This is not surprising since the UP chair is the main person conducting the VC and therefore should have knowledge about it and can therefore may teach other UP officials and representatives about the rules and regulation. The second biggest source of knowledge was training (41% of the respondents). Reading the VC Act by the officials themselves was reported as the third important source (38% of the respondents).

7. Practice/Adherence to VC rule by the UP officials and representatives

We asked UP chairmen to describe the latest case(s) resolved using a VC and the surveyor noted down what parts of the main steps in the VC regulation were followed and if they were done so in correct sequence. Most of the steps were followed in around 50% of the cases except for the implementation of the VC verdict within the 6- week time limit. Only in 4% cases, UP chair followed all steps in correct sequences.

According to Village Courts Act 2006 (amended in 2013) each UP should send a quarterly return on the VC's performance to the Union Nirbahi Officer (UNO). The quarterly return should be signed by the UP chair. Among those knowing about the return, 90% of the respondents knew who the return should be sent to while only 48% knew that it should be signed by the UP chair. There is a common misunderstanding that the return should be signed by the UP secretary.

8. Physical facilities and documentation of cases

39% of the sample UPs had '*Ejla*s'(Court bench). 69% of the UPs claimed to have a designated day in a week for VC hearing. None of the UPs had an Assistant Accountant-cum-Computer Operator (AACO). In terms of documentation, about half (51%) of the UPs maintained some type of documentation. However , a UP maintaining a register does not mean that it records every single case in it. Almost none of the UPs maintained all the forms and registers that they were supposed to maintain. The most common form to maintain is the main register of cases, which 40% of the UPs maintained. None of the UPs have an Ejlas, AACO and at least one form at the same time.

9. Performance of the Village Courts

According to administrative data, a total of 8,245 cases were recorded in VCs in last 12 months, of which forty percent of the recorded cases actailly fall within the VC jurisdiction. Among all cases recorded, land related disputes constitute 43% of all cases, 13% related to family issues, and another 13% cases related to credit/loan or breach of written/verbal contract.

Among cases that actually fall within the VC jurisdiction, 54% were land related disputes and 15% related to credit/loan and breach of written/verbal contract.

Most of the disputes (61% cases that fell within the VC jurisdiction) were resolved by forming a "full VC" i.e. by letting the defendant/respondant and applicant nominate two representatives each that forms the VC. About one third of the cases (31%) were resolved in the pre-trial, and about 8% through 'rule 31', which is a mutual agreement between the parties before forming the VC. Though good percentage of dispuets (92%) were resolved following full hering and pre-trial , but none of the cases, representatievs of both partities were nominated following VC's Act. On average, it took 40 days to resolve disputes in the VC. The median is even lower at 24.5 days.

10. Involvement of women in the VC process

Of the cases recorded by the UPs, 25% of all cases were reported by women while 28% of cases within the VC's jurisdiction were reported by women. Despite one fourth of the disputes were reported by women, the man-woman ratio among the nominated representatives were 27:1 (4% women were involved in VC's decision making proecss) among all cases and 35:1 (3% women were involved in VC's decision making process) among the cases within VC jurisdiction.

11. Programmatic suggestions

The survey data shows that the VCs are underused as a DRM despite being affordable and easily accessible. The data also reveals that very few people know about the VC and its processes. To increase demand for VC, the program team can put emphasis on raising awareness among the people, especially among the women and the poor. Incorporating family issues within the VC's jurisdiction with special provision for protection of privacy will help increase demand, especially demand from the women. The eligibility of the land disputes can be determined based on the nature of the dispute rather than the monetary value of the land. Also the VC system can be made a part of the regular UP officials and representatives training program so that other UP officials and representatives do not depend on the UP chair for information and guidance. The training should focus special attention to resovling land related dispute as it is the dominant dispute category in the VCs.

1 Introduction

The rule of law is generally regarded to be a necessary condition for economic development. The judiciary, or the system of courts that interprets the law, is the main institution ensuring that the rule of law is respected and that justice is accessible to all citizens. The existence of a transparent and fair court and an easy access to the court are therefore *sine qua non* to ensure the rule of law.

Lack of access to the court is a substantial problem in Bangladesh. Formal courts, which have an average wait time above five years,[2] are complicated and expensive to use. As a result, informal Dispute Resolution Mechanisms (DRM) are common, however, they: a) often lack the power to enforce decisions, and b) suffer from a perception of bias stemming from local power structures, potentially discouraging marginalized groups from using these informal mechanisms.

In 2006, the Government of Bangladesh replaced the age old Village Court Ordinance 1976 with an Act to create a functional semi-fromal court system at the lowest tier of the local government, i.e . Uniona Parishad, to resolve small disputes. In theory, these Village Courts (VCs) resolve small disputes at affordable cost and with fewer administrative complications, increasing access to the courts for those who cannot afford the formal court system for resolving small disputes. In practice however, qualitative reports indicated that the implementation of the VC system had been poor and that usage of the VCs had been low. To address this problem, the Government of Bangladesh—with technical assistance from UNDP and funding from the EU—has launched a program called Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh (AVCB). The AVCB program makes VCs functional by providing material support, human capital support, training to the UP officials and representatives and awareness campaigns for the villagers. In its first phase, the AVCB program was implemented in 351 UPs. Recently, the program has expanded to an additional 1,080 UPs.

While the initial assessments of the first phase of the AVCB program was positive, little is known about the causal effects of the program since we do not know the counterfactual for how UPs that received the AVCB program would have developed in the absence of the program. Therefore, the project has planned to conduct impact evaluation using pre-post surveys in all the divisions of Bangladesh, except Dhaka and Chittagong where a more rigorous impact evaluation will be conducted using Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) method.

1.1 Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to provide estimates on indicators regarding disputes and dispute resolution as well as knowledge, attitude and perception regarding the VCs before the start of the AVCB program. These estimates will help the UNDP program team to make appropriate design modification in the AVCB program components to make the program more effective. These indicators will also work as the baseline to measure the impact of the program later. The information has been collected from both households and VC service providers (i.e. UP chair, UP members, researved female UP members and UP Secretaries), as well as from the administrative records of the UPs.

A series of surveys were carried out from January to April of 2017 to collect data for estimating baseline of indicators stipulated in the logical framework of the AVCB program. Since the surveys were done before the AVCB program started, the study did not expect to see a well-functioning VC system. This report cannot and does not, in any way, evaluate the AVCB program but instead, provides a description of the context within which the program will be implemented.

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[2] Summary Report on Court Services Situation Analysis by the Judicial Strengthening Project (JUST) of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, December 2013.

1.2   Structure of the report

An important issue to keep in mind when reading this report is that the concept of a "Village Court" is not well-understood by all respondents at this point of time. Although respondents who had never heard of a VC were not asked questions specifically about VC, it is still possible that many of the people who said that they knew what a VC was, were actually talking about some other DRM when responding to the question. Therefore, the responses to questions regarding the VC should be interpreted carefully keeping different potential interpretations of the respondents in mind.

The report is structured in the following way. Section 2 provides an overview of the methodology employed to evaluate the AVCB program as well as the methods used for data collection. A more detailed description of the data collection procedures can be found in Appendix 1. Section 3 describes the most important features and findings from the baseline household survey. Section 4 describes the baseline status of Knowledge, Attitude and Perception of UP representatives and UP Secretaries; section 5 describes the baseline status of VCs' performance captured from UP's administrative data. Section 6 describes programmatic decisions that can be taken to improve AVCB interventions based on the baseline data. Section 7 provides a conclusion. In Appendix 2, key variables in the data are shown by divisions to provide division-level statistics.

2   Methodology

This section provides an overview of the methodology of the evaluation of the AVCB program and the data collection procedures followed for the baseline report. A more detailed description of the data collection procedures has been included in Appendix 1.

The core of the evaluation of AVCB program consists of a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) covering Dhaka and Chittagong division. Apart from the RCT, we have collected data from 90 randomly selected UPs from the other six divisions where AVCB program is planned to be implemented. In other words, the study area for this evaluation can be differentiated into two categories: a) RCT area that consists of Dhaka and Chittagong division, b) non-RCT area that consists of other six divisions. Within the RCT area, UPs have been randomly assigned to two groups- some will receive the AVCB program and others will not. In the rest of this report, we will refer this latter group as the 'control area' or 'control UPs'. Therefore, UPs in the 'control area' have been drawn from Dhaka and Chittagong division only. By 'the project area' or 'project UPs', we refer to all the 1,080 UPs where the program is being implemented across all eight divisions. In other words, UPs in the 'project area' consists of UPs from RCT area that will receive the AVCB program and UPs from non-RCT area that will also receive the AVCB program. Since the project area is spread across eight divisions covering entire Bangladesh while the control area is concentrated in Dhaka and Chittagong divisions, we do not expect these areas to be similar in the way that the treatment and control area are supposed to be. Therefore, we deliberately avoid a comparative discussion between the project and control area as we do not expect to have a balance between them. We mainly explain the overall characteristics of the baseline data. However, we present tables and figures showing distinct status of proect and control area during the baseline to facilitate pre-post comparison in follow-up surveys later.

We expect that random assignment to make the project and control areas similar within the RCT sample, i.e. the project UPs from Dhaka and Chittagong division, and the control UPs. In a seprate report on the RCT sample, we have elaborated this 'Balance Test' in details.

2.1   Impact evaluation of the AVCB program

The Impact Evaluation of the AVCB program uses three different methodologies. The first one is a simple pre-post comparison of the project area. For pre-post estimation to be valid, we have to assume that nothing has changed or contributed to the program impact other than the program itself, which is indeed a strong assumption. A much improved estimate is a "difference-in-difference" methodology where the change in the project area is compared with the change in a control area. However for the difference-in-difference analysis to be valid, we have to assume that the project area and control area had similar trends in outcomes of interest in the absence of the AVCB program. Since we do not have the panel data on the project area UPs and control area UPs before the start of the AVCB program, we will not be able to verify this assumption.

The third and the best impact estimate is a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) where UPs that were randomly assigned to receive the program are compared to a control group that were randomly assigned not to receive the program. Due to administrative limitations, it was not possible to randomise among all UPs where the AVCB wants to implement the program. Instead. the RCT is being carried out in Dhaka and Chittagong division only. Due to random assignment of the program, any difference in the dispute resolution and other socio-economic outcomes between the project and control area UPs can be attributed to the AVCB program.

The RCT will provide a valid measure of the causal effect of the program in Dhaka and Chittagong divisions while the difference-in-difference strategy will help us investigate the external validity of the results for the rest of Bangladesh.

2.2   Data collection

In each UP, the study collected data in four different ways. Since it is not that common for a household to have a dispute[3] in any given year, we focused more on households that had an ongoing dispute or that had at least a dispute resolved in the last two years . Therefore, we first conducted a short targeting survey with a large number of households to identify the households that were engaged in disputes. We then conducted a longer household survey with a weighted random sample of the households who participated in the short targeting survey. Furthermore, we interviewed four UP officials and representatives (One UP Chair, one UP member, one reserved female UP member and one UP Secretary) in each UP and conducted a review of the administrative documents relating to the VC/dispute resolution from each UP.

2.2.1   UPs and household sampling process

We followed a five stage stratified random sampling procedure. In the first stage, we followed a district level stratification to make sure that all program districts within a division have representation in the final sample. Afterwards, UPs were then randomly selected within the districts in the first stage. The next stage involves a random selection of a ward from 9 available wards. In the third stage, our enumerators met with knowledgeable persons within the UP and divided the selected ward in sub-UP areas, normally villages or *paras* (neighbourhoods) in terms of dispute proneness. Sub-UP areas were categoriezed into more than average dispute-prone area, average dispute-prone area, and less than average dispute-prone area. Enumerators first randomly picked one category and then randomly picked one sub-area within the category. In the fourth stage, enumerators selected 60 to 90 households within the sub-UP area following a systematic random sampling protocol and collected data on the

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[3] For this evaluation, we defined 'dispute' as a conflict, altercation, fight, or a perceived act of crime between two parties where at least one party feels aggrieved and wants or seeks a resolution. Such disputes may or may not have monetary value.

basic household characteristics as well as their involvement in disputes. We call this exercise as 'the targeting survey' that produced a smapling frame for the main household survey.[4]

In the last stage, we selected households for the full household survey using weighted random sampling, in which a higher weight (i.e. a higher probability) was given to households that either had an ongoing dispute or had resolved a dispute within the last two years. An even higher weight was given to households that had an ongoing dispute within the jurisdiction of the VC since we expected some of these disputes to be resolved in the VCs after the implementation of the AVCB program. Section 3 of this report provides summary statistics as well as analysis of the household data collected.

2.2.2   Diagram for sample selection:
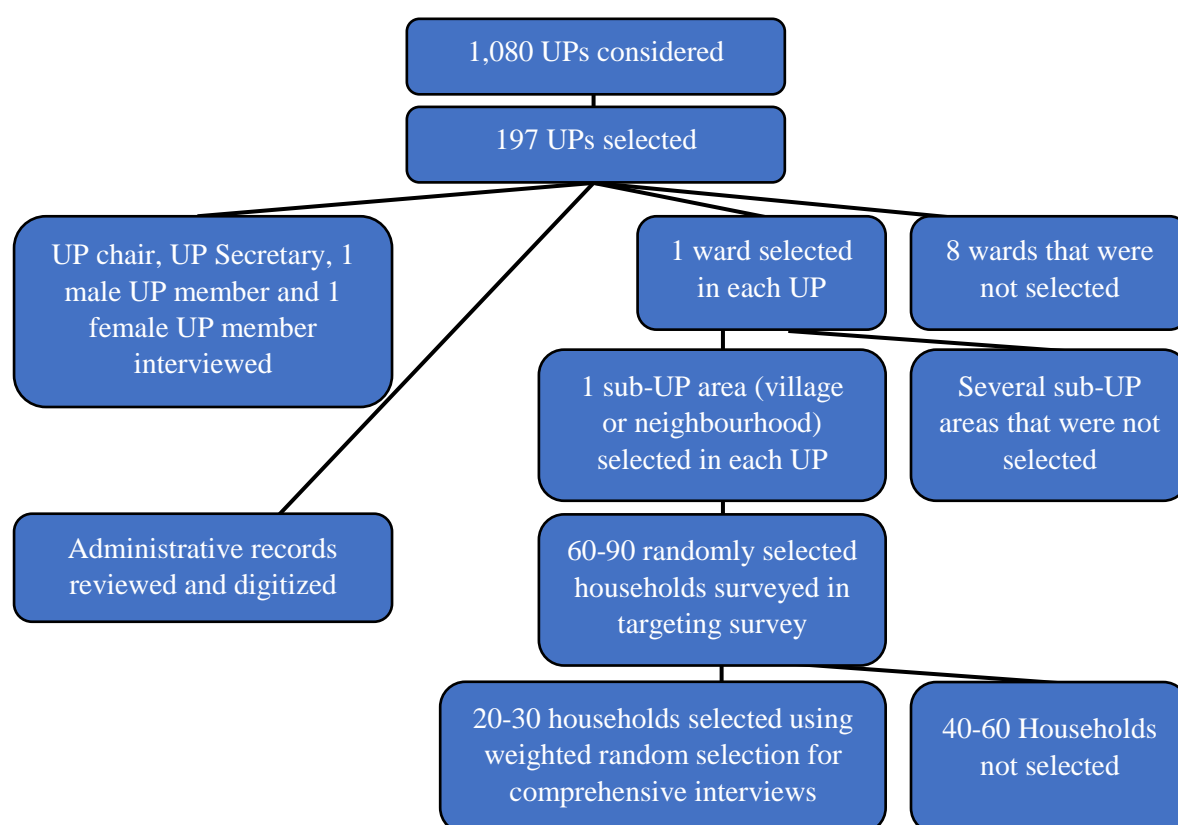
2.2.3   Sampling of UP officials and representatievs and collecting administrative data

In addition to households, the UP chair, the UP secretary and one (out of nine) UP member as well as one (out of three) reserved female UP member were interviewed in each UP.[5] The UP members and female members that we surveyed were selected using simple random sampling. These UP officials and representatives (both elected 3 officials and appointed one official) were then interviewed to estimate their knowledge about VC and its function and their attitude and perception about VC.

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[4] In some project documents this survey is referred to as a census since it was initially planned to be a census of whole sub-UP areas.

[5] Each UP has 12 members. 9 of them are directly elected members and represent one ward. We will refer them as UP members in the report., Although these members can be either man or woman they are almost exclusively man in our data. In addition to the 9 members there are 3 female member positions (they are also directly elected and each one represents 3 wards) that are reserved exclusively for women. We will refer them as "female members" in the report

Section 4 contains statistics and analysis of the data collected from the UP representatives and officials.

In addition to interviewing the UP officials, the survey team also reviewed administrative data on dispute resolution in each UP. The review of the administrative data was done by asking the UP officials and representatives if they kept any record of the cases that they had resolved through the VC. If they had such records, they were asked to show the type of records they kept. Among the records, the number of forms that were kept according to the VC rules were counted. The forms and registers were studied thereafter to extract specific information which were simultaneously recorded in a pre-programmed tablet. Section 5 contains summary statistics of the data collected from the review of administrative data.

2.2.4 Implementation of data collection

The data collection process took place between January 31 and April 30, 2017. Overall, the data collection was relatively smooth without any major problems or delays. In total, approximately 15,000 households were surveyed in the short targeting survey and approximately 5,000 in the full household survey. We also interviewed 787 UP officials and representatives and reviewed the administrative records of 197 UPs. For detailed summary statistics of the survey, please review table A1 in Appendix 1. Similarly, for a detailed description of the quality control mechanism, please review Appendix 1.

2.2.5 Weighting of observations and representativeness of the data

We followed a weighted sampling procedure in order to increase the likelihood that our sample baseline households use the VC services once the program is implemented. Households that reported having an on-going dispute was assigned more weight in the household survey sample selection. In order to make our sample statistics is unbiased, the sample observations were weighted according to the probability that any individual observation was observed. This was done for the household survey, the UP officials' survey and the administrative data.

The weighting of the sample was done using sampling weights which are the inverse of the probability that any given observation is observed in the whole project population. This means that observations that were observed with a higher probability will have a lower weight in the generation of summery statistics and analysis output.[6] In other words, the summary statistics and percentages that we report are weighted average and percentage (not arithmetic average and percentage). The result is that our estimates will be representative of the population of households in the whole project area.

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[6] Standard errors are obtained using a heteroskedasticity robust (Huber-White) estimator taking into account the inverse probability weights.

3 Household Surveys (Knowledge, Attitude and Perception of community people)

3.1 Profile of the households

The purpose of the household survey was to collect data on the experience and perception of the household members on past and present disputes, justice seeking behaviour, perceived safety and security within the community, efficiency of different DRMs, knowledge about VC, etc.

The following table shows the socio economic and demographic characteristics of the households in the project and control areas. The average size of our sample households is approximately five members and the average age is 28 years. Forty-nine percent of the household members are woman. Most of the household members either did not receive formal education or completeed primary or below-primary grades. Twenty-four percent of the sample households belong to the below poverty line as defined by the World Bank (i.e. below per capita USD 1.9 per day in PPP constant 2011 USD). Estimates provided here should not be compared with the nationally representative statistics (e.g. Household Income and Expenditure Survey) as our sample households have been systematically drawn to evaluate the AVCB program.

Table 1: Statistical overview of demographic and economic conditions in the study area

HH characteristics	Project Area	Control area	Overall
Household size (no. of persons)	4.8	5.2	4.9
Age (in years)	27.4	27.7	27.5
% woman	49%	49%	49%
Education level			
Informal education or no eudcaton at all[7]	35%	33%	34%
Primary or below	31%	30%	31%
Secondary or below	28%	30%	28%
Higher Secondary or below	4%	4%	4%
Above higher Secondary	3%	3%	3%
Per capita expenditure (in taka)	3194	3768	3343
% of HHs below WB poverty line[8]	28%	14%	24%

Table 2 shows occupational distribution by the project and control area and by gender. As can be seen, the study area is mainly an agrarian economy with agriculture related work as the most common source of income- approximately 40% of the households reported agriculture or related sector as the main occupation. About 16% were salaried employees in government positions or private firms. Small and medium trade (retail shops) were also sizable with 16% of the households involved in this occupation. While men are more involved in petty trade, service, agricultural labor or agricultural work on own farm, women are more involved in service, livestock and poultry rearing.

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[7] If a respondent has no formal education or only did Hafezi, i.e. memorization of the Quran (as coded zero in the data collection) was considered under informal education.
[8] US$ 1.90 per capita per day in PPP constant 2011 USD.

Table 2 Distribution of HHs by occupations

Occupations	Project area			Control area			Overall
	Man	Woman	Total	Man	Woman	Total	
Service (govt/employee)	13.4%	9.4%	12.7%	24.7%	26.6%	25.0%	15.6%
Petty Trade (Small retail shop)	14.3%	2.3%	12.3%	15.3%	2.4%	13.6%	12.6%
Agricultural wage labor	15.9%	3.6%	13.8%	3.9%	0.5%	3.5%	11.4%
Agricultural work on own farm	10.5%	0.7%	8.8%	10.9%	3.7%	9.9%	9.1%
Look after live stocks	1.4%	49.8%	9.7%	0.8%	12.5%	2.4%	8.0%
Share cropper / cultivate plot owned by others	8.3%	0.4%	6.9%	7.4%	0.6%	6.4%	6.8%
Non-agriculture wage labor	4.7%	4.0%	4.6%	6.9%	2.5%	6.3%	5.0%
Rickshaw/ Van Pulling	3.9%	0.0%	3.2%	2.9%	0.0%	2.5%	3.1%
Medium Trader (Retail and insignificant wholesale)	3.2%	0.1%	2.6%	4.2%	0.6%	3.8%	2.9%
Carpenter	4.1%	0.0%	3.4%	1.4%	0.0%	1.2%	2.9%
Supervisory work of agricultural activity on own farm	2.9%	0.5%	2.5%	2.5%	3.2%	2.6%	2.5%
Mason	3.0%	0.0%	2.5%	2.1%	0.0%	1.8%	2.3%
Look after Poultry (Duck, Chicken,Pigeons)	0.1%	10.9%	1.9%	0.3%	22.3%	3.3%	2.3%
Fishing	2.2%	0.1%	1.8%	2.8%	0.0%	2.4%	2.0%
Driver (motorized vehicle)	1.8%	0.0%	1.5%	2.4%	0.0%	2.1%	1.6%
Agricultural wage labor (Off Farm)	0.8%	0.6%	0.8%	2.2%	0.8%	2.0%	1.0%
Servant in house	0.0%	4.7%	0.8%	0.0%	7.6%	1.0%	0.9%
Helper (Transport helper)	1.2%	0.0%	1.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.8%
Family labor in Tailoring	0.3%	3.2%	0.8%	0.4%	3.4%	0.8%	0.8%
Helper (Construction helper)	0.8%	0.0%	0.7%	0.9%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%
Family labor in Enterprise	0.9%	0.1%	0.7%	0.6%	0.0%	0.5%	0.7%
Others self employment	0.5%	1.4%	0.6%	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%
Service worker in NGO	0.1%	2.7%	0.6%	0.3%	0.8%	0.4%	0.5%
Earthen work	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.1%	3.3%	0.6%	0.5%
Others	5.1%	4.9%	5.1%	6.1%	8.5%	6.5%	5.4%

3.2   Experience of Disputes

To measure the frequency of the disputes, we asked the respondents whether any member of his/her household has a disagreement or conflict (or had a disagreement or conflict) with a member from another household or another member from his/her household that they feel requires a resolution by a third party. Therefore, our estimate of disputes does not include disputes that respondents do not want to resolve by a third party.

Disputes are common in rural Bangladesh. One in every six households (i.e. about 16% of all housholds) in our sample has an ongoing dispute. On the other hand, one in every eight households

(i.e. 13% of all households) has resolved a dispute within the past 2 years[9]. There seems to be a reporting bias in dispute reporting as either households who were the defendant/respondent in a case were not willing to speak to the surveyors about it, or households claimed to be the applicant even though they were actually the defendant since 80% of the household interviewed with a dispute claimed to be the applicant. If the defendant households is indeed less likely to report it to our surveyors, it is possible that the 16% and 13% figures reported above are actually underestimates of how much dispute exists in our sample.

In our sample of 5,006 households, 1,699 households has at least one dispute resolved or unresolved. Among these households, 24% of the households have an unresolved dispute that may fall within the VC jurisdiction[10]. A similar 24% of the households has a resolved dispute in the past two years that may fall within the VC jurisdiction. Disputes that may fall outside the VC jurisdiction are at least as common as disputes that may fall within the VC jurisdiction. 43% of all unresolved disputes and 40% of the all resolved dispute may fall within the VC jurisdiction. This demonstrates the relevance of having a functional VC in increasing access to justice. However, in reality only 1% of the resolved disputes those fall within VC jurisdiction were solved in VC, 10% of the disputes were resolved in district court and the majority (89%) were resolved in *Shalish*.

Most of the disputes, 82% of all, have a specific monetary value attached to them. The average monetary value of disputes is very high, approximately BDT 272,177. This estimate can be considered as the upper bound of the average monetary value as these are figures reported mainly by applicants and they might overstate their claim. In fact, as we will see in the next section, the average value of the compensation imposed in different dispute mechanisms is less than half of this value. Among disputes with a monetary value reported, 49% have a value lower than BDT75,000 and can potentially be resolved using VCs if the nature of these cases fall within the VC jurisdiction.

Table 3 Experience with disputes

Experince with disputes	Project area	Control areas	Overall
Among total housholds, % of households with at least one dispute (resolved or not)	28%	14%	24%
Among total housholds, % of households with at least one unresolved dispute	16%	13%	16%
Among total households, % of households with at least one dispute that was resolved in the past 2 years	13%	14%	13%
Among households with a dispute, % of households with unresolved dispute within VC jurisdiction	25%	21%	24%
Among housheds with a dispute, % of housholds with resolved dispute within VC jurisdiction	29%	12%	24%
Among households with a dispute, % of households with unresolved dispute outside VC jurisdiction	26%	33%	28%
Among housheds with a dispute, % of housholds with resolved dispute outside VC jurisdiction	29%	45%	33%
Among all unresolved disputes, % of unresolved disputes fall within VC jurisdiction	46%	37%	43%

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[9] Our estimate of disputes can be different from other studies for a number of reaons, for example, other studies may have used a different definition of disputes, different sampling plan, different measurement method, and different estimation method. For example, purposive or convenient sampling will provide much higher and biased estimate than a representative sampling that we used. A study that defines dispute as any sort of conflict will provide higher estimate than this study.

[10] Cases were categorized as potential disputes within the VC jurisdiction if a particular dispute fell under the VC jurisdiction following the VC Act 2006 (relevant criminal and civil sections) and the monetary value of the case (if the case has an associated monetary compensation claim) was less than or equal to BDT75,000. If the case did not have any reported monetary compensation, we considered the nature of the case only.

Experince with disputes	Project area	Control areas	Overall
Among total housholds, % of households with at least one dispute (resolved or not)	28%	14%	24%
Among all unresolved disputes, % of unresolved disputes fall outside VC jurisdiction	54%	63%	57%
Among all resolved disputes, % of solved disputes fall within VC jurisdiction	47%	21%	40%
Among all resolved disputes, % of resolved disputes fall outside VC jurisdiction	53%	79%	60%
Among the resolved disputes that fall within VC jurisdiction, % of disputes that were solved in VC	1%	3%	1%
Among the resolved disputes that fall within VC jurisdiction, % of disputes that were solved in DC	10%	11%	10%
Among the resolved disputes that fall within VC jurisdiction, % of disputes that were solved in Shalish	88%	87%	88%
% of disputes where the respondent claimed to be the applicant	79%	82%	80%
% of conflicts with a specific monetary value	83%	82%	82%
Among these: average monetary value of dispute (in taka)	166,449	552,276	272,177
Minimum	100	100	100
Maximum	9,200,000	9,500,000	9,500,000
% of disputes with monetary value <=75,000	41%	67%	49%
% of disputes with monetary value >75,000	59%	33%	51%

In terms of geographic variation, the southern region is more distpute-prone (in terms of both number resolved and unresolved disputes) than the northern and middle region of the country (please see dispute choropleth maps in Appendix 6).

Table 4 below provides information on the frequency of different types of disputes by two broad categories- disputes that fall within the VC jurisdiction and outside the VC jurisdiction. Cases were categorized as potential disputes within the VC jurisdiction if a particular dispute fell under the VC jurisdiction by the VC Act 2006 (relevant criminal and civil sections) and the monetary value of the case (if the case has an associated monetary compensation claim) was less than or equal to BDT75,000. Therefore, cases of the same category can fall within or outside VC jurisdiction if the case involves a monetary value exceeding BDT75,000 though the nature of the case is triable under the criminal and civil sections of the VC Act.

The most common type of disputes within and outside the VC's jurisdiction are land disputes (58% of the disputes that fall within the VC jurisdiction are land related and the rate is 45% for disputes outside the VC jurisdiction). Among disputes that may fall within the VCs, verbal fights and physical fights without bloodshed are also common (14% and 8% of all disputes within the VC). Physical fights with bloodshed and verbal fights are also common (18% and 8% of all disputes outside the VC) among disputes that may fall outside the VC.

Among disputes that may fall under the VC jurisdiction, both men and women are mostly involved in the land disputes. However, among disputes outside the VC jurisdiction, men are relatively more engaged in land related disputes and physical fights with bloodshed. On the other hand, women are more involved in family disputes, such as restitution of conjugal life, divorce, alimony, and verbal fights.

Table 4: Types of disputes within and outside VC's jurisdiction

Type of dispute	Project area			Control area			Overall
	Man	Woman	Overall	Man	Woman	Overall	
Disputes within VC's jurisdiction							
Dispute about non-agricultural land (or compensation for it)	36%	45%	38%	32%	44%	33%	37%
Dispute about agricultural land (or compensation for it)	26%	7%	22%	14%	10%	14%	21%
Verbal Fight	11%	31%	15%	8%	13%	9%	14%
Physical Fight (without bloodshed)	7%	7%	7%	16%	29%	17%	8%
Fraud	5%	4%	5%	10%	0%	9%	6%
Verbal/non-verbal act to dishonour women	4%	1%	4%	0%	2%	0%	3%
Dispute about credit/loan	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Theft	2%	0%	1%	3%	0%	3%	2%
Others	7%	4%	7%	15%	0%	14%	8%
Disputes outside of VC's jurisdiction							
Dispute about non-agricultural land (or compensation for it)	26%	13%	24%	39%	33%	38%	29%
Physical Fight (with bloodshed)	25%	9%	22%	10%	8%	10%	18%
Dispute about agricultural land (or compensation for it)	16%	5%	14%	23%	7%	20%	16%
Verbal Fight	7%	12%	8%	7%	17%	8%	8%
Fraud	4%	8%	5%	4%	3%	4%	4%
Restitution of conjugal life	1%	11%	3%	2%	12%	4%	3%
Divorce	1%	9%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%
Physical Fight (without bloodshed)	2%	1%	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%
Others	11%	28%	14%	9%	9%	9%	12%

3.3 Determinants of disputes

The regression analysis below shows what households characteristics are related to the probability of having a dispute. Among the "standard" household characteristics, (per capita expenditure, age of household head, sex of household head), only the age of the household head is significantly associated with the probability of having a dispute. However, this association is relatively weak, and one additional year of the household head's age is associated with only a 0.1 percentage point increase in the probability of dispute. The household characteristic that is most consistently associated with dispute is land ownership, more specifically ownership of cultivable land. As can be seen in column 3 below, a household that owns cultivable land is 5.1 percentage points more likely to have a dispute than a household that does not own cultivable land. Furthermore, the more cultivable land that a household owns the higher is the probability of having a dispute. For each 100 decimals of land owned the probability of dispute increases by 3.6 percentage points.

Table 5: Household Characteristics and the probability of dispute

HH Characteristics	(1) Dispute	(2) Dispute	(3) Dispute	(4) Dispute	(5) Dispute
Land owned (hundreds of decimals)		0.034***			
		(0.012)			
Household Expenditure Per Capita, BDT 1,000	0.001	0.000			-0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)			(0.001)
Age of household head	0.001**	0.001*			0.001*
	(0.000)	(0.000)			(0.000)
Female household head (dummy)	-0.001	0.000			0.003
	(0.016)	(0.016)			(0.016)
Any cultivable land owned			0.051***	0.025**	0.024*
			(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Area of cultivable land owned (hundreds of decimals)				0.036**	0.036**
				(0.014)	(0.014)
Any homestead land owned			0.018	0.011	0.010
			(0.054)	(0.053)	(0.053)
Area of homestead land owned (hundreds of decimals)				0.055	0.050
				(0.054)	(0.055)
Any pond owned			0.009	0.010	0.009
			(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Area of pond owned (hundreds of decimals)				-0.024	-0.023
				(0.086)	(0.086)
Any other land owned			-0.010	0.019	0.018
			(0.015)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Area of other land owned (hundreds of decimals)				-0.035*	-0.034*
				(0.019)	(0.019)
Constant	0.105***	0.099***	0.112**	0.113**	0.082
	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.054)	(0.053)	(0.056)
Observations	4,971	4,971	5,242	4,971	4,971
R-squared	0.002	0.011	0.005	0.014	0.014

Robust standard errors, clustered at the UP level, in parentheses
*** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

3.4 Justice seeking behaviour

When it comes to dispute resolution methods (DRM), *Shalish* (i.e. informal mediation by village leaders) is by far the most popular DRM (See the following graphs). *Shalish* was the mechanism used in the vast majority (88% in project area and 79% in control area) of the resovled cases. The formal district courts were used in 10% of all resolved cases in project area and 19% in control area. The main determinant for deciding to resolve a case either in *Shalish* or in the district court seems to be the value of the case where higher value cases tend to be resolved in the district court.

Figure 1 Usage of different DRMs for resolved disputes
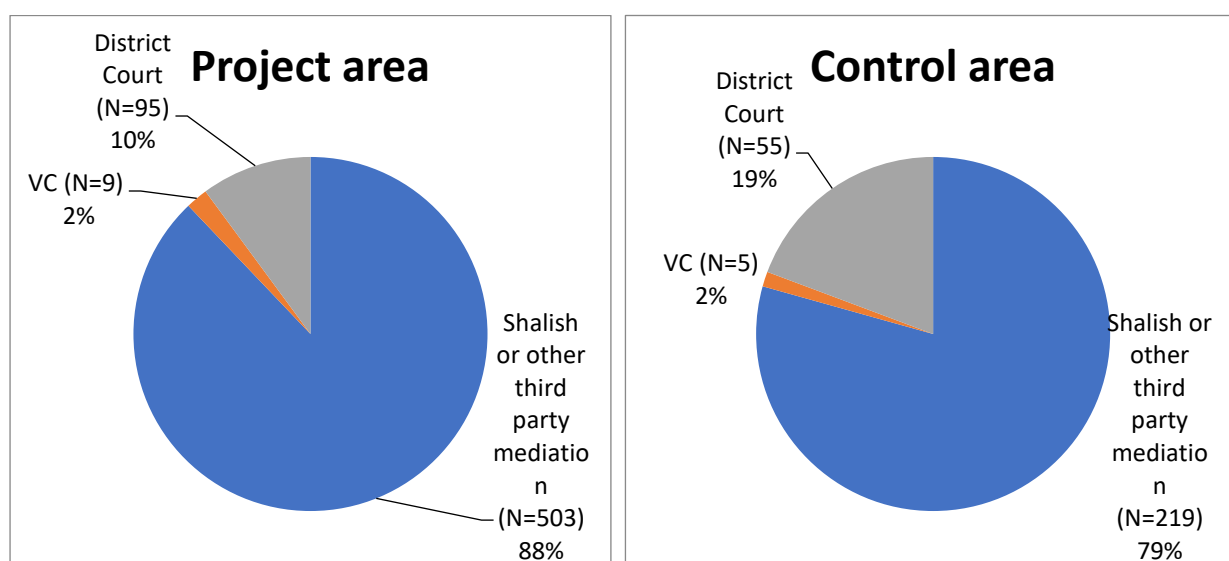
VCs are very rarely used. Only 2% of all resolved cases (i.e. 14 disputes out of 886 resolved disputes) were settled in village courts. This is expected in the baseline as the VCs are hardly functional across the country which makes AVCB program relevant. The next section will demonstrate that households seem to be altogether unaware of the existence of VCs and those who are aware, do not have a good understanding of the VC's rules and regulation. Since a majority of the people do not know what a VC is, and that those who do know, are not familiar with how a VC should operate, makes it important to interpret all the statistics regarding people's opinions and perceptions of the VC below with caution.

Among the 14 cases that respondents claimed they settled in a VC, only one dispute had a woman as the primary party to the dispute. Most disputes were related to land and livestock as shown in Table 6. Among these 14 cases, there were three cases that seemed fall outside VC's jurisdiction. This demonstrates that cases that were claimed to have resolved in a VC did not follow proper procedure as described in the law. (*please see appendix 2 for a more detailed table on these 14 cases*) . The average cost of VC service is around BDT 2,048. Average compensation realized by VCs is about BDT69,123.

Table 6 Nature of the cases resolved in Village Courts

Indicator	Project area			Control area			Overall
	Man	**Woman**	**Overall**	**Man**	**Woman**	**Overall**	
Types of cases							
Fraud	0%	100%	66%	0%	0%	0%	52%
Dispute about other kinds of land (or compensation for it)	40%	0%	14%	55%	0%	55%	22%
Claiming compensation for deliberately damage to livestock	26%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%	7%
Dispute about agricultural land (or compensation for it)	16%	0%	5%	7%	0%	7%	6%
Physical Fight (with bloodshed)	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	17%	3%
Restitution of conjugal life	0%	0%	0%	15%	0%	15%	3%
Dispute about credit/loan	9%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	2%

Indicator	Project area			Control area			Overall
	Man	Woman	Overall	Man	Woman	Overall	
Verbal Fight	9%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Physical Fight (without bloodshed)	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	6%	1%
Average expenditure excluding opertunity cost							
Average monetary cost	3924	0	1329	4747		4747	2048
Court fee	47	0	16	315		315	79
Lawyer fee	0	0	0	302		302	63
Legal consultancy cost	0	0	0	0		0	0
Additional payments to court members, witnesses, or police	0			13000[11]		13000	13000
Travel cost (including food and accommodation)	816	0	276	1895		1895	617
Other legal services	3061	0	1037	276		276	877
Compensation as a result of the trial							
Average	33524	70000	57646	112182		112182	69123
Maximum	250000	70000	250000	200000		200000	250000
Minimum	0	70000	0	0		0	0

3.5   What determines where households resolve disputes

Another interesting question is what household and dispute characteristics can predict that a dispute would be resolved and if a dispute is resolved, in what DRM it would be resolved.

Columns 1-4 in the table below shows the probability that a dispute was resolved by a specific DRM against demographic and economic characteristics of the houseold. Column 1 demonstrates that land disputes and high value disputes are less likely to be resolved, but disputes that can be tried in a village court are 17 percentage point more likely to be resolved. This shows that small disputes triable in VCs have high demand for resolution. Land disputes and high value disputes could be complex in nature and therefore, are less likely to be resolved. In Column 2, we can see that households with a relationship with the UP chair are more likely to resolve cases in *shalish*. Perhaps having connection with powerful persons like UP chairs provide some confidence in the *shalish* process. Among the case characteristics tested, the value of the case is the most significant predictor of where the case is resolved. A higher value is associated with a lower probability of an informal solution in *shalish* and a higher probability of a formal solution in a district court. On the other hand, female headed households are seven percentage point less likely to use district court for dispute resolution.

Column 4 should be interpreted carefully since, as discussed above, there are a very few cases in our dataset that were actually resolved in VCs and hence it is very hard to draw any strong conclusions regarding the determinants of why these cases were resolved in VCs. The only marginally significant determinant for a case to be resolved in a VC is if the case falls within VCs' jurisdiction.

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[11] One respondent claimed to have paid this amount.

Table 7: Factors affecting whether a dispute is resolved and where it is resolved

Variables	(1) Dispute resolved	(2) Dispute resolved in Shalish	(3) Dispute resolved in DC	(4) Dispute resolved in VC
Head of household's age	-0.00053	-0.00025	0.00028	-0.00003
	(0.00129)	(0.00101)	(0.00100)	(0.00032)
Female Head of Household	0.00689	-0.03163	-0.06651*	0.09814
	(0.06141)	(0.09608)	(0.03801)	(0.08928)
Per capita expenditure, 1,000 BDT	0.00003	-0.00225	0.00274	-0.00049
	(0.00170)	(0.00201)	(0.00198)	(0.00049)
Any type of relationship with UP Chair	0.03348	0.06383**	-0.04080	-0.02303
	(0.05121)	(0.03100)	(0.02936)	(0.01500)
Any type of relationship with UP member	0.03534	0.00457	-0.01447	0.00990
	(0.05142)	(0.04391)	(0.03984)	(0.01938)
Land dispute	-0.29520***	0.02224	-0.00236	-0.01988
	(0.05667)	(0.04643)	(0.04528)	(0.01598)
Value of dispute, 1,000 BDT	-0.00007***	-0.00012***	0.00013***	-0.00001
	(0.00002)	(0.00003)	(0.00003)	(0.00001)
Dispute within VC's jurisdiction	0.16507**	0.02218	-0.04916	0.02698*
	(0.06913)	(0.03996)	(0.04018)	(0.01404)
Constant	0.46161***	0.85765***	0.14283***	-0.00048
	(0.09950)	(0.05332)	(0.05249)	(0.01147)
Observations	2,114	880	880	880
R-squared	0.08861	0.03591	0.04879	0.06343

Robust standard errors, clustered at the UP level, in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

3.6   Efficiency and costs of DRMs

Table 8 below compares the average speed and cost of resolving a case in different DRMs. It should be noted that this difference may be driven by differences in the severity or complexity of cases going to different DRMs. Also readers should consider the small smaple size of cases resovled in village courts while interpreting estimates in this table.

Disputes resolved in *Shalish* and the VCs tend to be resolved relatively quickly with an average duration of about 3-6 months. However, this average is mainly driven by a few cases that took a very long time to resolve. The median case resolved in *Shalish* or VC took only half a month. Average time taken from complain to decision in *Shalish* is 4.8 months whereas it takes 3.4 months by the VCs in the project area. In the control area, *Shalish* took 9.6 months on average whereas VCs took only 0.6 months. On the other hand, cases resolved by the formal judiciary tend to take a much longer time. The average resolution time in the District Court is 53 months or 4 and a half years (33.7 months in the project area and 71 months in the control area). The median case resolved in a district court took 16 months.

Another interesting aspect of the resolution time is that a relatively long time, i.e. 4.1 months, is usually spent before disputes are taken to any DRM (3.2 months in the project area and 7.3 months in the control area). It is also common for people to spend time in other DRMs before reaching the final mechanism that actually resolves the dispute. In the project area, cases spent on average 0.9 months in

other DRMs before it came to the DRM where the resolutions were made. This is 1.6 months in the control area.

Disputes resolved in district courts tend to be very expensive for the justice seekers. The cost are partly due to fees paid to the court and lawyers but also in terms of transportation and the opportunity cost of time spent. When summing up all these costs, the average cost of resolving a dispute is nearly BDT 90,000 or 2.5 years of total expenditure for an average person in our sample (the cost of seeking justice in district courts is BDT 66,000 in the project area and BDT 107,000 in the control area). Furthermore, a majority (BDT 60,578) of this cost is a direct monetary cost. This means that district courts are not an affordable alternative for the majority of the households. On the other hand, *Shalish* or VC cases are quite affordable with average costs around BDT 4,000 or a little more than per capita monthly expenditure of an average person. In the project area, cases in *Shalish* spent BDT 3,400 and cases in VCs spent BDT 3,000. In the control area, the costs are BDT 4,700 and BDT 10,600 for *Shalish* and VCs respectively. Only about half of these costs are direct monetary costs, making these DRMs accessible for most of the households in our sample. This is also evident from the fact that the number of users of district courts below the poverty line is lower than that of *Shalish* and VC.

Another interesting aspect of access to DRMs is the type of DRMs mostly used by female justice seekers. In our sample, female justice seekers tend to use *Shalish* and VC more than district courts. Among those whose disputes resolved in *Shalish,* 19% of them are women, while this is an overwhelming 66% for village court. Among justice seekers in district courts, only 10% are women. As *Shalish* and VC are locally accessible and inexpensive, these appear to be more affordable and convenient for women to seek justice.

When comparing the final compensation[12] realized through different DRMs, we expectedly find that the average compensation is much higher in district courts, about BDT 200,000, while in the *Shalish* and VC, this figure is around BDT 65,000-75,000. Interestingly, average compensation recovered through village courts is BDT 112,182 in control area. Its indicate that VC's resolved the disputes which were out of VC's jurisdiction..

Percentage of decisions fully implemented are high across all DRMs in both the project and control area. Seventy-two percent of *Shalish dicisons,* 80% of VC decions and 75% of district courts disions were fully implemented in the project area. These rats are 63%, 78% and 56% respectively for *Shalishs,* VCs and district courts, respectively in control area.

Table 8: Efficiency and costs of DRMs

Indicator	Project Area				Control area			
	Shalish or other third party mediation (N=503)	VC (N=9)	District Court (N=95)	Overall (N=607)	Shalish or other third party mediation (N=219)	VC (N=5)	District Court (N=55)	Overall (N=279)
Average time from start of dispute until resolution was sought (months)	3.0	0.4	4.8	3.2	7.2	44.6	4.8	7.3
Average number of months spent	0.6	1.1	2.8	0.9	0.2	12.6	6.5	1.6

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[12] Compensation is defined as the transfer of money or valuables (measured in monetary terms) from one party to another party as a result of the court verdict.

Indicator	Project Area				Control area			
	Shalish or other third party mediation (N=503)	VC (N=9)	District Court (N=95)	Overall (N=607)	Shalish or other third party mediation (N=219)	VC (N=5)	District Court (N=55)	Overall (N=279)
in other DRM before seeking resolution in the final DRM								
Average time taken (in months) from case file to judgement	4.8	3.4	33.7	7.7	9.6	0.6	71.0	21.4
% of cases resolved within 6 weeks	64%	22%	17%	58%	65%	94%	9%	54%
% of decisions fully implemented	72%	80%	75%	73%	63%	78%	56%	62%
If implemented, average months taken	2.1	1.1	13.0	3.2	1.1	0.4	40.2	8.7
Average monetary cost of resolution (court fees, lawyer fees and transportation costs)	1400	1329	39294	5242	2282	4747	85313	18439
Average total cost of resolution (court and lawyer fees, transportation costs and opportunity cost of time)	3436	3064	65906	9765	4742	10669	107272	24731
% of users below WB poverty line	18%	66%	15%	18%	17%	0%	16%	17%
% of female users	19%	66%	11%	19%	16%	0%	7%	14%
% of trials resulting in some type of monetary compensation or transfer of assets	43%	77%	67%	46%	42%	78%	53%	44%
Average compensation as a result of the trial	70300	57646	177766	80945	92553	112182	220785	117722

3.7   Satisfaction level with DRM

An important indicator for the quality of a DRM is how satisfied the users are. The table below reports different DRMs in terms of subjective satisfaction levels with the decision and resolution process among the users of different DRMs. We do not think readers should compare between the satisfaction levels of different DRMs. For such comparison to be valid, the same disputant parties should have sought resolution for the same dispute in different DRMs and then provide comparative satisfaction levels with different DRMs. We can mimic this condition in an experimental setting where we will randomly assign similar cases to different DRMs and then measure satisfaction levels, which will give us valid comparative estimates. Readers should also be cautious while taking the difference in satisfaction level between a baseline and a follow-up as the succss indicator for a program that claims to improve a DRM. This indicator can be misleading if the VC capacity does not match with corresponding increase in the demand for VC services. For example, AVCB program may make village courts functional and increase demand for justice seeking. This may increase the demand for VC services. Keeping all else constant, such as panel members of VCs and VC management staff, increased demand for VC will increase the average wait time in the VC. Consequently, users of VCs may record a lower satisfaction rate when the damand for VC service is high in comparison to users of VCs from a low demand period. There could be a trade-off between improving access to justice and improving satisfaction of the justice seekers if corresponding investment is not made to manage the increased demand properly.

In this survey, users of different DRMs reported similar satisfaction levels; an average respondent expressed close to moderate level of satisfaction across all DRMs.. This is surprising, especially given the long processing times and high costs of district courts. But it is possible that since people expect these long resolution time and high cost, they do not feel particularly dissatisfied when facing them in the district courts. Subjective satisfaction on the VC should be considered with caution due to small sample size.

Moreover, higher satisfaction rate on DRM usage may indicate a methodological issue with construct validity. Satisfaction may not be a uni-dimensional construct. Users might be satisfied with some aspects, such as the quality of judgement, while dissatisfied with something else, such as the cost of seeking justice. If it is true that satisfaction is not a uni-dimensional construct, then measuring satisfaction with a single question may not provide accurate estimate of satisfaction. In the future rounds of data collection, this measurement can be compared with an alternative measurement where satisfaction will be measured using principal component analysis on a multi-item scale. The qualitative data collection part of this evaluation will further investigate what aspects of a justice seeking and resolution process people weigh more while perceiving satisfaction. That qualitative section will not only explain the reason for reporting such high satisfaction, but will help in constructing the multi-item satisfaction scale.

Table 9: Satisfaction level by DRM

Indicators	Project Area				Control Area			
	Shalish or other third party mediation (N=503)	VC (N=9)	District Court (N=95)	Overall (N=607)	Shalish or other third party mediation (N=219)	VC (N=5)	District Court (N=55)	Overall (N=279)
Frequency of satisfaction levels with decisions								
Very satisfied	11%	0%	18%	12%	15%	7%	12%	14%
Satisfied	68%	89%	61%	68%	50%	93%	50%	51%
Indifferent	10%	2%	11%	10%	13%	0%	9%	12%

Indicators	Project Area				Control Area			
	Shalish or other third party mediation (N=503)	VC (N=9)	District Court (N=95)	Overall (N=607)	Shalish or other third party mediation (N=219)	VC (N=5)	District Court (N=55)	Overall (N=279)
Dissatisfied	8%	9%	8%	8%	19%	0%	19%	18%
Very dissatisfied	2%	0%	2%	2%	3%	0%	10%	4%
Frequency of satisfaction levels resolution process								
Very satisfied	9%	3%	8%	8%	9%	22%	12%	10%
Satisfied	72%	85%	71%	72%	61%	78%	48%	58%
Indifferent	10%	9%	12%	10%	13%	0%	17%	14%
Dissatisfied	7%	3%	7%	7%	13%	0%	14%	13%
Very dissatisfied	2%	0%	2%	2%	4%	0%	9%	5%
Average satisfaction levels								
Average satisfaction level with resolution process (1=very satisfied, 5=very dissatisfied)	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.4	1.9	2.7	2.5
Average satisfaction level with decision (1=very satisfied, 5=very dissatisfied)	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.4	1.8	2.6	2.4

3.7.1   Relationship between applicant and defendant after resolution

Another important indicator for the quality of a resolution to a dispute is how the parties of the dispute feel about each other after the resolution. Table 10 answers of different DRMs users to the question on how they feel about the party that they had the dispute with. There is no consistent pattern found here. In the project area, there is a small difference between *Shalish* and district courts users; people who used *Shalish* are more likely to continue to argue after the resolution (8% of cases), while this number is very low in cases resolved in district courts (2% of cases). However in the control area, 21% of the respondents who got resolution from district courts still continue arguing compared to 11% in the *Shalish*. In most cases, most of the people involved in the dispute across DRMs do not establish a friendly relationship after the resolution.

Table 10: Relationship between applicant and defendant

Indicators	Project Areas				Non-Project Areas			
	Shalish or other third party mediation (N=503)	VC (N=9)	District Court (N=95)	Overall (N=607)	Shalish or other third party mediation (N=219)	VC (N=5)	District Court (N=55)	Overall (N=279)
Frequency of relationship with other party in dispute								
Friendly	7%	9%	7%	7%	10%	0%	7%	9%
Cordial	36%	9%	36%	36%	28%	55%	14%	26%
We do not speak	48%	83%	54%	49%	51%	23%	58%	52%
We still argue	8%	0%	2%	8%	11%	22%	21%	13%
Frequency of feeling towards other party in dispute								
Hatred	9%	0%	19%	10%	14%	7%	19%	15%
Dislike	28%	7%	32%	28%	24%	21%	43%	28%
Do not speak with each other	34%	75%	19%	33%	39%	72%	28%	37%
Friendly	28%	9%	29%	28%	20%	0%	10%	18%
Good friend	2%	9%	2%	2%	3%	0%	0%	3%

3.8   Potential future mechanisms

Section 3.4 described how actual disputes were resolved in the past. Estimates in the previous section were calculated from the sub-sample of households that resolved a dispute using a DRM. It is also important to understand the preferences (including those that did not have a dispute recently or did not resolve a dispute recently)   to resolve future hypothetical disputes to project future demand. We therefore asked all households about how they would resolve four common disputes that are all within the VC jurisdiction. Below are the answers to these four questions.

Table 11: Choice of DRM for hypothetical future disputes

Indicator	Project area			Control area			Overall
	Man	Woman	Overall	Man	Woman	Overall	
Credit dispute of BDT 10,000							
Shalish or other third party mediation	81.8%	80.6%	81.1%	43.4%	44.4%	44.0%	71.5%
District Court	0.8%	0.2%	0.5%	0.8%	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%
Village Court	17.3%	18.8%	18.2%	54.6%	53.9%	54.2%	27.5%
Others	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%	1.2%	1.5%	1.4%	0.5%
Assault of Family member							
Shalish or other third party mediation	84.2%	83.3%	83.7%	49.4%	53.4%	51.9%	75.4%
District Court	1.9%	0.9%	1.3%	1.4%	0.7%	0.9%	1.2%
Village Court	13.5%	15.2%	14.5%	48.7%	44.5%	46.1%	22.7%
Others	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%	1.4%	1.1%	0.7%
Land disputes							
Shalish or other third party mediation	84.0%	81.2%	82.4%	56.8%	54.5%	55.4%	75.4%

Indicator	Project area			Control area			Overall
	Man	**Woman**	**Overall**	**Man**	**Woman**	**Overall**	
District Court	4.1%	3.6%	3.8%	2.8%	1.8%	2.2%	3.4%
Village Court	11.9%	14.7%	13.6%	40.4%	43.2%	42.2%	21.0%
Others	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
Resolve dispute related to crops damage							
Shalish or other third party mediation	85.4%	84.8%	85.1%	54.7%	54.4%	54.5%	77.1%
District Court	1.7%	0.8%	1.1%	2.0%	1.7%	1.8%	1.3%
Village Court	12.8%	14.0%	13.5%	42.4%	42.8%	42.7%	21.1%
Others	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	0.9%	1.1%	1.1%	0.5%

As can be seen in Table 11 above, *Shalish* is by far the most popular dispute resolution mechanism with more than 75% of the households answering that they would resolve these disputes through *Shalish* even though all the four disputes fall within the VCs jurisdiction. Village courts are the second most popular dispute resolution mechanism with around 20% of the household answering that they would take the case to a village court. Very few, less than 3% , of the households state that they would use the District Court. One striking aspect of these answers is that there is little difference between these four types of scenarios. What it indicates is that for most households they would go to the same DRM for all their minor disputes regardless of the type. If the AVCB program can shift this standard DRM preference from Shalish to VC, it may quickly change the justice seeking behaviour in the project area.

In choosing a particular DRM for a particular petty dispute, we ran regressions to see what household demographic and knowledge characteristics affect the choice of DRM (please see appendix 3 for regression results). It appears that awareness and knowledge about VCs can consistently predict the higher usage of VCs and lower usage of *Shalish* and district courts. To increase awareness about VCs among the people appears to be an effective way of increasing demand for VC services.

3.8.1 Reasons for choosing DRM

In order to better understand why respondents would choose a particular DRM, we asked them to rank the DRM in terms of how likely they were to use them for the types of cases we had described above and state the main reason for their top and bottom rankings. Below are the responses to this question.

Figure 2: Main reasons for choosing a particular resolution mechanism
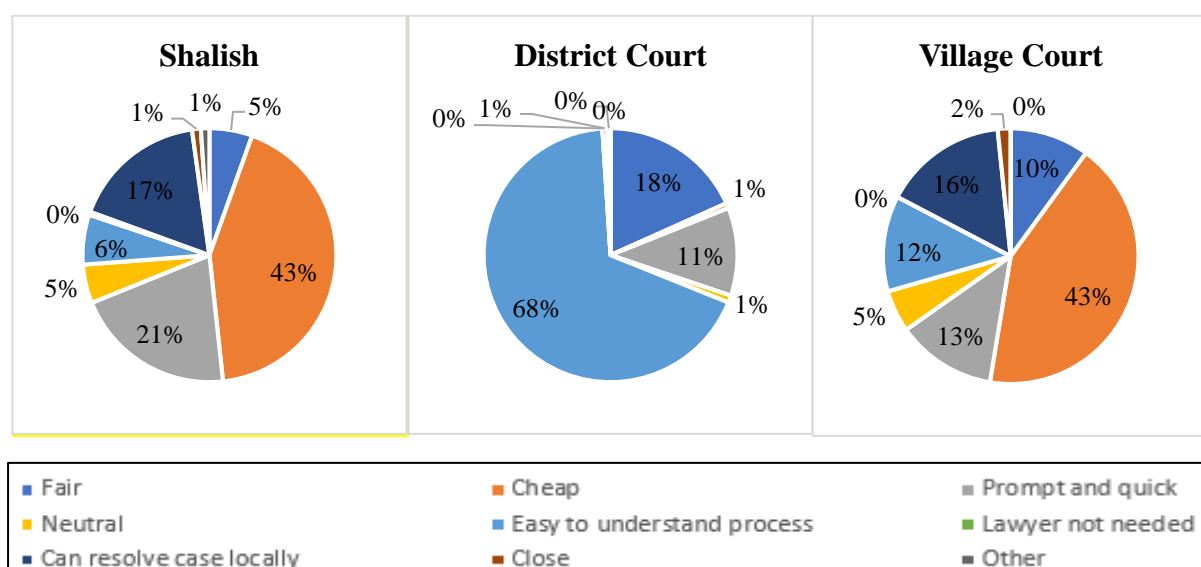
It is clear that most households choosing *Shalish* or VC do so because VCs are affordabile and local. The main attractive aspects to the district courts seem to be their transparent and easily understood process as well as their fair decisions.

Figure 3: Main reasons for not choosing a particular resolution mechanism
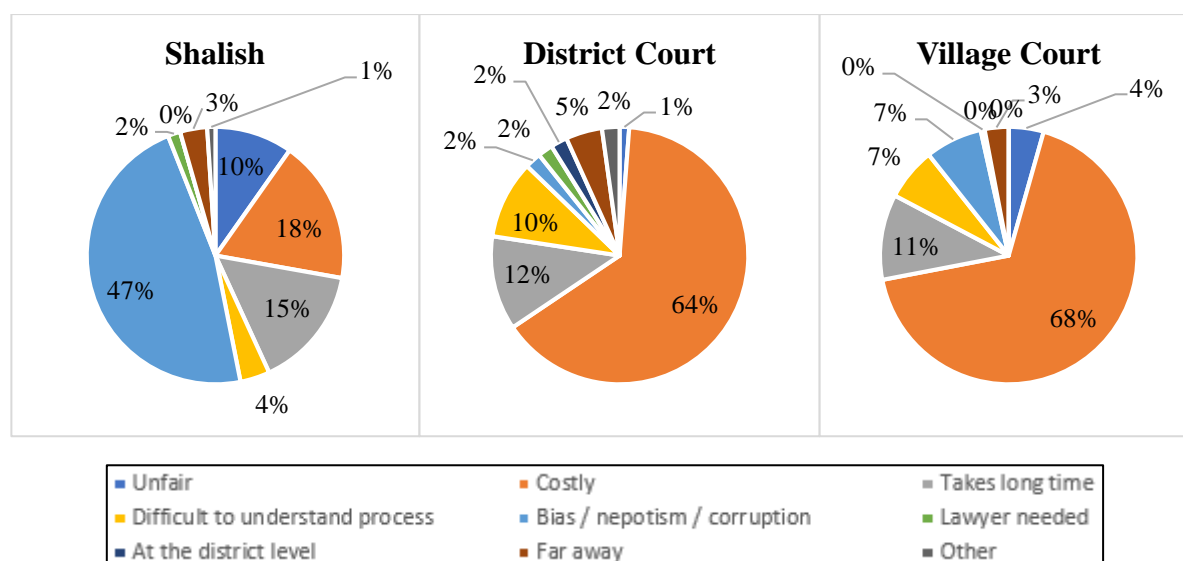
Amongst the households ranking *Shalish* as their bottom choice, bias, nepotism and corruption seem to be the main concerns. For those ranking district courts as the bottom choice, the cost seems to be the main concern. This is consistent with the prevous section that reports districts courts as the most expensive DRM. There seems to be some misconception about the VCs among the people ranking the VCs as their bottom choice since the main reason for doing so is VCs being expensive. We regard this as a misconception since our estimates in the previous section shows that VCs are as much affordable as *Shalish.* People might not have proper knowledge about court fees and other expenses in VCs.

3.9 General perception of crime, community harmony and DRMs

3.9.1 Perception on crime and community harmony

In general, respondents think that crime is a serious problem in their villages. However, they also record good relationships with the closest five neighbours. Our interpretation of this result is that people trust others who are well-known to them but are suspicious of the general population in the community. It is also interesting that people seem relatively satisfied with the justice system they have access to. This is confirming the results on satisfaction among the people who have resolved an actual dispute. However, as mentioned above, these subjective satisfaction measures should be interpreted with caution as it is difficult to know what people have in mind when they say they are satisfied; maybe they are satisfied compared to the situation few years ago or compared to other locations they have visited. Their satisfaction could have been different if they compared their experience to the justice system they ought to have access to.

Table 12: Perception on crime and community harmony

Indicators	Project area	Control	Overall
How big of a problem crime is in your village? (1=not at all, 5=very serious problem)	3.9	3.7	3.9

How much harmony or conflict exists between you and your 5 closest neighbours? (1=a lot of harmony, 5=a lot of dispute)	1.6	1.6	1.6
Overall, how satisfied are you with the justice system that you have access to? (the justice system that you would turn to if something happened to you.) (1=very satisfied, 5=very dissatisfied)	2.2	2.2	2.2

3.9.2   People's perception of different DRMs

The table below describes people's perceptions of different DRMs. Note that these are perceptions and the people responding to these questions may or may not have actual experience with a particular DRM they are talking about (for actual experiences, please refer to the section on "Experience of Disputes"). People's perception of the DRMs are important since this determines to what DRMs they resort to when a dispute occurs.

In terms of fairness, the three DRMs seem to be viewed similarly by the respondents. The majority of the people perceive VCs, *Shalish* and district courts as somewhat fair. Peoples' perceptions of different DRMs are also similar when we compare their views in terms of how able different DRMs are in enforcing their decisions. Most people think all three DRMs are somewhat capable of enforcing their decisions.

People seem to have a realistic view of how long it takes to resolve a dispute in *Shalish* and districts courts. The average response to how many days it takes to resolve a dispute in *Shalish* is 16 days and in VC is 33 days, while for district courts this is 909 days. These numbers are relatively similar to the actual time it took for people to resolve disputes discussed in the previous section.

Another area in which the perceptions of the three DRMs are very different is how expensive they are to use. Most people think that VCs and *Shalish* are not expensive at all or just a little expensive while the vast majority perceive the district courts to be very expensive. Again, these results correspond to the statistics reported in the previous section showing that the formal court system is very expensive to use while *Shalish* and VC are affordable ways to resolve disputes.

Table 13: Perception about the fairness and speed of different DRMs

Indicator	Project area	Control area	Overall
How fair is Village Court?			
Not fair at all	2%	3%	2%
Not fair	4%	6%	4%
Neutral	26%	29%	27%
Somewhat Fair	19%	19%	19%
Completely fair	50%	44%	48%
How fair is District Court?			
Not fair at all	2%	4%	3%
Not fair	7%	9%	7%
Neutral	26%	22%	25%
Somewhat Fair	23%	21%	23%
Completely fair	42%	45%	42%
How fair is Shalish?			
Not fair at all	2%	2%	2%
Not fair	4%	6%	4%
Neutral	16%	21%	17%

Indicator	Project area	Control area	Overall
Somewhat Fair	17%	23%	18%
Completely fair	62%	49%	59%
Days required to resolve dispute through VC	31	39	33
Days required to resolve dispute through DC	942	768	909
Days required to resolve dispute through Shalish	16	16	16
Ability of VC to enforce decisions			
Very bad	2%	2%	2%
Bad	2%	4%	2%
Neutral	28%	27%	28%
Good	30%	32%	31%
Very good	38%	35%	37%
Ability of DC to enforce decisions			
Very bad	1%	2%	1%
Bad	3%	7%	4%
Neutral	23%	22%	23%
Good	29%	24%	28%
Very good	43%	45%	43%
Ability of Shalish to enforce decisions			
Very bad	1%	1%	1%
Bad	3%	5%	3%
Neutral	25%	23%	25%
Good	31%	27%	30%
Very good	40%	44%	41%
How expensive is VC			
Not expensive at all	34%	22%	30%
A little expensive	39%	43%	40%
Neutral	18%	23%	20%
Somewhat expensive	6%	8%	7%
Very expensive	2%	5%	3%
How expensive is DC			
Not expensive at all	0%	1%	0%
A little expensive	0%	1%	1%
Neutral	3%	6%	4%
Somewhat expensive	15%	20%	16%
Very expensive	81%	73%	79%
How expensive is Shalish			
Not expensive at all	52%	47%	51%
A little expensive	35%	32%	34%
Neutral	7%	9%	8%
Somewhat expensive	2%	3%	2%
Very expensive	1%	3%	2%

3.10 People's Knowledge about VCs

3.10.1 People's knowledge about VC's existences

Only a small portion of the households heard about VCs (9%) and two thirds of them needed a hint before they said that they knew what a VC was. Male respondents heard about VCs more (12% of male respondents) than the female respondents (7% of female respondents). Also non-poor respondents heard more about VCs (11% of the non-poor respondents) than the poor respondents (4% of the poor respondents). These figures show the overall lack of awareness among the people about VCs and that this lack of awareness is even larger among the groups that VCs are explicitly aiming to help, i.e. women and the poor. These estimates are also consistent with the very low usage of and demand for VCs as described in earlier sections.

Table 14: Frequency of having heard about VC

Indicator	Project area	Control area	Overall
Spontaneously said yes	3%	4%	3%
After given a hint	6%	7%	6%
Never heard	91%	89%	91%
Frequency of having heard about VC (Spontaneously or after given a hint) by sex			
Man	12%	15%	12%
Woman	7%	9%	7%
Frequency of having heard about VC (Spontaneously or after given a hint) by poverty status[13]			
Non-Poor	11%	12%	11%
Poor	4%	5%	4%

3.10.2 Knowledge about VC measured by quiz

The following section describes the knowledge of the household respondents about the VC system as measured by quizzes administered to the respondents. Note that if a person stated that he or she did not know what a VC was, the person did not take the quiz but was classified as having no knowledge about the VC. Since only 9% of the population stated that they knew about the village courts, the "maximum" percentage of people who could answer the questions correctly could be 9% of the population.
The quiz was administered on the following domains of knowledge on VCs: 1) VC's financial jurisdiction, 2) cases that are dealt with VC, 3) formation of VCs, 4) fees for filing cases in VCs, 5) knowledge about the chair of VC, 6) process of decision making in VC, 7) process of appeal against the decision made by the VC and 8) use of lawyers in VC. The following table shows weighted average knowledge in these domains by gender and poverty.

Table 15 Status of knowledge by sex, poverty and areas

Indicators	Project areas					Control areas					Overall
	Man	Woman	Non-poor	Poor	Overall	Man	Woman	Non-poor	Poor	Overall	
Knowledge about VC's financial jurisdiction	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%

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[13] Poverty line used is the World bank's official poverty line of US$ 1.90 in PPP constant 2011 USD.

Indicators	Project areas					Control areas					Overall
	Man	Woman	Non-poor	Poor	Overall	Man	Woman	Non-poor	Poor	Overall	
Knowledge about about type of cases dealt by village courts	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Knowledge about the formation of VC	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Knowledge about VC fees	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Knowledge about the chair of the VC	9%	4%	8%	3%	6%	11%	6%	9%	5%	8%	6%
Knowledge about VC decision making process	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Knowledge about how to appeal against VC's decisions	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Knowledge about engagement of lawyers in VCs	8%	3%	7%	2%	5%	9%	5%	8%	2%	7%	6%

Respondents were asked if they knew what the maximum value of a disputes that could be tried in the VC. If they responded that they knew and then could state that the maximum value was BDT75,000, they were classified as having correct knowledge about the financial jurisdiction of the VC. As can be seen in the above, only 1% of the population knew what the financial jurisdiction of the VC was and almost no one among the poor households had the correct knowledge.

Respondents were asked if they knew what type of disputes the VC could deal with. If they responded that they knew, they were then presented with six types of disputes and were asked to classify which of these cases that the VC could dealt with. If they could correctly classify the six cases, they were classified as having correct knowledge about what type of disputes the VC could deal with. As can be seen in the table above, only 1% are aware about the VC jurisdiction. Male respondents and non-poor respondents had better knowledge about the VC jurisdiction compared to female respondents and the poor across project and control area.

Respondents were asked if they knew how the VC was formed. If they responded that they knew, they were then asked about a few details about the formation such as how the VC is formed or how many people of each position (UP member, local elite etc.) should be appointed to the VC, etc. As can be seen in the above table, very few (2%) had correct knowledge about how the VC is formed.

Respondents were also asked if they knew the fees for filing a disputes with the VC. If they responded that they knew, they were asked how much it is for Criminal and civil case. As can be seen in the table above, almost no one had correct knowledge about the fees of VC.

We also asked respondents if they knew who was the chair of the VC. If they responded that they knew, they were asked about who the chair was, if a person responded that it was the UP chair, that respondent was classified as knowledgeable. As can be seen in the table, 6% of the respondents knew that the UP chair is also the chair of VC. Fewer poor and fewer female respondents had this knowledge.

Respondents were also asked if they knew how the VC makes decisions. If they responded that they knew, they were asked to describe a specific part of the process and the surveyor classified the response as being correct or not. Overall, only 1% of the respondent knew the decision making process in the VC. Male and non-poor respondents had better knowledge than female and the poor

respondents. About the knowledge on appeal process against the VC decision, respondents were asked if they knew when to appeal. If they responded that they knew, they were asked to determine in what cases an appeal could be made. Almost no one had correct knowledge about the appeal against VC's decision.

Respondents were asked if lawyers could be used in the VC or not. Most people who knew about the VC also knew that lawyers could not be used in the VC. Overall, 6% of the respondents knew that lawyers could not be used in the VC. Male and the non-poor respondents had better knowledge than the female and the poor respondents.

Overall the quiz result show that even the people who have heard about the VC, are not familiar with the details of how the VC operates. Most respondents (92.5%) could not correctly answer a single question in the quiz and no one could answer more than one third of the questions correctly. Table 16 below demonstrates the results from each component of the quiz.

Table 16: Overall knowledge of village court (by quiz)

Number of Correct Answers	Project area			Control area			Overall
	Man	Woman	Overall	Man	Woman	Overall	
0	90.0%	95.2%	93.1%	87.8%	92.7%	90.8%	92.5%
1	2.6%	1.7%	2.0%	2.2%	2.6%	2.5%	2.1%
2	4.7%	0.9%	2.5%	6.2%	2.1%	3.7%	2.8%
3	1.2%	0.4%	0.7%	2.7%	1.8%	2.2%	1.1%
4	0.9%	1.3%	1.1%	0.9%	0.6%	0.7%	1.0%
5	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
6	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
7	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
8	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Lack of knowledge about the VC can explain the demand for VC. As the following table shows people who heard about the VC are one percentage point more likely to resolve a petty dispute in the VC. Therefore, increasing awareness could help increase demand for VC.

Table 17: Awareness of VC and tendency to resolve disputes in VC

VARIABLES	Resolved a dispute at VC
Aware of VC	0.006*
	(0.003)
Constant	0.001
	(0.001)
Observations	4,974
R-squared	0.001

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

3.11 People's Perception about VCs

Those who heard about VCs, we asked them about their perception regarding VCs. Perceptions of the respondents on most of the attributes relatd to VCs appear to be positive. For instance, most of the respondents regardless of gender mentioned that the VCs were active in their villages (71% of those who heard about VCs). Almost similar proportion believed that VCs attended to people's needs for justice and could enforce decisions taken in the VC.

75% of them also believed that social problems and crimes were reduced due to VC's activities. Interestingly, while 29% believed that VCs reduced petty crimes (those are triable in VC) 61% told that VCs reduced all sorts of crimes. People might be attributing a deterrent effect of VCs on all sorts of crimes including petty ones triable under VCs. However, people's perceptions about other social changes such as increasing community harmony or feeling safe in the community were not high. Less than 5% of the respondents believed that VC had increased community harmony or community safety.

One salient purpose of introducing VCs is to reduce dependence on the district court for petty disputes and crimes. As it can be seen from the table that 80% of the respondents who heard about VC actually believed VCs reduced likelihood of going to a district court. There is no difference in such perception by gender. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents told that likelihood of going to a district court was reduced as getting justice from VCs was easy.

Table 18: Perception on different attributes of VCs (those who heard about VC)

Indicator	Project area			Control area			Overall
	Man	Woman	Over all	Man	Woman	Overall	
% saying VC is active in UP	70%	66%	68%	72%	82%	77%	71%
% believing that VC hears and attend to people's needs?	70%	71%	70%	67%	68%	68%	70%
% believing that VC can enforce its decision	71%	76%	73%	71%	66%	69%	72%
% perceiving any change in social problems and crimes due to operations of VC	77%	66%	72%	76%	84%	80%	75%
Types of changes occurred							
Reduce all types of crime	56%	66%	61%	64%	58%	61%	61%
Reduce petty crime which are triable at VCs	40%	20%	31%	26%	26%	26%	29%
Increase community harmony	3%	6%	4%	8%	6%	7%	5%
Increase community safety	1%	5%	3%	1%	6%	3%	3%
Reduce business disputes	0%	0%	0%	2%	4%	3%	1%
Other disputes	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Likelihood of the people to go to District Court after introducing the Village Court							
Likelihood reduced	79%	79%	79%	78%	84%	81%	80%
Likelihood increased	4%	9%	6%	4%	2%	3%	5%
Same as before	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Don't know	14%	10%	12%	16%	12%	14%	13%
If reduced, why							
Can get justice easily	59%	47%	54%	70%	70%	70%	59%
Less expensive	35%	39%	37%	29%	27%	28%	34%
Easy transportation	6%	13%	9%	1%	3%	2%	7%
If increased or same as before, why ?							
District court deals with cases worth over Tk. 75000	51%	82%	69%	9%	64%	29%	60%
Delay in decision	17%	14%	15%	26%	0%	16%	16%
Decision not implemented	29%	1%	13%	59%	36%	50%	21%
Others	3%	2%	3%	7%	0%	5%	3%

4 UP Representatives' Knowledge, Attitude and Perception about VCs

4.1 Overview of survey with UP representatives

UP representatives are engaged in a lot of dispute resolutions and see this as one of their main duties. Most UP representatives have a basic knowledge about the VC system, however, most of the dispute resolution they engage in take the form of *Shalish* and do not follow the VC format. Even among the UPs that claim to be conducting VCs, the procedures rarely follow the VC rules and regulations.

When UP officials and representatives were tested on their knowledge of the VC system it was clear that a very few had a full understanding of the VC rules and regulations. Hence, some of the non-compliance with VC rules and regulation probably take place for UP representatives' lack of knowledge about the VC system. Among the different types of UP representatives, the female UP members have the least knowledge about the VC system.

Almost none of the UPs have a person employed dedicated to supporting the VC such as a VC assistant or AACO. Another reason for non-compliance, therefore, could be attributed to the lack of assistance in administering the activities related to VC management. In response to what was the biggest weakness of the VC is, lack of manpower is cited as the most common by VC representativves.

4.2 Profile of UP officials and representatives

Table 18 provides the characteristics of the interviewed UP representatives and the secretaries.[14]. UP officials and representatives are older and have more education than the population they represent. Our sample has 27% female UP representatives. This is because we interviewed one female UP member per UP.

Table 19: Personal characteristics of the UP officials and representatives interviewed

Variable name	Project area	Control area
Average age	43.4	44.1
Average years of education	12.3	12.7
% women	27%	26%
Average number of years in current position	3.8	4.9

4.3 Engagement of UP representatives and officials in dispute resolution activities

According to their own estimates, UP representatives and officials spend a lot of time resolving disputes. In particular, UP chairs spent on average 22 hours per week resolving, on average, 36 disputes in a 3-month period. UP chairs mainly use *Shalish* to resolve disputes (78% of all disputes that they resolved in the past 3 months). While 17% percent of disputes that UP chairs claimed to have resolved using VC might sound low, it is much higher than the estimate from the previous section that households reported.

UP members reported spending less time and solving less disputes than the UP chairs but given that there are 9 UP members in each UP, their cumulative time is still a substantial amount of work. The average individual UP member reported spending 13 hours per week, resolving 13 disputes over past 3 months. UP members use *Shalish* even more- 87% of all disputes that they resovled were in *Shalish.* In only 10% of disputes, they used VC. Finally, the female UP members occupying the seats reserved

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[14] UP chair, UP member, and female UP member comprise the UP representatives. UP secretary is the appointed officer. In this report, we will refer them as UP officials.

for women spent less time overall resolving disputes and resolved fewer disputes than the general UP members.

It is worth noting that some UP officials mentioned using *Shalish Parishad* as a DRM. *Shalish Parishads* (or Arbitration Councils) are similar to Village Courts in the way they are set up but are only meant for family issues in Muslim families and operate under the Muslim Family Law. Among the households, no households reported having had their disputes resolved by *Shalish Parishad* and therefore we omitted it from the analysis of the household data. It is also clear that among UP officials *Shalish Parishad* is the least commonly used DRM. It could be the case that most of the households probably cannot distinguish, due to the similarity in the names, *Shalish Parishad* from a standard *Shalish* even when it is used.

Table 20: UP officials and representatives' engagement with VCs

Indicators	Village Court	Shalish Parishad	Shalish
UP chair			
Number of disputes resolved in the past 3 months	6.2	1.8	27.8
Hours spent on dispute resolution in a typical week	3.8	1.4	17.3
Ordinary UP member			
Number of disputes resolved in the past 3 months	1.4	0.4	11.2
Hours spent on dispute resolution in a typical week	1.4	0.3	11.5
Female UP member			
Number of disputes resolved in the past 3 months	1.0	0.2	4.8
Hours spent on dispute resolution in a typical week	0.9	0.1	5.9

4.4 Basic knowledge of VCs by UP representatives and officials

UP officials are expectedly much more knowledgeable about the VC than the general population. Even so, only 58% of the UP officials could spontaneously say they knew what a VC was and even after a hint was given, only 80% said so.

The lack of knowledge was concentrated among the UP members and more specifically among the female UP members. While only 6% of the UP chairs did not know what a VC was, 18% of UP members and 55% of female UP members did not even know what a VC was and did therefore not take the full knowledge quiz test. Ninety-nine percent of the UP officials who heard about VCs learned this at least 6 months to more than 2 years before, which suggests that activities undertaken under the AVCB program in this phase did not affect their knowledge in a considerable way before the baseline data collection.

Table 21: Percetnage of UP representatives and officials who heard about VCs

Indicator	Project area					Control area					Overall
	UP Chair	Ordinary UP	UP female	UP secretary	Overall	UP Chair	Ordinary UP	UP female	UP secretary	Overall	Overall
Could say spontaneously/easily	80%	45%	16%	88%	57%	80%	46%	35%	91%	63%	58%
Could say after giving some idea	14%	37%	30%	9%	22%	15%	35%	24%	9%	21%	22%
Could say nothing about Village Court	6%	18%	55%	3%	20%	6%	19%	41%	0%	16%	20%

Indicator	Project area					Control area					Overall
	UP Chair	Ordinary UP	UP female	UP secretary	Overall	UP Chair	Ordinary UP	UP female	UP secretary	Overall	
When have heard											
Less than 1 month	1%	3%	4%	0%	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%	1%	1%
2-5 months	4%	7%	12%	1%	5%	2%	2%	9%	0%	3%	5%
6-12 months	5%	12%	22%	6%	9%	4%	9%	9%	6%	7%	9%
13-24 months	6%	8%	2%	4%	5%	4%	5%	6%	2%	4%	5%
More than 2 years	84%	70%	60%	89%	79%	90%	84%	69%	93%	86%	80%

4.5 Quiz to test knowledge on VC system among UP representatives and officials

In order to assess the UP representatives and officials' knowledge about how a VC should be conducted, but not necessarily how it *is* conducted in practice, a knowledge quiz was administered to all UP representatives and officials. Two slightly different quizzes were administered randomly so that in the follow-up survey, respondents would not respond to exactly the same quiz. Both quizzes had the following same 9 domains of knowledge questions about VCs:
1.Knowledge about the formation of VC, 2. Knowledge about the VC chair, 3. Knowledge about fines that the VC can impose, 4. Knowledge about VC jurisdiction, 5. Knowledge about VC fees, 6. Knowledge about decision making process of the VC, 7. Knowledge about the process for appeal against VC decision, 8. Knowledge about the use of lawyers in the VC and 9. Knowledge about the process for issuing a summon (please see appendix 4 for quizzes that were administered to measure knowledge in these 9 domains)

It is clear from the knowledge test that the general knowledge about how the VC is supposed to function is low. Overall, on average, UP representatives and officails provided correct answers to 36% of the questions in the quiz. No one managed to answer all questions correctly. Among the different types of UP representatives and officials, UP secretaries and UP chairs were the most knowledgeable groups while female members were the least knowledgeable group. Overall, knowledge about VC formation, jurisdiction, VC's chair and use of lawyers in VC appears to be good. Knowledge about fees, decision making and appeal process seems weak.

Table 22: Knowledge about functioning of VCs by UP representatives and officials

Indicator	Project area					Control area					Overall
	UP Chair	Ordinary UP member	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	UP Chair	Ordinary UP member	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	
% of questions correctly answered	42%	26%	23%	46%	36%	37%	26%	22%	43%	33%	36%
Frequency of correct knowledge in individual knowledge areas											
VC formation	78%	46%	40%	88%	68%	61%	41%	31%	81%	57%	66%
Fees for both civil and	17%	4%	6%	22%	14%	12%	2%	3%	15%	9%	13%

Indicator	Project area					Control area					Overall
	UP Chair	Ordinary UP member	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	UP Chair	Ordinary UP member	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	Overall
criminal cases											
Fees for criminal case	25%	10%	6%	26%	19%	14%	2%	3%	19%	10%	18%
Fees for civil cases	19%	6%	7%	25%	16%	14%	5%	6%	22%	13%	16%
VC jurisdiction	28%	10%	8%	39%	24%	18%	5%	9%	30%	17%	23%
VC Chair	79%	58%	54%	74%	69%	78%	66%	50%	85%	72%	69%
VC Fines	20%	10%	7%	25%	17%	27%	2%	3%	15%	13%	17%
Decision making process	14%	6%	4%	14%	11%	8%	7%	3%	17%	9%	11%
Appeal process	5%	2%	5%	11%	6%	12%	0%	0%	11%	7%	6%
Correct response frequency on appeal related questions											
None of the questions	38%	47%	75%	41%	50%	19%	35%	69%	7%	32%	48%
Exactly one question	12%	19%	8%	16%	14%	28%	31%	15%	24%	25%	15%
Exactly two questions	33%	23%	12%	21%	22%	39%	24%	17%	43%	31%	23%
Exactly three questions	13%	9%	4%	14%	10%	7%	7%	0%	19%	8%	10%
All the questions	5%	1%	1%	8%	4%	7%	2%	0%	7%	4%	4%
Use of lawyers in VC	71%	58%	47%	76%	66%	63%	70%	63%	69%	66%	66%
Issuing a summon	60%	38%	40%	64%	53%	51%	39%	38%	61%	49%	52%
Correct response frequency on all questions											
None of the question	1%	5%	12%	0%	3%	4%	7%	19%	0%	6%	4%
Exactly one question	2%	25%	26%	5%	12%	6%	16%	16%	6%	10%	12%
Exactly two questions	18%	25%	25%	9%	18%	20%	34%	28%	13%	23%	19%
Exactly three questions	25%	29%	21%	22%	25%	25%	27%	22%	22%	24%	24%
Exactly four questions	25%	11%	9%	29%	20%	27%	14%	16%	31%	23%	21%
Exactly five questions	17%	5%	5%	17%	12%	8%	2%	0%	15%	7%	12%

Indicator	Project area					Control area					Overall
	UP Chair	Ordinary UP member	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	UP Chair	Ordinary UP member	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	Overall
Exactly six questions	8%	0%	2%	8%	5%	10%	0%	0%	7%	5%	5%
Exactly seven questions	2%	0%	0%	3%	2%	0%	0%	0%	4%	1%	1%
Exactly eight questions	1%	0%	0%	7%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%
All nine questions	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Among the officials and representatieves, UP chairs have fairly good knowledge on VC formation, VC jurisdiction, VC's chair, use of lawyers in VC, and the issuance of summon. Their knowledge on court fees, decision making process and appeal process are weak. On the other hand, UP members and female members have good knowledge on the VC's chair and use of lawyers in VC. Their knowledge in other domains are weak. UP secretaries in the control area have good knowledge on the VC's chair but secretaries in the project areas have relatively weak knowledge in that domain. Therefore, AVCB training for the UP officials and representatives should provide emphasis on the VC processes and specially target female UP members and general members with greater urgency. Otherwise, the VC process would evolve to a system too much dependent on the UP chairmen.

4.5.1 Sources of knowledge about the VC

Among those who took the knowledge test, the most common place to have learned about the VC was directly from a UP chair. This is not surprising since the UP chair is the main person conducting the VC and therefore should have the knowledge about it and consequently teach other UP officials and representatives about the rules and regulation. One UP chair can also learn from other UP chairs as UP chairs often interact. However, it is alarming that, at present, the UP chairs not only have to run the VC but also teach the other UP officials and representatives about the rules. The fact that UP chairs is the major source of knowledge also runs the risk of making the VC process much dependent on the UP chair. It therefore seems to be a key step for the AVCB program to educate other UP representative and officials about how to conduct a VC. The second biggest source of knowledge was training (43% of the respondents). Reading the VC Act by the officials themselves was reported as the third important source (38% of the respondents).

Table 23: Source of knowledge among UP representatives and officials

Sources of knowledge	Project area					Control area					Overall
	UP Chair	Ordinary UP member	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	UP Chair	Ordinary UP member	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	
Training	31%	24%	57%	60%	43%	35%	36%	38%	57%	43%	43%
Workshop	20%	10%	18%	15%	16%	10%	2%	3%	11%	7%	11%
Read village court act myself	43%	12%	21%	60%	37%	51%	25%	9%	52%	38%	38%
UNO	31%	12%	11%	25%	21%	27%	7%	3%	20%	16%	18%

Sources of knowledge	Project area					Control area					Overall
	UP Chair	Ordinary UP member	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	UP Chair	Ordinary UP member	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	
UP Chairman	39%	68%	61%	43%	51%	35%	68%	66%	44%	51%	51%
NGO	24%	20%	21%	28%	24%	16%	14%	9%	20%	15%	20%
Government letter	22%	7%	14%	55%	27%	20%	5%	0%	39%	18%	23%
Courtyard meeting	4%	15%	11%	2%	7%	2%	9%	6%	7%	6%	7%
Poster/sticker	6%	5%	4%	15%	8%	12%	0%	6%	13%	8%	8%
Others	6%	15%	4%	4%	7%	4%	9%	6%	11%	8%	7%

4.5.2 Number and timing of training and workshops

Although far from all UP officials and representatives received official training on how to conduct a VC, those who did mostly received it relatively recently. Among those who received training the vast majority (67%) received it within the past 4 years.

Table 24: Frequency and timing of training on VCs

Indicator	Project area					Control area					Overall
	UP Chair	Ordinary UP member	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	UP Chair	Ordinary UP member	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	Overall
How many times did you get training/ workshop?	0.8	0.7	0.8	1.8	1.1	1.3	0.7	0.5	1.6	1.1	1.1
When did you get the last training?											
Before 2008	8%	9%	7%	12%	10%	8%	0%	8%	15%	9%	10%
2008	3%	8%	0%	3%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
2009	7%	0%	13%	2%	4%	4%	0%	0%	3%	2%	4%
2010	2%	0%	0%	2%	1%	8%	0%	0%	9%	6%	2%
2011	0%	3%	8%	5%	4%	4%	13%	0%	0%	3%	4%
2012	4%	0%	2%	7%	5%	0%	6%	0%	6%	3%	4%
2013	8%	11%	2%	7%	8%	4%	0%	0%	3%	2%	7%
2014	2%	11%	4%	14%	9%	4%	25%	8%	21%	15%	10%
2015	5%	6%	10%	12%	9%	17%	19%	8%	24%	19%	10%
2016	46%	45%	32%	32%	38%	42%	13%	42%	15%	26%	36%
2017	15%	7%	22%	4%	9%	8%	25%	33%	6%	14%	10%

4.6 Adherence to VC rules

In the previous section, we described what UP officials and representatives know about the VC rules and regulations. In this section, we will provide an overview for how well these rules have been followed in practice, as claimed by the UP Chairmen themselves. The method to collect data for the table below was to ask the UP Chairmen to describe the latest case(s) resolved using a VC and for the surveyor to note down what parts of the main steps in the VC regulation that were followed and if they were done so in correct sequence.

In the table below, we can see that almost no UP Chairman described cases where they followed all the steps in correct order. This could stem from the lack of knowledge about VC rules and regulation described in the previous section. But it could also be due to time constraints on the UP Chairmen , i.e. in the absence of support staff, UP Chairmen might not have followed the sequential. Most of the steps were followed in more than or around 50% of the cases except for the implementation of the decision within the 6- week time limit. Only in 6% cases, UP chairmen followed all steps in correct sequence.

While interpreting the table below, it should be kept in mind that these figures are based on self-reported data. It is possible (even plausible) that the UP Chairmen described how they think a VC case *should* be conducted, as opposed to how it was actually conducted. Therefore, these figures can be seen as an upper bound on how well the VC rules and regulations are adhered to as opposed to definitive figures on actual adherence to VC rules and regulations.

Table 25: How correctly the steps of conducting VC is followed by the UP Chairmen (Self-reported)

Major steps of resolving a case by Village Court	% of respondents conducting this step correctly		
	Project Area	**Control Area**	**Overall**
1. Receive and review of application by the Chair	73%	76%	73%
2. Enter the case in the relevant register	90%	82%	90%
3. Issuance of summon to the defendant	75%	79%	75%
4. Instruct both parties to nominate representatives within 7 days	68%	53%	68%
5. Formation of Village Court panel (Chair and 4 representatives nominated by both parties)	59%	47%	59%
6. Hearing of both parties and witnesses	80%	68%	80%
7. Taking decision with majority vote and declare publicly	59%	58%	59%
8. If the decision is not appealable, implement the decision within a 6 week time limit	38%	21%	38%
% who followed all steps correctly and per sequence	*6%*	*0%*	*6%*

The experience in the elected position can explain the knowledge of the UP Chairmen about the village court but cannot explain their practices to run such courts. As the table 26 shows that each additional terms in the UP chairmen position is associated with answering 1.5 more questions correctly regarding VC. However, this experience does not have bearing on properly practicing VC processes. This demonstrates the need for training to increase the knowledge about VC after each new election. But knowledge itself does not guarantee proper following of the VC processes.

Table 26: Experience in the elected position, knowledge of VC, practice to conduct VC

VARIABLES	(1) Knowledge score	(2) Reported to follow all steps correctly (Only Chairmen)
Number of terms elected	1.408***	-0.010
	(0.289)	(0.017)
Constant	5.500***	0.072*
	(0.577)	(0.039)
Observations	586	194
R-squared	0.042	0.001

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

4.7 Attitude and perception on DRMs

4.7.1 Preference of DRM

Confirming the result from the previous section, we can see in the table below that most UP officials and representatives , who have ever heard of village court, preferred to use *Shalish* to resolve smaller disputes. *Shalish* was the preferred method by 72% of the UP representatives and officials while 26% preferred VCs. Only 1% preferred *Shalish Parishad*. In our qualitative data collection. We will investigate this further to ascertain what factors make *Shalish* so popular compared to VCs. It could be the case that UP representatives and officials like the 'informality' aspect of *Shalish* and see the record keeping and other formal documentation in VCs onerous. Another explanation could be the 'habit' factor. UP representatives and officials are conducting *shalish* for many years and thus feel comfortable with it. It is hard to change the habit and adopt a new practice.

When asked why Shalish was preferred, the most common response was that it was an easy process and disputes could be resolved quickly. Interestingly, 22% of the UP officials and representatives reported that they preferred *Shalish* as the process of *Shalish* was bound by law. This misconception signifies the need for training. When asked why those who preferred to use VC, the popular responses were that it was an easy process, disputes could be resolved quickly and that the VC was bound by law. It appears that UP officials and representatives give immense weight on process simplicity and quickness (please see appendix 3 for details on reasons for DRM preferences).

Table 27: Preferred methods of dispute resolution by UP representatives and officials

Indicator	Project area					Control area					Overall
	UP Chair	Ordinary UP	UP female	UP secretary	Overall	UP Chair	Ordinary UP	UP female	UP secretary	Overall	Overall
Village Court	28%	18%	20%	34%	26%	29%	18%	9%	39%	26%	26%
Shalish	71%	80%	79%	65%	73%	67%	82%	91%	56%	71%	72%
Shalish Parishad	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	4%	0%	0%	6%	3%	1%

4.7.2 Perception about ability to enforce decisions under different DRMs

One important aspect of any DRM efficiency is whether it can enforce its decisions or not. UP officials and representatives were asked to which degree they thought that VC, *Shalish* and *Shalish*

Parishad can enforce their decisions on a five-point scale where 1 was not capable at and 5 fully capable.

Very few UP officials and representatives think there are severe problems of enforcement for either the VC or *Shalish*. The vast majority of answers are somewhere between a neutral response (3) to saying that the VC or *Shalish* is fully capable of enforcing its decisions (5). However, for *Shalish Parishad* the answers are more scattered, potentially because this DRM has not been used at all in most unions.

Table 28: Perception about effectiveness DRMs among UP representatives and officials

Indicator	Project area					Control area					Overall
	UP Chair	Ordinary UP	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	UP Chair	Ordinary UP	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	Overall
Ability of VC to enforce decisions											
1 (Not capable at all)	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%	10%	2%	3%	4%	5%	3%
2	6%	1%	0%	7%	4%	2%	5%	3%	4%	3%	4%
3	21%	30%	23%	26%	25%	24%	23%	28%	26%	25%	25%
4	29%	34%	30%	27%	30%	37%	39%	41%	35%	38%	31%
5 (**Fully** capable)	41%	32%	46%	36%	38%	27%	32%	25%	31%	29%	37%
Ability of Shalish to enforce decisions											
1 (Not capable at all)	3%	0%	2%	2%	2%	4%	0%	9%	4%	4%	2%
2	5%	1%	2%	10%	5%	8%	9%	0%	6%	6%	5%
3	16%	21%	10%	24%	19%	18%	25%	44%	22%	25%	20%
4	29%	29%	34%	27%	29%	37%	27%	25%	39%	33%	30%
5 (Fully capable)	48%	48%	52%	37%	45%	33%	39%	22%	30%	31%	44%
Ability of Shalish Parishad to enforce decisions											
1 (Not capable at all)	13%	14%	7%	10%	12%	12%	9%	19%	9%	12%	12%
2	9%	9%	12%	10%	9%	10%	20%	6%	15%	13%	10%
3	34%	39%	32%	38%	36%	27%	32%	44%	33%	33%	36%
4	19%	17%	6%	21%	17%	24%	25%	25%	24%	24%	18%
5 (Fully capable)	25%	22%	43%	21%	25%	27%	14%	6%	19%	18%	24%

4.7.3 Perception regarding social changes influenced by the VC activities

UP officials and representatives who heard about VC and took the knowledge test were also asked what social changes they perceived had been influenced by the VC activities. 93% of the UP officials and representatives who took the knowledge test also perceived changes in the social problems because of VC activities. Among these changes, 71% of the UP officials and representatives thought that VCs reduced all types of crime and 53% thought that VCs reduced petty crimes triable under the VC. This is consistent with the household survey that also demonstrated that most households believed that VCs reduced all sorts of crimes more than petty crimes. Perhaps, both stakeholders might be considering the deterrent effect of VCs on crimes that were outside the VC jurisdiction.

One stark difference with the household survey is that UP officials and representatives found VC's benefit went beyond dispute resolution to communal harmony and safety. 40% of the UP officials and

representatives told that VCs increased communal harmony and 34% told that it increased feeling of community safety. An overwhelming 94% of the UP officials who were knowledgeable about the VCs also believed that VCs brought some sort of economic benefits to the community.

Another difference that is observed from the household survey is regarding after-resolution relationship between the applicants and the defendants. While households mostly claimed that they did not establish a friendly relationship after the resolution, 68% UP officials and representatives believed that the resolution re-established either a 'very good' or 'good' relationship between the disputant parties after the resolution.

Table 29: UP Official's perception on the changes influenced by the VC activities

Indicators	Project Area	Control Area	Overall
Do you feel any change in social problem due to VC	92%	96%	93%
A1.Type of changes			
Reduce all types of crime	72%	67%	71%
Reduce petty crime which are triable at VCs	54%	46%	53%
Increase community harmony	41%	29%	40%
Increase community safety	36%	25%	34%
Reduce family disputes	41%	25%	39%
Reduced tendency to go to higher / District Court	32%	28%	32%
Poor distressed people are getting access to justice with less expense	31%	26%	31%
Local women get access to justice	16%	12%	15%
Local people are getting financially benefitted	20%	18%	20%
Others	0%	2%	0%
Is your village getting economically benefited	93%	97%	94%
In your opinion, in general, how is the relation between the petitioner and the opponent after resolving the case by village court?			
Very Good relation	3%	9%	4%
Good relation	65%	58%	64%
Neither good nor bad	30%	33%	30%
Bad relation	2%	1%	2%

4.7.3.a Preferred choice of DRM

To assess UP officials' and representatives' perception about the demand for different DRMs, we asked them to rank the preference of their community members to take a petty dispute to, among VC, *Shalish, Shalish Parishad*, district court, and mediation by the UP chair/member. 56% of the officials and representatives chose *shalish* as the top choice that their community. 40% said that the UP chair/member would be the first choice. Only 4% said that the VC would be the first choice of their community members. This is even lower than when we asked UP officials and representatives to choose their preferred DRMs for petty disputes (26% UP officals and representatives chose VC in that case). One potential explanation could be that as UP officials and representatives are more aware about the VC, they had more trust on the VC process; however, they knew that people did not know much about the VCs and therefore would not select VC as the first choice.

Table 30: Preferred choice of DRM by the community people as perceived by the UP officials and representatives

Indicator	Project area	Control area	Overall
TOP CHOICE			
Shalish	55%	69%	56%
Shalish Parishad	0%	0%	0%
Village Court	3%	6%	4%
UP Chair / Member	42%	25%	40%
Thana/Police	0%	0%	0%
SECOND CHOICE			
Shalish	37%	27%	35%
Shalish Parishad	9%	10%	9%
Village Court	26%	38%	28%
District Court	4%	5%	4%
UP Chair / Member	19%	18%	19%
Thana/Police	6%	2%	5%
THIRD CHOICE			
Shalish	11%	8%	10%
Shalish Parishad	4%	6%	4%
Village Court	38%	31%	37%
District Court	21%	25%	22%
UP Chair / Member	9%	14%	10%
Thana/Police	17%	17%	17%

4.7.4   Satisfaction with VC functioning

Despite not preferring to use the VC, most UP officials and representatives, i.e. 66%, stated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the current functioning of the VC. This relative satisfaction might have come from the apparent lack of knowledge about the correct VC processes. Only 6% said that they were not satisfied. Among the reasons that drove satisfaction were VC process being less expensive, easily accessible, and fast. Major reasons that drove dissatisfaction were lack of expertise in conducting VC, lack of awareness among the locals, and irregular attendance of representatives nominated by the disputant parties.

Table 31: Satisfaction with VC activities

Indicator	Project area	Control area	Overall
Satisfaction with VC activities			
Not satisfied at all	6%	1%	6%
Slightly dissatisfied	3%	7%	4%
Neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied	24%	20%	24%
Satisfied	24%	22%	24%
Very satisfied	42%	50%	42%
Reasons for satisfaction (for 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied')			
Easy access to justice	68%	75%	69%
Less expenses	75%	75%	75%
Get justice within short period	71%	68%	70%

Indicator	Project area	Control area	Overall
Satisfaction with VC activities			
Easy process	44%	39%	44%
Lawyer isn't needed	21%	18%	20%
Within the locality	33%	30%	33%
Easy to visit	31%	32%	31%
Local distressed women and poor people come for justice.	13%	9%	13%
Gender sensitive (women friendly) environment.	2%	0%	2%
Reasons for dissatisfaction (for 'slightly dissatisfied' and 'not satisfied at all')			
Lack of expertise in conducting VC.	7%	4%	7%
Lack of awareness among the locals.	5%	4%	5%
Others	6%	0%	5%
Representatives of petitioner and defendant do not come in time.	4%	4%	4%
Lack of budget for VC.	4%	4%	4%
Lack of manpower.	3%	4%	3%
Access to justice is not easy	2%	2%	2%
No Trust in Village Court	2%	3%	2%
Defendant's lack of interest in nominating representatives.	2%	2%	2%
Difficult to implement final decision against powerful people.	2%	0%	2%
Unfairness/ Judgment is not neutral	1%	0%	1%
Distressed women are neglected	1%	0%	1%
Expensive	0%	1%	0%

4.7.5   Perception about nepotism and partiality in the village courts

When asked if there is any nepotism or partiality in the Village Court, most UP officials and representatives tend to say that no such biases exist. However, UP officials and representatives who admitted some sort of nepotism stated that this nepotism was mainly due to political affiliations. Some also mentioned that VCs showed favors to the rich, the friends and the family of the UP officials and representatievs themselves.

The household survey also demonstrated that nepotism was not one of the major reasons people did not choose village court. People perceived VCs to be expensive. On the other hand, *Shalish* was not chosen mainly for nepotism.

Table 32: Perception about nepotism in VCs of UP representatives and officials

Indicator	**Project Area**	**Control Area**	**Overall**
Is there any nepotism? (1= Not fair / highly partial, 5= completely fair/no partiality)	4.0	4.3	4.1
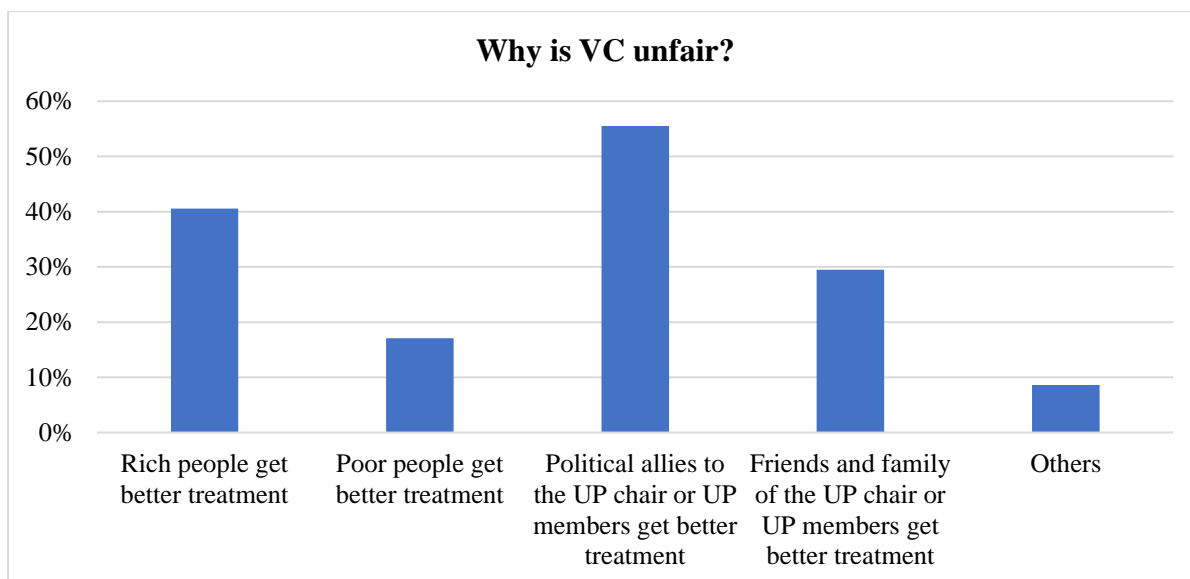
Figure 4: Perception about the reasons of unfairness in VCs by UP representatives and officials

4.8 UP officials' and representatives' opinion about the financial jurisdiction of the VC

When asked if the maximum financial value of a case within the VCs jurisdiction was alright, 88% of the UP officials and representatives thought it should be increased. The modal value is BDT 200 thousand.
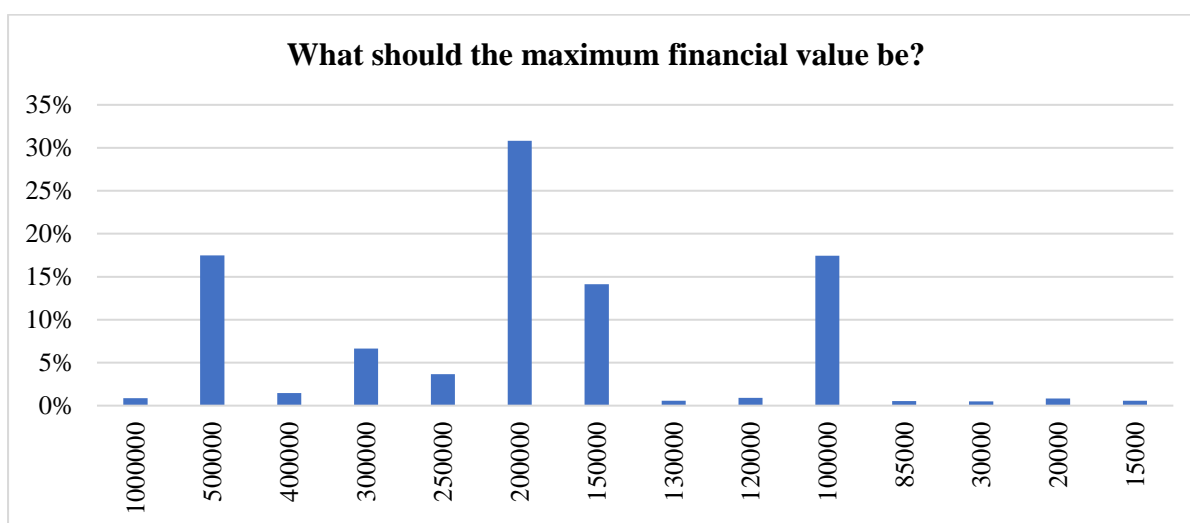
Figure 5: Opinion about the appropriate financial jurisdiction among the UP representatives and officials

4.9 Strengths and weaknesses of village courts according to UP officials and representatives

The table below presents answers from UP officials and representatives when asked to describe the strengths and weaknesses of the VC. We can see that easy access to justice, quick resolution and low cost are the main perceived strengths of the VC. The main weaknesses are shortage of manpower, inadequate training facilities and the lack of awareness about VC among the local people.

Table 33: Strengths and weaknesses of VCs according to UP representatives and officials

Indicator	Project area					Control area					Overall
	UP Chair	Ordinary UP member	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	UP Chair	Ordinary UP member	UP female member	UP secretary	Overall	Overall
Strengths of village courts											
Easy access to justice	70%	69%	53%	73%	68%	71%	53%	52%	67%	60%	67%
Easy process	66%	59%	47%	65%	61%	59%	53%	45%	50%	52%	60%
Bound by law	57%	40%	28%	55%	47%	56%	36%	14%	33%	36%	46%
Lawyer isn't needed	43%	29%	29%	38%	35%	29%	31%	14%	23%	25%	34%
Final decision is taken along with representatives by petitioner and defendant.	36%	35%	25%	42%	36%	41%	28%	28%	33%	33%	35%
Here final decision is taken considering social and financial status.	24%	32%	32%	38%	31%	24%	17%	17%	20%	19%	30%
Disputes can be resolved in a short period of time.	66%	64%	64%	70%	67%	71%	69%	52%	77%	67%	67%
Less expenses	66%	59%	58%	63%	62%	56%	56%	52%	63%	57%	61%
Within the locality	39%	31%	36%	48%	39%	26%	31%	41%	40%	34%	38%
Weakness of VC											
Influenced by political pressure	30%	33%	31%	42%	34%	18%	25%	28%	30%	25%	33%
Discrepancy/ Disparity between rich and Poor	11%	20%	15%	9%	14%	6%	0%	14%	17%	9%	13%
Limited Power of judges	41%	38%	24%	47%	39%	56%	33%	31%	37%	40%	39%
Shortage of Manpower	73%	51%	40%	67%	60%	56%	50%	24%	67%	50%	59%
Compared to the need inadequate training facilities	63%	47%	45%	59%	55%	47%	53%	31%	57%	47%	54%
Lack of awareness about Village Court of local people	58%	50%	48%	46%	51%	41%	39%	41%	50%	43%	50%

4.10 Reporting and monitoring

According to Village Courts Act 2006 (Amended in 2013), each UP should send a quarterly return regarding VC's performance to the UNO. The quarterly return should be signed by the UP chair. In the survey, UP chairs and UP secretaries were asked about this process to see if they knew the correct process.

Almost 78% of the UP officals heard about the quarterly return. Among those who know about the return, 90% of the respondents knew who the return should be sent to. However, only 48% knew that it should be signed by the UP chair. There is a common misunderstanding that the return should be signed by the UP secretary.

Table 34: Reporting of VC

Indicator	Project area	Control area	Overall
Have you heard of the quarterly return of VC?	77%	85%	78%
Who signs quarterly return?			
UP member	1%	3%	1%
UP Secretary	50%	48%	50%
UP Chair	48%	49%	48%
Don't know	1%	0%	1%
To whom it is sent?			
UNO	90%	90%	90%
DC	2%	4%	3%
Magistrate	5%	2%	4%
Other (Specify)	1%	0%	1%
Don't know	2%	4%	2%

5 Review of Administrative Records of UPs

5.1 Overview of administrative record review

There are big differences between different UPs commitment to keeping records of their VC activities. About half the UPs have no records whatsoever while others document some aspects of the cases. Administrative data also confirms the observation from the previous section that UP performs a lot of dispute resolution activities. However, many of the cases that have been resolved have not followed the rules and regulation of the VC system properly. Many of the cases resolved do not even fall within the VC's jurisdiction. We can reasonably assume that UPs conduct and record many *shalish* process in the name of VC.

5.2 UPs equipped with Ejlas, forms and AACO

In order to assess the functioning of the VC, data were collected on whether the UP complex (the main building of the UP administration) had any *Ejlas* (the Bengali word for the court bench covered in red cloth where judges sit and in front of which the VC hearings take place), if there was a designated day of the week when hearing was held, and whether the UP appointed an Assistant Accountant-cum-Computer Operator (AACO). As we can see below, there are relatively fewer (39%) UPs with *Ejlas* and no UPs with AACOs. On the other hand, a majority of UPs have claimed that they have a designated a date when VC hearings take place. Again, the designated day indicator, has all the problems that come with self-reported data, i.e. it could be in practice that there is no designated day but the UP officials and representatives still claim that there is one. On the other hand the existence of *Ejlas* and AACOs can be easily verified through observation and are therefore more accurately reported.

Table 35: The presence of physical facilities of VCs in UP complex

Indicator	Project area	Control area	Overall
% of UP have Ejlas	38%	46%	39%
% of UPs have a designated day(s) of VC hearing	70%	66%	69%
% of UP has an AACO (Assistant Accountant-cum-Computer Operator)	0%	0%	0%

In terms of documentation, about half (51%) of the UPs claimed that they regularly practised some sort of documentation and we found the claim is correct. However, almost none of the UPs maintain all forms and registers that they are supposed. The most common form to maintain is the main register of cases which 40% of the UPs maintain. However, a UP maintaining a register does not mean that it records every single case in it. The surveyors checked if the form was maintained regularly, and only regularly maintained forms were categorised as maintained in the table below. However, the surveyors could not check if there were cases that were resolved in the VC but that were not entered into the forms or registers.

Table 36: Records maintained in the VCs

Indicator	Project area (N=144)	Control area (n=53)	Overall (N=197)
Type of form or register found and claimed to be used regularly			
Application (form 1)	8%	6%	8%
Register of cases (form 2)	39%	47%	40%

Indicator	Project area (N=144)	Control area (n=53)	Overall (N=197)
Case order form (Form 3)	15%	14%	15%
Summon form for the defendant (form 4)	29%	27%	29%
Summon form for the witness (form 5)	15%	6%	14%
Member nomination notice (Form 6)	7%	2%	6%
Member nomination form (form 7	5%	0%	5%
Village court member attendance request (form 8)	4%	0%	3%
Mutual agreement (form 9)	6%	2%	6%
Case attendance form (Form 10)	5%	2%	4%
Case slip (Form 11)	4%	0%	3%
Decree or order from (form 12)	10%	4%	10%
Register of Decree and Order (form 12-A)	6%	6%	6%
Register of monetary transactions (form 13)	4%	2%	4%
Receipt for fine/fees (form 14)	13%	14%	13%
Register of Fine or Fees (form 15)	6%	8%	6%
Register of letters (form 16)	3%	6%	4%
Quarterly reports on taking and resolving of cases (form 17-19)	10%	4%	9%
Fees/fine collection (form 20)	1%	0%	1%
Referring case to district court (form 21)	6%	0%	6%
% of UPs maintain any form or register	50%	59%	51%
% of UPs maintain all forms and registers	1%	0%	1%
% of UP equipped with Ejlas, AACO (Assistant Accountant-cum-Computer Operator) and all forms or registers	0%	0%	0%
% of UP equipped with Ejlas, AACO (Assistant Accountant-cum-Computer Operator) and at least any forms or registers	0%	0%	0%
% of UP equipped with Ejlas, AACO (Assistant Accountant-cum-Computer Operator) and at least fifty percent of any forms or registers	0%	0%	0%
% of UPs submitted last quarterly report to UNO	4%	4%	4%

5.3   Performance of the Village Courts

5.3.1   Type of cases reported at village courts

According to the administrative data, a total of 8,245 cases were recorded to village courts in last 12 months, of which 13% were civil cases and 14% were criminal cases. For 73% of the cases recorded, administrative records did not identify specific category. This indicates incomplete documentation even when a case is registered. Forty percent of the recorded cases actually fall within the VC jurisdiction that shows that a significant portion of all disputes dealt by the VCs can be dealt by them. Among all cases recorded, land related disputes constitute 43% of all cases. Thirteen percent of all cases recorded were related to family issues, and another 13% cases were related to credit/loan or breach of written/verbal contract.

Among cases that actually fall within the VC jurisdiction, 54% were land related disputes and 15% related to credit/loan and breach of written/verbal contract. VCs can contribute to beneficial economic transactions by resolving small and localized verbal/written contracts. Another 9% cases were physical fights without bloodshed. These estimates are consistent with the estimates reported by the households. (See appendix 3 for the types of cases)

Table 37: Cases reported at VCs in the last 12 months

Indicator	Project area	Control area	Overall
Number of Civil cases	850	210	1060
Number of Criminal cases	829	358	1187
Number of Total cases	5849	2396	8245
Number of Total cases under VC jurisdiction	2370	988	3358
% of cases resolved in AVCB area which are within the VCs jurisdiction	64%	64%	64%
Among the cases under VC jurisdiction:			
# of cases referred by district court	18	16	34
Average Financial value	31,763	26,329	31,120
Median	26,500	20,000	25,000
Minimu	200	100	100
Maximum	75,000	75,000	75,000

5.3.2   Efficiency of the VC processes

As can be seen in the table below, On average, village courts took 40 days to resolve disputes. The median is even lower at 25 days. 68 percent of the cases were resolved withing six weeks from the day the case was filed.

Table38: Efficiency of village courts (Only considered cases that were under VC's jurisdiction)

Indicator	Project area	Control area	Overall
% of recorded resolved cases among the cases those fall under VC jurisdiction	7%	3%	6%
Days required to resolve a dispute			
Average days	40	34	40
Median	24	25	24.5
Minimum	0	0	0
Maximum	277	102	277
Within 6 weeks	68%	70%	68%

5.3.3   Involvement of women in the VC process

Of the cases recorded by the UPs, 25% of all cases were reported by women while 28% of cases within the VC's jurisdiction were reported by women. Even though one fourth of the cases were reported by women, the man-woman ratio among the nominated representatives was 27:1 (among the panel members, 4% were women) among all cases and 35:1(Among the panel members, 3% were women) among the cases within VC jurisdiction.

Table 39: Involvement of women in VC activities

Indicator	Project area	Control area	Overall
% of cases reported by women			
% of case (among all cases) reported by women	23%	33%	25%
% of case (within VC's jurisdiction) reported by women	20%	24%	28%
Women involvement in VC's decision making process			
Man-woman ratio of representatives (among all cases)	2%	4%	4%
Man-woman ratio of representatives (within VC jurisdiction)	2%	3%	3%

The types of cases reported by women to the VCs are presented in the following table. Thirty percent of all cases reported by women are related to family issues. Twenty-two percent are related to land disputes. Among cases reported by women that actually fall within the VC jurisdiction, 37% were land disputes.

Table 40: Types of cases reported by women

Indicators	Project areas	Control area	Overall
Type of cases reported by women			
Reclaiming marriage after dispute	16%	19%	17%
Dispute about other kinds of land (or compensation for it)	12%	10%	12%
Dispute about agricultural land (or compensation for it)	10%	7%	10%
Physical Fight (without bloodshed)	7%	11%	8%
Dispute about credit/loan	8%	5%	7%
Dowry	6%	15%	7%
Fraud	4%	8%	5%
Alimony	4%	3%	4%
Violence of women (by someone inside the household)	5%	0%	4%
Verbal Fight	4%	2%	4%
Dispute about due payment as per written/verbal contract	4%	0%	3%
Threat/intimidation	3%	1%	2%
Divorce	2%	2%	2%
Dispute about posession of movable asset (or compensation for damage)	2%	2%	2%
Theft	2%	1%	2%
Others	11%	12%	11%
Cases reported by women within VC jurisdiction			
Dispute about other kinds of land (or compensation for it)	20%	18%	20%
Dispute about agricultural land (or compensation for it)	17%	13%	17%
Physical Fight (without bloodshed)	13%	24%	15%
Dispute about credit/loan	15%	9%	14%
Fraud	4%	14%	6%
Verbal Fight	6%	5%	6%
Dispute about due payment as per written/verbal contract	6%	0%	5%
Dispute about posession of movable asset (or compensation for damage)	4%	4%	4%

Indicators	Project areas	Control area	Overall
Threat/intimidation	3%	2%	3%
Theft	3%	2%	3%
Others	9%	9%	9%

5.3.4   Disposal of cases following major procedures

In the table below we describe the evidence in the administrative records on whether the VC is operating in accordance with the VC rules and regulation. We identified five processes as indicators of compliance for each case filed: 1) Petition submission using form no.1, 2) Final order found in the case order form no.3, 3) Summon was issued and sent to the defendants using form no.4, 4) both parties appoint their representatives, and 5) voting ratio of decision is recorded. We can see that most cases (65%) seemed to adhere to the practice of having petition submitted on the correct application form. There is less adherence to record the final order on the case order form, something that was done only in 36% of the cases. Summons were correctly given using the right form in 47% of the cases. The biggest noncompliant issues were recording the nomination of representatives for the parties and the voting ratio of judgement. Almost no cases were found that followed all these five processes.

Table 41:% of Case resolved following VC proceedings

Indicator	Project area	Control	Overall
1. Petition submitted using application form (form-1)	65%	66%	65%
2. Final order found in the case order forms (form-3)	35%	42%	36%
3.Summon given to the defendants using form 4	47%	46%	47%
4. Both parties nominate their representative as per law found	0%	0%	0%
5. Decree or Order form found (Form-12)	5%	2%	4%
% of cases heard in AVCB area which are within the VCs jurisdiction and in compliance with the correct procedure	0%	0%	0%
% of cases resolved following all five procedures	0%	0%	0%
% of cases resolved following four procedures	3%	1%	3%
% of cases resolved following three procedures	24%	34%	26%
% of cases resolved following two procedures	52%	53%	52%
% of cases resolved following one procedures	72%	68%	71%

6 Programmatic Suggestions from Baseline Data Analysis

It is neither feasible nor desirable to make policy suggestions based on the baseline data. However, we have few salient observations that may help the program team improve the interventions.

6.1 Increase awareness to increase demand for VC

The baseline data shows that VCs were rarely used and mostly used for land related disputes. Many people also claimed that they did not prefer VC for petty dispute resolution as the VC was expensive. The lack of information and awareness about the VC process might have caused such low demand and misconception. The data also reveals that knowledge of VC is associated with a higher likelihood of using VC and a lower likelihood of using *shalish* or district court. We therefore recommend that the program team put emphasis on information dissemination and awareness campaign.

Our data also reveals that women and the poor, who ideally should have been the core beneficiaries of the VC, had the least knowledge about the VC. The awareness campaign should specially target the women and the poor.

6.2 Incorporation of family disputes within the VC jurisdiction

Currently, the VC cannot deal with family issues since such issues should be dealt by "Shalish Parishad" (Adjudicating councils under the Muslim family law from 1961). However, VCs and Shalish Parishad have very similar set-up. The research team think having two DRMs and running them simultaneously make the process unnecessarily complicated. Furthermore, Shalish Parishad are even less commonly functional than VCs and would therefore also need a substantial implementation effort to become functional. The research team would therefore advice the Government to consider merging the responsibilities of the Shalish Parishad with those of the VC with special provision for protection of privacy and honor during resolving family issues. This would create a more efficient institution that could deal with a larger set of cases as well as streamline the institutional set-up so that there is only one dispute resolution institution within each UP.

6.3 Integration of the VC training into standard UP official training

The baseline data reveals that the biggest source of information regarding the VC is the UP chairmen. Other UP members depend on the UP chair for learning VC process. This may create two problems. First, UP chairs who are already entrusted with many responsibility may feel overburdened to train and educate others. The fact that others become dependent of the UP chairs may make the VC process centralized around them. Second, depending too much on the UP chairs runs the risk of disseminating and practising wrong process if the UP chairs themselves are not well educated on the VC process. To avoid these problems, the sources of information and training on VCs should be diversified. One way to accomplish this would be to incorporate a VC training program, potentially based on the AVCB training program, into the standard training received by UP officials and representatives taking office.

6.4 Long-term funding for administrative support to VCs

UP chairs already spend, on average, 22 hours per week on dispute resolution while ordinary UP members spend 13 hours and female UP members spend 7 hours. In order to not burden the UP representatives with the additional task of record keeping and administration, the VCs requires administrative assistance. The AVCB provides funding to hire a VC assistant but if the government decides to expand the VC system, there should be some type of provision to hire an additional person to take responsibility for these tasks in all UPs. However, it may be sufficient that a half-time position could cover the administrative needs of the VC.

6.5   Increase of monetary limit of VC jurisdiction

Both in qualitative interviews with UP officials and representatives as well as in our survey data, it is clear that most UP officials and representatives would wish to raise the monetary limit of the VC jurisdiction. Eighty-eight percent of the UP officials and representatives thought that the limit was too low and among them, the median suggested that the new limit should be 200,000 taka. In addition to increasing the limit, qualitative interviews have revealed that changing the jurisdiction limitation on land disputes from a financial value of land to a limit on the plot size of the disputed land would be beneficial since the financial value of land is hard to estimate.

6.6   Optimization of documentation

Currently UP officials and representatives are already burdened with resolving disputes mainly by *Shalish*. As VCs come with additional administrative burdens of documentation, VCs may create extra workload. Also survey data reveals that UP officials and representatives like process simplicity. One big help therefore would be to simplify the documentation process by optimizing documentation needs.

While some of these extra burden can be managed by hiring a VC assistant with the help of the AVCB program, this may not be a long-term solution unless the government creastes a full-time position for VCs. While reviewing the documents, the research team realised that many of the forms filled out have duplicate information that is repeatedly filled out by hand. The research team therefore proposes that an overhaul of the documentation requirements is done with a special focus on reducing the administrative burden on the UP officials, AACO and/or VC assistants.

6.7   Awareness about involving female judges when cases involve a woman or a child

Currently, the VCs require one woman to be present as a judge when the case involves a woman or a child. However, our data reveals that female judges were involved only in 1% of cases that fell within the VC jurisdiction despite the fact that one-fourth of cases within the VC jurisdiction were reported by women. This denotes very low engagement of female judges in the VC process. Either lack of reliable female judges or lack of awareness or negligence about the rule might have caused such low engagement of women. This phase of AVCB program may put emphasis on developing quality women judges and increasing their engagement in the VC process. Female UP members and female primary school teachers could be two potential sources that can be tapped in.

6.8   Modification of the measurement process for satisfaction

Satisfaction may not be a good indicator to measure the success of the VC if measured as a single construct. Since access and demand for seeking resolution to disputes is low at present, provding high quality resolution is relatively easy given that the VCs are serving very few clients. As demand goes up for VCs, there could be queues to get VC services which may reduce satisfaction. Instead, we can measure satisfaction as a composite construct comprising fairness, transparency, easy process, cost, time, etc. and estimate a satisfaction index using principal component analysis.

6.9   Better linkage with the District Court

The baseline data reveals that the referral of cases from district court to VC is close to zero. This means either very few cases have been filed in district courts that fall within the VC jurisdiction or such cases have been tried in the district court. If the first case is true, even a functional VC will not help reduce the caseload on the district courts. If the second case is true, proper referral can reduce the caseload. District courts also act as the appellate body of VCs.

To make the above linkage more productive, a coordination mechanism should be in place other than training district court judges and UP officials and representatives. In our interviews with the district court judges, we have learned that district courts, through its legal aid department, can help the UPs to conduct VC processes effectively. The program can test this new avenue of coordination and cooperation between the VCs and district courts.

7 Conclusion

A functional village court system is a critical public service delivery point in the country as petty disputes are common in rural Bangladesh. Other than increasing access to justice by providing faster and cheaper means of DRM, VCs can act as a deterrent to potential future disputes and hence can contribute to increasing communal harmony and community safety. If people are informed about the easy access to justice, they may change their economic behaviour in a social welfare increasing manner.

However, the VCs are rarely used at present as a DRM mostly due to lack of awareness on the part of the people and UP officials and representatives and lack material support to manage VC activities. Wherever used, the VCs do not follow the law and administrative procedure. Increasing awareness of the people, improving expertise of UP officials and representatievs to conduct VC, and providing some critical material services are key to making VCs functional. Reducing the burden of administrative records to a minimum level might be helpful.

Moreover, initiative can be undertaken to increase the engagement of women in the VC process. At present, the engagement of women in the VC is minimal- only 1% of the cases involved a female judge as per the UP administrative data. Also female household members as well as female UP representatives were less knowledgeable about the VC than their male counterpart. The awareness campaign for the people and training for the UP officials and representatives can put emphasis on involving more women.

One policy objective of a functional VC is to reduce the caseload on the district court by channelling petty disputes to the VCs. To realize this objective, district court and VCs should have a means of coordination. District courts can not only act as a source of training for the VCs but also play a role in making VC process fair by monitoring the quality of judgement. Ideas can be tested to establish better coordination between the VCs and district courts to increase institutional synergy.

8 Appendix 1: Detailed Description of Survey Methodology

In this section the exact methodology of data collection has been described in detail.

8.1 Sampling

For the evaluation of the Activating Village Courts Bangladesh (AVCB) program, we have collected data from 90 Union Parishads (UPs) across 6 divisions of Bangladesh (6 divisions other than Dhaka and Chittagong) that will not participate in the RCT[15] (the non-RCT area). We have also collected data from 107 UPs in the two divisions, Dhaka and Chittagong, "the RCT area". The selection strategies between the non-RCT and RCT areas differ and are therefore described in two different sections of this document. The reason for the difference in sampling strategy is primarily due to different data requirements from the non-RCT and RCT area. We first tested our methodology in the non-RCT area and found some ideas to improve the methodology for the RCT data collection. This learning effect also made few diffrences between non-RCT and RCT data collection.

8.2 Non-RCT area

8.2.1 Selection of UPs

90 UPs were selected using simple random sampling stratified on Division (15 UPs from each division).

8.2.2 Protocol for short targeting survey[16] sampling

1. Listing the wards: A surveyor met with the UP chair as well as potentially other knowledgeable people in the UP. The surveyor asked the UP chair to select one ward as the most dispute prone ward and classify approximately one third of the rest of the wards as "Above normal levels of dispute", one third as "Normal levels of dispute" and one third as "Below normal levels of dispute".

2. Selecting a ward: A ward was then selected using a pre-programmed tablet. The ward was randomly selected with a 8/15 probability of choosing the most dispute prone ward, a 4/15 probability of choosing a "Above normal levels of dispute" wards and a 2/15 probability of choosing a "Normal levels of dispute" and a 1/15 probability of choosing a "Below normal levels of dispute" ward.

3. Dividing the ward into sub-UP areas: This ward was then divided into so called "sub-UP areas" such as villages or neighbourhoods (*paras*).

4. Categorising the sub-UP areas and selecting a sub-UP area: The sub-UP areas were then ranked in terms of their dispute proneness. Surveyors will ask the UP knowledgeable persons to rank the sub-UP areas in terms of their dispute proneness. Again, the pre-programmed tablet was used to pick one sub-UP area in such a way that the top ranked sub-UP area had a twice as high probability to be chosen compared to the second ranked, the second ranked had twice as high probability to be chosen compared to the third ranked etc.

8.2.3 Selecting what households to interview

60 households were interviewed per sub-UP area: 60 randomly selected households will be interviewed per sub-UP area

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[15] UPs that were randomely assigned to receive the program are compared to a control group that were randomely assigned not to receive the program.

[16] In some project documents this survey will be referred to as a census since it was initially planned to be a census of whole sub-UP areas.

The surveyor will try to interview the household head. If the household head is not available, the interviewer will interview the eldest son of the household head (if knowledgeable and not a minor). If the eldest son is not available, the interviewer will try to interview any other son that is not a minor and is knowledgeable. If none of the sons are available then the interviewer will try to interview the wife of the household head, if knowledgeable. If the wife is not available, the interviewer will try to interview anyone else in the household who is not a minor and is knowledgeable. If no one in the household is at home, the surveyor will note this household down as empty in the tablet and interview the next household instead.

8.3 Protocol for Household sampling for the full household survey

8.3.1 Selecting the households

Among the 60 households surveyed in each sub-UP area during the targeting survey, 20 households from will be selected for the household survey. The households will be selected using unequal probability sampling where a higher probability is given to households that reported having a dispute in the past two years and an even higher probability is given to households reported having an unresolved dispute within the jurisdiction of the Village Court.

In a sub-UP area with no disputes the probability of being selected for the household was approximately 20/60=1/3. If a household is the only household in a sub-UP area with a dispute the probability of this household being selected was approximately 5/6 and if the household has a unresolved dispute within the jurisdiction of the village court the probability was approximately 23/24.

Using this strategy raises the proportion of households with disputes from 21% in the census to 52% in the household survey. Similarly, it raises the proportion of households who have an unresolved dispute within the jurisdiction of the VC from 5.8% in the census to 16% in the household survey.

8.3.2 Replacement strategy

For each sub-UP area there are 20 "selected households" and 10 "replacement households" the replacement households are selected using the same criteria as the selected households but the list of replacement households can obviously not contain selected households. If a selected household is unavailable, then a replacement household will be surveyed instead.

8.4 Protocol for selecting UP members in non-RCT area

In addition to households the UP chair, the UP secretary and one (out of nine) male UP member as well as one (out of three) female UP member will be interviewed. The UP members, both female and ordinary, will be selected using simple random sampling so each ordinary UP member had a 1/9 probability of being sampled while each female UP member had a 1/3 probability of being sampled. If a particular UP member is not available (s)he will be replaced by a replacement that was selected using the same simple random sampling strategy.

8.5 RCT area

8.5.1 Sampling UPs from RCT area

The RCT area UPs were selected by simple random sampling stratified on treatment status and division. If a particular UP was not available due to weather conditions or not relevant because it was being merged with an urban area and would therefore could not receive the AVCB program it was replaced by a randomly selected UP in the same district with the same treatment assignment.

8.5.2   Protocol for short targeting survey sampling

1. Selecting a ward: Each of the 9 wards will have an equal probability of being selected.

2. Dividing the ward into sub-UP areas: The surveyor will meet with the UP chair or the UP member of the selected ward. They will divided the ward into sub-UP areas and a sub-UP area will be selected by simple random sampling using a pre-programmed tablet.

3. 90 households were interviewed per sub-UP area: 90 randomly selected households will be then interviewed per sub-UP area.

The surveyor will try to interview the household head. If the household head is not available, the interviewer will interview the eldest son of the household head (if knowledgeable and not a minor). If the eldest son is not available, the interviewer will try to interview any other son that is not a minor and is knowledgeable. If none of the sons are available then the interviewer will try to interview the wife of the household head, if knowledgeable. If the wife is not available, the interviewer will try to interview anyone else in the household who is not a minor and is knowledgeable. If no one in the household is at home, the surveyor will note this household down as empty in the tablet and interview the next household instead.

8.5.3   Protocol for Household sampling for the full household survey

8.5.3.1 Selecting the households

Among the 90 households surveyed in the census, 30 households from each sub-UP area will be selected for the household survey using the information collected during the census. The households are selected using unequal probability sampling where a higher probability is given to households that reported having a dispute in the past year and an even higher probability is given to households reported having an unresolved dispute within the jurisdiction of the Village Court.

In a sub-UP area with no disputes the probability of being selected for the household was approximately 30/90=1/3. If a household is the only household in a sub-UP area with a dispute the probability of this household being selected was approximately 5/6 and if the household has a unresolved dispute within the jurisdiction of the village court the probability was approximately 23/24. Naturally, the more disputes and unresolved disputes within the jurisdiction of the VC there are in a particular sub-UP area, the lower are the probabilities that a specific household was selected.

Using this strategy raises the proportion of households with disputes from 16% in the targeting survey to 40% in the household survey. Similarly, it raises the proportion of households who have an unresolved dispute within the jurisdiction of the VC from 4.4% in the census to 12% in the household survey.

8.5.3.2   Replacement strategy

For each sub-UP area there are 30 "selected households" and 10 "replacement households" the replacement households are selected using the same criteria as the selected households but the list of replacement households can obviously not contain selected households. If a selected household is unavailable, then a replacement household will be surveyed instead.

8.5.4   Protocol for selecting UP members

In addition to households we will also interview the UP chair, the UP secretary and one (out of nine) ordinary UP member as well as one (out of three) female UP member. The UP members, both female and ordinary, were selected so that they represent the ward where the household survey was

conducted. If the UP chair was not available, the panel Chairman was interviewed as a replacement. If a particular UP member is not available (s)he will be replaced by using simple random sampling strategy.

8.5.5 Review of administrative VC data

The review of the administrative data will be done by asking the UP officials and representatives if they keep any record of the cases they resolved through the VC. If they keep such records they are asked to show us the type of records they keep. Among the records the number of forms that keep according to the official regulations are counted. After this the forms and registers have been studied and all relevant information for each case have been typed into a pre-programmed tablet.

8.5.6 Table A1: Statistical description of data collection

	Survey	Time period of survey	Unit of survey	Sample size	Average time of survey (in minutes)
Non-RCT area(Dhaka and Chittagong divisions)	Targeting Survey	January 31, 2017 – February 10, 2017	Household	5446	15
	Household survey	February 23, 2017 – March 10, 2017	Household	1799	57
	UP official survey	February 23, 2017 – March 16, 2017	Individual	358	180
	Review of administrative data	February 23, 2017 – March 16, 2017	Union	90	860
RCT area (6 divisions other than Dhaka and Chittagong divisions)	Targeting Survey	March 28, 2017 – April 14, 2017	Household	9675	8
	Household survey	April 25, 2017 – May 15, 2017	Household	3206	130
	UP official survey	March 28, 2017 – April 14, 2017	Individual	426	195
	Review of administrative data	April 25, 2017 – May 15, 2017	Union	107	769

8.5.7 Table A1a: Sample distribution by division

Type of survey	Barisal	Mymensing	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Total
Targeting Survey	904	915	909	907	903	908	5968	3707	15121
Household survey	299	300	300	300	300	300	1977	1230	5006
UP official survey	60	60	60	60	59	59	263	163	784
Review of administrative data	15	15	15	15	15	15	66	41	197

8.5.8 Table A1b: Sample distribution by area (Porject and control area)

Type of survey	Project	Control	Total
Targeting Survey	10242	4879	15121
Household survey	3387	1618	5005
UP official survey	568	216	784
Review of administrative data	143	54	197

8.5.9 Table A1c: Sampling distribution of knowlesge test administered among the UP officials and representatives (those who heard of village court)

	UP Chairman	UP Member	Female UP Member	UP Secretary	Total
Participated in knowledge test	183	156	100	193	632

8.5.10 Weighting of observations for summery statistics and analysis

Since the sampling strategy differs between the RCT and non-RCT area and since weighted random sampling is used at several stages of the sampling process we will weigh the sample according to the probability that any individual observation is observed. This will be done for both the household survey and the UP officials and representatives survey.

The weighting of the sample will be done using sampling weights which are the inverse of the probability that any given observation is observed in the whole project population. This means that observations that were observed with a higher probability will have a lower weight in the generation of summery statistics.[17] This means that our estimates will be representative of the population in the whole project area if nothing else is indicated.

8.5.11 Data collection and entry program

To ensure highest level of data quality and security digital tablets were used to collect the data, as they enable a quick survey turnaround time, minimize data entry errors, and ensure automated data security. After the questionnaires were finalized, we programmed the questionnaires into a SurveyCTO format, which is a high-quality platform that offers the features necessary for data security and quality. SurveyCTO allowed automatically checking for consistency and constraints which reduced the data entry error.

8.5.12 Recruitment of qualified field staff

Experienced and qualified data collection team were recruited and trained for each of the surveys separately. The training sessions included both classroom training and field practices. Since data were collected on tablets, we first trained staff on the paper versions of the questionnaires before training them on how to administer the survey using tablets. The training began with sessions on ensuring ethical and unbiased data collection. The next sessions focused on understanding of the study and its research questions. Pairs of enumerators then practiced data collection for the entire questionnaire.

8.5.13 Pilot test

A false launch pilot was used to assess the capacity of each field staff member to perform the tasks in a real-life context. During the pilot, data were collected from households from areas outside of the

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[17] Standard errors are obtained using a heteroskedasticity robust (Huber-White) estimator taking into account the inverse probability weights.

study area. Following the false launch, the Field Managers evaluated each enumerator and supervisor using relevant criteria and compiled a final enumerator list. The false launch pilot also served as an opportunity to fine-tune some of the questions and SurveyCTO codes.

Through the pilot test, we could estimate the average amount of time required to complete each section of the questionnaire. For monitoring purposes, we used this information to identify any potential lapses during the actual survey by comparing the time required during the pilot to that required during the actual survey.

Before the commencement of data collection, the Field Managers tested each of the tablets to make sure all programs are correctly installed. Furthermore, they piloted the Cloud Server to make sure data extraction worked properly.

8.5.14 Field-work management and supervision

Respondent tracking:

During the short targeting survey and the full household survey, we collected detailed identifiable information, such as multiple mobile numbers (including from at least two of each respondent's relatives/friends) and the full address of a household within the same neighbourhood that knows about our sample household. This information will help in minimising the survey attrition rate. The selected survey respondents were given a unique ID before starting the survey. Using the assignment sheet that had necessary tracking information, the enumerator found the household corresponding to a particular ID. Once the enumerator entered the ID into his/her tablet, relevant information (e.g. village name, address, household name, name of the head of the household, name of the household members) popped up on the screen and the enumerator matched information on the tablet with that of the actual household, and then began surveying.

Quality control:

We employed a number of methods in maintaining data quality, including:

- Accompaniments: Almost 10% of surveys conducted by each enumerator were observed by field supervisors.
- Back checks: 10% of surveys were randomly selected to be partially resurveyed within a week of the original survey. We compared the back-checked data with the original data in order to identify errors and take necessary corrective measures.
- Spot checks: The Field Managers and the core research team regularly visited the study area to randomly check individual enumerators and provide feedback.
- Random recording of surveyors and back-checkers: Randomly selected surveys were recorded and audited.
- Consistency checks: Consistency of data across all interrelated questions was ensured by adding different constraints in the SurveyCTO form. We also performed high frequency checks on peridodic data flow using STATA to find out consistency issues by questions and by enmuerators. The analysis produce a consistency report that is shared with supervisors periodically. Supervisors debrief their teams and re-train them if necessary.
- Monitoring feedback: The enumerators and supervisors met every day to discuss all monitoring feedback and improve their data collection efforts.
- The Field Managers performed various checks, such as consistency checks and back checks, on the data on a regular basis. This helped identify any issues with the data, such as completion rates or accuracy, and take prompt action to correct any issues. Since the data were collected on tablets and uploaded in the cloud on a daily basis, the Field Managers were able to access the uploaded data in near real-time.

9 Appendix 2: Divisional Level Statistics

9.1 Household survey

9.1.1 Profile of the houeholds

HH Characteristics	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
Demographic summery statistics									
Age	27.7	26.9	27.1	29.4	30.6	26.6	26.5	28.7	27.5
% of woman	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	49%
Education level									
Informal education or no eudcaton at all[18]	33%	40%	44%	34%	22%	29%	34%	30%	34%
Primary or below	37%	30%	27%	34%	36%	31%	31%	31%	31%
Secondary or below	23%	23%	24%	25%	33%	32%	31%	31%	28%
Higher Secondary or below	3.9%	5.0%	3.2%	2.4%	5.3%	4.7%	3.1%	4.7%	4%
Above higher Secondary	3.2%	2.4%	2.1%	4.0%	3.6%	3.0%	1.9%	3.2%	3%
Respondent occupation composition									
Service (govt/employee)	15%	19%	5%	12%	9%	9%	21%	23%	16%
Petty Trade (Small retail shop)	17%	15%	9%	10%	19%	16%	12%	16%	13%
Agricultural wage labor	5%	17%	26%	8%	8%	9%	5%	4%	11%
Agricultural work on own farm	11%	18%	6%	29%	10%	7%	4%	12%	9%
Look after live stocks	0%	2%	23%	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%	8%
Share cropper / cultivate plot owned by others	10%	9%	3%	11%	11%	10%	9%	6%	7%
Non-agriculture wage labor	3%	3%	3%	6%	5%	2%	8%	5%	5%
Supervisory work of agricultural activity on own farm	2%	3%	2%	6%	6%	2%	2%	2%	3%

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[18] If a respondent has no formal education or only did Hafezi, i.e. memorization of the Quran (as coded zero in the data collection) was considered under informal education.

HH Characteristics	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
Carpenter	3%	1%	4%	1%	1%	16%	2%	1%	3%
Medium Trader (Retail and insignificant wholesale)	3%	0%	2%	1%	4%	4%	3%	5%	3%
Rickshaw/ Van Pulling	4%	5%	4%	3%	4%	0%	3%	4%	3%
Fisher (Fishing)	8%	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	5%	0%	2%
Look after Poultry (Duck, Chicken, Pigeons)	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	3%	2%	2%
Driver (motorized vehicle)	5%	1%	0%	0%	1%	4%	2%	4%	2%
Mason	6%	0%	2%	0%	1%	3%	3%	3%	2%
Others	5%	6%	7%	8%	16%	11%	15%	7%	9%

9.1.2   Experience of disputes by division

Type of disputes	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
Disputes within VC's jurisdiction									
Dispute about non-agricultural land (or compensation for it)	20%	12%	26%	34%	27%	44%	34%	40%	37%
Dispute about agricultural land (or compensation for it)	45%	13%	21%	26%	14%	18%	11%	17%	21%
Verbal Fight	12%	9%	18%	6%	4%	6%	17%	7%	14%
Physical Fight (without bloodshed)	6%	10%	6%	2%	2%	4%	4%	2%	8%
Fraud	2%	0%	0%	24%	5%	3%	6%	8%	6%
Verbal/non-verbal act to dishonour women	1%	0%	8%	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%	3%
Theft	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	1%	0%	2%
Dispute about credit/loan	0%	17%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Others	9%	38%	19%	7%	41%	21%	21%	22%	8%
Disputes outside of VC's jurisdiction									

Type of disputes	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
Dispute about non-agricultural land (or compensation for it)	20%	12%	26%	33%	27%	43%	34%	40%	29%
Physical Fight (with bloodshed)	5%	6%	12%	3%	31%	4%	6%	4%	18%
Dispute about agricultural land (or compensation for it)	45%	13%	21%	26%	14%	18%	11%	17%	16%
Verbal Fight	12%	9%	18%	6%	4%	6%	17%	8%	8%
Fraud	2%	0%	0%	23%	5%	3%	6%	8%	4%
Reclaiming marriage after dispute	0%	10%	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%	1%	3%
Physical Fight (without bloodshed)	6%	10%	6%	2%	2%	4%	4%	2%	2%
Divorce	0%	3%	3%	1%	0%	0%	1%	3%	2%
Others	5%	36%	12%	3%	11%	22%	14%	14%	9%
Experience with dispute									
Among total housholds, % of households with at least one unresolved dispute	15%	9%	10%	13%	30%	16%	12%	11%	16%
Among total households, % of households with at least one dispute that was resolved in the past 2 years	8%	12%	13%	8%	19%	19%	12%	7%	13%
Knowledge on Village court									
% that has heard of VC	0%	6%	1%	9%	3%	0%	4%	2%	3%
% that say they have heard of VC after given a hint	3%	4%	3%	5%	25%	6%	6%	5%	6%
% that has not heard of VC	97%	90%	96%	87%	72%	94%	90%	93%	91%
Among the people knowing who has heard about VC									
% saying VC is active in UP	91%	67%	37%	66%	95%	80%	93%	95%	71%
% believing that VC hears and attend to people's needs?	99%	60%	72%	77%	93%	100%	90%	81%	70%
% of people think there is change in social problems and crimes in locality due to VC	100%	64%	77%	86%	92%	92%	89%	91%	75%
% believing that VC can enforce its decision	92%	63%	100%	97%	78%	100%	97%	94%	72%

9.1.3 Efficiency and Effectiveness of DRM

Indicator	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
Time from start of dispute until resolution was sought (months)	3.7	11.0	1.7	3.6	4. 2	5.2	5.0	6.9	4.5
Number of months spent in other DRM before seeking resolution in the final DRM	3.0	0.0	1.2	0.2	2.6	2.1	2.6	3.2	0.9
Time taken (in months) from case file to judgment	2.8	2.7	1.1	0.8	4.1	4.2	5.8	2.7	5.0
% of cases resolved within 6 weeks	89%	85%	95%	91%	66%	69%	81%	82%	82%
% of decisions fully implemented	25%	48%	34%	15%	36%	38%	37%	21%	33%
If implemented, average months taken	0.1	0.6	0.6	0.0	3.4	0.5	2.1	0.3	1.7
Total cost of resolution (court and lawyer fees, transportation costs and opportunity cost of time)	4630.383	1742.004	3765.978	1146.053	1451.558	7421.865	8034.171	3378.96	6939.881
Of which is a monetary cost (court and lawyer fees, transportation costs)	3554.29	771.8737	1544.999	527.6122	950.4834	5393.915	3471.059	2520.065	3238.576
Average compensation as a result of the trial	30762.11	32192.62	21712.84	55892.96	18379.25	46913.75	37222.07	111466.3	54683.51
% of users below WB poverty line	20%	13%	33%	22%	24%	28%	17%	15%	17%
% of woman	20%	19%	11%	9%	23%	20%	23%	12%	19%
Satisfaction level by DRM									
Level of satisfaction with decisions	2.29	2.11	2.02	2.32	2.10	2.26	2.33	2.41	2.21
Very satisfied	7%	12%	13%	11%	7%	12%	17%	6%	12%
Satisfied	75%	71%	78%	61%	81%	66%	52%	68%	6%
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	6%	11%	4%	18%	6%	8%	15%	10%	10%
Unsatisfied	6%	6%	5%	8%	4%	13%	11%	12%	8%
Very unsatisfied	6%	0%	0%	3%	1%	1%	5%	4%	2%

Indicator	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
Satisfaction with services	2.91	2.33	2.61	2.49	2.51	2.78	2.80	2.75	2.67
Very satisfied	4%	4%	2%	7%	2%	4%	12%	4%	6%
Satisfied	50%	71%	56%	50%	62%	49%	37%	48%	51%
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	10%	16%	23%	31%	22%	12%	22%	22%	20%
Unsatisfied	26%	8%	17%	11%	10%	33%	17%	21%	17%
Very unsatisfied	11%	1%	2%	2%	4%	2%	12%	5%	6%
Feeling towards other party, (1=hatred, 5=good friends)	2.50	2.70	2.74	2.14	2.36	2.34	2.50	2.54	2.49
Strong dislike / Hatred	23%	9%	9%	22%	10%	24%	21%	18%	16%
Dislike	34%	30%	31%	53%	52%	40%	27%	30%	37%
Neither negative nor positive	14%	48%	37%	15%	32%	15%	33%	36%	30%
Friendly	26%	10%	23%	9%	7%	21%	18%	14%	16%
Good friends	3%	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	3%	0%
Relationship	2.50	2.54	2.61	3.03	2.91	2.80	2.87	2.76	2.77
Friendly	12%	3%	5%	2%	7%	2%	5%	1%	1%
Cordial	29%	44%	34%	14%	11%	31%	21%	32%	24%
We do not speak	57%	49%	57%	63%	67%	52%	55%	56%	58%
We still argue	2%	4%	4%	21%	15%	15%	19%	11%	13%

9.1.4 Choice and perception on DRM

Chose of DRM for hypothetical future disputes	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
Credit dispute of BDT 10,000									
Shalish or other third-party mediation	99%	99%	99%	100%	89%	99%	44%	63%	72%
District Court	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Village Court	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%	0%	54%	36%	28%
Others	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Assault of Family member									

Chose of DRM for hypothetical future disputes	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
Shalish or other third-party mediation	96%	99%	99%	99%	90%	97%	56%	66%	75%
District Court	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	3%	1%	1%
Village Court	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	41%	33%	23%
Others	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Land disputes									
Shalish or other third-party mediation	93%	96%	96%	97%	72%	97%	60%	68%	75%
District Court	6%	3%	3%	3%	11%	2%	3%	2%	3%
Village Court	0%	1%	0%	0%	16%	0%	36%	31%	21%
Others	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Resolve dispute related to crops damage									
Shalish or other third-party mediation	96%	99%	99%	100%	92%	99%	59%	68%	77%
District Court	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	1%
Village Court	0%	1%	0%	0%	8%	0%	39%	31%	21%
Others	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Perception on crime and community harmony									
How big of a problem crime is in your village? (1=not at all, 5=very serious problem)	3.39	4.15	4.36	4.25	4.55	3.45	3.42	3.94	3.9
How much harmony or conflict exists between you and your 5 closest neighbors? (1=a lot of harmony, 5=a lot of dispute)	1.75	1.55	1.47	1.47	1.91	1.29	1.71	1.56	1.6
Overall, how satisfied are you with the justice system that you have access to? (the justice system that you would turn to if something happened to you.) (1=very satisfied, 5=very dissatisfied)	2.19	2.04	2.12	2.05	2.39	2.08	2.18	2.22	2.2

Chose of DRM for hypothetical future disputes	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
How do people resolve smaller disputes in your community?									
Village Court	0%	2%	0%	1%	17%	1%	2%	1%	2%
District Court	5%	0%	1%	11%	7%	1%	11%	5%	5%
Shalish	98%	100%	100%	98%	97%	98%	98%	99%	99%
Thana/Police	7%	6%	2%	24%	8%	1%	16%	12%	9%
Other	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	1%	1%
Perception about the fairness, speed, enforcement power and cost of different DRMs									
How fair is Village Court?									
Not fair at all	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	3%	1%	2%
Not fair	2%	0%	11%	7%	1%	0%	2%	6%	4%
Neutral	36%	7%	40%	30%	19%	70%	24%	27%	27%
Somewhat Fair	5%	10%	10%	34%	13%	8%	21%	22%	19%
Completely fair	57%	83%	39%	28%	66%	22%	50%	45%	48%
How fair is District Court?									
Not fair at all	1%	4%	1%	0%	2%	4%	5%	4%	3%
Not fair	3%	11%	6%	7%	8%	3%	9%	8%	7%
Neutral	18%	39%	32%	18%	28%	16%	19%	19%	25%
Somewhat Fair	46%	9%	35%	11%	7%	9%	24%	21%	23%
Completely fair	32%	37%	25%	64%	55%	67%	44%	49%	42%
How fair is Shalish?									
Not fair at all	4%	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%	5%	2%	2%
Not fair	10%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	5%	9%	4%
Neutral	22%	2%	7%	12%	39%	16%	16%	29%	17%
Somewhat Fair	47%	7%	8%	17%	11%	7%	24%	21%	18%
Completely fair	17%	90%	84%	69%	44%	74%	48%	40%	59%

Chose of DRM for hypothetical future disputes	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
Days require to resolve dispute through VC	22	26	40	35	25	32	33	28	33
Days require to resolve dispute through DC	1641	995	783	1844	979	768	682	722	909
Days require to resolve dispute through Shalish	21	14	11	12	9	28	21	12	16
Ability of VC to enforce decisions									
Very bad	0%	0%	0%	3%	2%	6%	1%	3%	2%
Bad	7%	0%	1%	8%	0%	0%	1%	4%	2%
Neutral	12%	8%	43%	41%	21%	22%	29%	31%	28%
Good	29%	53%	38%	34%	22%	37%	30%	20%	31%
Very good	52%	38%	17%	14%	55%	35%	38%	42%	37%
Ability of DC to enforce decisions									
Very bad	0%	5%	0%	0%	1%	2%	2%	4%	1%
Bad	1%	9%	1%	2%	3%	2%	8%	5%	4%
Neutral	23%	44%	24%	18%	31%	12%	19%	19%	23%
Good	31%	20%	47%	22%	14%	14%	22%	20%	28%
Very good	44%	22%	29%	58%	53%	70%	49%	53%	43%
Ability of Shalish to enforce decisions									
Very bad	3%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Bad	8%	2%	2%	1%	2%	0%	4%	6%	3%
Neutral	18%	9%	32%	27%	38%	20%	18%	31%	25%
Good	55%	18%	39%	30%	17%	16%	31%	27%	30%
Very good	16%	72%	27%	41%	43%	62%	44%	35%	41%
How expensive is VC									
Not expensive at all	61%	26%	27%	24%	81%	51%	18%	29%	30%
A little expensive	36%	60%	58%	69%	12%	46%	41%	31%	40%

Chose of DRM for hypothetical future disputes	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
Neutral	3%	15%	15%	3%	4%	3%	29%	21%	20%
Somewhat expensive	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	9%	12%	7%
Very expensive	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	3%	6%	3%
How expensive is DC									
Not expensive at all	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%
A little expensive	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%	1%	1%
Neutral	3%	2%	1%	6%	1%	5%	5%	6%	4%
Somewhat expensive	24%	10%	19%	11%	7%	7%	17%	20%	16%
Very expensive	73%	86%	80%	84%	92%	84%	78%	73%	79%
How expensive is Shalish									
Not expensive at all	26%	65%	43%	80%	82%	73%	47%	49%	51%
A little expensive	66%	32%	53%	13%	16%	17%	33%	28%	34%
Neutral	7%	2%	3%	5%	1%	7%	13%	17%	8%
Somewhat expensive	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	1%	4%	4%	2%
Very expensive	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%	4%	2%	2%

9.1.5 Knowledge on VC by community people

Indicator	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
Frequency of having heard about VC									
Spontaneously	0%	6%	1%	9%	3%	0%	4%	2%	3%
After given a hint	3%	4%	3%	5%	25%	6%	6%	5%	6%
Never heard	97%	90%	96%	87%	72%	94%	90%	93%	91%
Knowledge about Financial Jurisdiction of village courts (Correct knowledge)	0%	1%	0%	0%	5%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Knowledge about type of cases dealt by village courts (Correct knowledge)	0%	2%	0%	2%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%

Indicator	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
Knowledge about formation of Village courts (Correct knowledge)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Knowledge about fees (Correct knowledge)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Knowledge about Chair of Village courts (Correct knowledge)	2%	9%	2%	6%	25%	1%	7%	4%	6%
Knowledge about decision making process of Village courts (Correct knowledge)	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Knowledge about appeal against VC's decision (Correct knowledge)	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Knowledge about engagement of lawyer of Village courts (Correct knowledge)	2%	5%	2%	9%	19%	1%	6%	4%	6%
Knowledge questions									
None of the questions	98%	91%	97%	90%	75%	99%	92%	95%	92.5%
At least one question	0%	3%	2%	5%	4%	0%	2%	2%	2.1%
At least two questions	2%	3%	0%	3%	15%	0%	5%	2%	2.8%
At least three questions	0%	3%	0%	2%	6%	0%	1%	1%	1.1%
At least four questions	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1.0%
At least five questions	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.4%

9.2 UP Representatives' Knowledge, Attitude and Perception of VCs

UP Representatives' Knowledge, Attitude and Perception of VCs	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
Demographic summery statistics									
Age	44.6	41.3	42.1	44.2	44.9	42.7	43.2	46.1	43.5
Years of education	13.5	11.8	12.1	11.7	13.1	11.8	12.9	12.1	12.4
Years in current position	4.3	3.7	2.9	4.2	4.2	2.4	5.1	4.9	3.9
% of woman	27%	28%	27%	25%	32%	27%	25%	25%	27%

UP Representatives' Knowledge, Attitude and Perception of VCs	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
Summery statistics of UP chair's engagement in dispute resolution activities									
Number of disputes resolved in the past 3 months through village court	5.1	0.5	3.0	3.6	1.0	2.1	5.4	0.8	2.9
Number of disputes resolved in the past 3 months through Shalish	20.8	14.5	13.7	12.8	16.1	10.7	19.1	8.1	14.6
Number of disputes resolved in the past 3 months through Shalish Parishad	0.9	0.0	0.4	1.4	0.3	0.8	1.6	0.9	0.8
Hours spent on dispute resolution in a typical week in village court	3.0	0.4	1.8	2.6	2.4	0.7	2.6	1.0	2.1
Hours spent on dispute resolution in a typical week in Shalish	15.5	10.9	8.7	14.1	11.3	7.6	12.2	9.4	11.5
Hours spent on dispute resolution in a typical week in Shalish Parishad	0.1	0.0	0.2	1.6	0.3	0.5	1.3	0.5	0.6
Knowledge about VC									
Overall score on Knowledge test (% of correct answers)	38%	33%	37%	45%	33%	32%	32%	32%	36%
% of officials that could answer all questions	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Knowledge areas:									
VC formation	69%	86%	76%	60%	54%	74%	55%	70%	66%
VC chair	73%	59%	57%	69%	73%	87%	72%	67%	13%
Fines	22%	5%	12%	40%	21%	5%	6%	8%	18%
Jurisdiction	29%	19%	35%	25%	15%	18%	18%	16%	16%
Fees	24%	0%	2%	25%	29%	0%	13%	8%	23%
Decision making process	5%	5%	14%	23%	4%	3%	8%	14%	69%
Appeal process	0%	5%	2%	21%	4%	3%	6%	3%	17%
Use of lawyers	71%	73%	59%	75%	65%	56%	64%	62%	66%
Issuing a summon	51%	41%	71%	69%	33%	38%	50%	38%	52%
Sources of knowledge about the VC									
Training	18%	43%	37%	50%	40%	21%	29%	66%	43%
Workshop	13%	11%	8%	27%	23%	10%	12%	23%	11%
Reading the law myself	51%	57%	35%	48%	38%	26%	39%	36%	38%
UNO	38%	11%	18%	35%	19%	15%	20%	25%	18%
UP Chairman	71%	30%	55%	67%	54%	38%	53%	46%	51%

UP Representatives' Knowledge, Attitude and Perception of VCs	Barisal	Mymensingh	Rangpur	Rajshahi	Khulna	Sylhet	Chittagong	Dhaka	Overall
NGO/private organization	25%	32%	24%	52%	27%	21%	16%	39%	20%
Government order/letter	25%	22%	20%	33%	15%	33%	28%	28%	23%
Yard meeting	4%	0%	8%	12%	17%	7%	5%	11%	7%
Leaf-let/Pocket book	8%	3%	13%	32%	5%	4%	11%	3%	8%
Others	2%	16%	16%	8%	8%	13%	5%	10%	7%
% of respondents practice VC's process correctly									
Receive and review of application by the Chair	87%	64%	68%	55%	41%	41%	79%	65%	62%
After acceptance, entry the case in the relevant register	91%	100%	71%	84%	88%	95%	85%	62%	83%
Issueance of summon to the defendant	74%	64%	52%	71%	65%	55%	77%	76%	64%
Instruct to both parties to nominate representatives	57%	57%	48%	58%	47%	50%	56%	50%	52%
Formation of Village Court panel (Chair and 4 representatives nominated by both parties)	61%	57%	52%	39%	24%	73%	45%	44%	49%
Hearing of both parties and witnesses	74%	79%	68%	68%	53%	50%	79%	79%	67%
Taking decision with majority vote and declare publicly	57%	79%	58%	45%	53%	41%	58%	41%	53%
If the decision is not appelable, implement the decision within the given date	9%	43%	39%	29%	6%	50%	18%	18%	28%
% who followed all steps correctly and per sequence	2%	5%	3%	10%	0%	2%	2%	0%	4%
Knowledge, Experience, attitudes and perceptions and of VCs									
Have ever heard of Village Court	93%	62%	83%	87%	81%	66%	82%	79%	58%
Have you ever resolved any dispute by forming Village Court	36%	18%	37%	37%	20%	31%	48%	44%	35%
UP officials' preferences between DRMs									
Village court	40%	16%	27%	29%	31%	8%	19%	33%	26%
Shalish	56%	81%	73%	71%	69%	92%	76%	67%	72%
Satisfaction									
How satisfied are you satisfied with the functioning of the Village court (on a scale from 1 to 5)?	3.8	4.0	3.5	4.3	3.9	3.7	4.5	3.9	3.9
How well can VC enforce its decision? (on a scale from 1 to 5)	4.1	4.2	3.6	4.1	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9

9.3 Frequency of disputes and households with disputes in the household sample

Indicator	Frequency
1) Total number of disputes	2128
Number of disputes fall under VC	787
2) Total number of resolved disputes	891
Number of resolved disputes fall under VC	382
Numbe of resolved disputes fall outside VC	509
3) Total number of unresolved dispute	1237
Number of unresolved dispute fall under VC	405
Number of unresoved dispute fall outside VC	832
4) Total number of households with resolved disputes	807
Number of housholds with resolved disputes fall under VC jurisdirction	360
Number of housholds with resolved disputes fall outside VC jurisdirction	476
5) Total number of households with unresolved disputes	1020
Number of housholds with unresolved disputes fall under VC jurisdirction	359
Number of housholds with unresolved disputes fall outside VC jurisdirction	715
6) Number of households with at least one dispute (resolved or unresolved)	1699

9.4 Details on cases that were claimed by households to have resolved in VCs

Nature of the dispute	Area	VC jurisdiction	Case status	Monetary loss caused	Resolution type	Total monetary and time cost	Total monetary cost	Total compensation	Court fee	Additional payment	Legal consultancy	Travel cost	Lawyer fee	Legal service fee
Dispute about other kinds of land (or compensation for it)	Project area	Yes	Resolved, partially enforced	15000	A compromise was reached through discussion without forming a village court	3197.632	1520	160000	20		0	1500	0	0
Dispute about other kinds of land (or compensation for it)	Project area	No	Resolved, but not enforced		A Village Court was formed but a resolution was reached through discussions in the first hearing	0	0	1	0		0	0	0	0
Dispute about agricultural land (or compensation for it)	Project area	Yes	Resolved, but not enforced	4000	A Village Court was formed and made a decision through a "full hearing"	4723.684	4000	30000	0		0	4000	0	0
Dispute about credit/loan	Project area	Yes	Resolved, but not enforced	50000	A Village Court was formed and made a decision through a "full hearing"	7521	21	0	21		0	0	0	0
Verbal Fight	Project area	Yes	Resolved, enforced	5000	A Village Court was formed and made a decision through a "full hearing"	956.5789	200	0	200		0	0	0	0
Claiming compensation for deliberately damage to livestock	Project area	Yes	Resolved, enforced	2400	A Village Court was formed but a resolution was reached through discussions in the first hearing	2426.974	700	0	0		0	700	0	0

Nature of the dispute	Area	VC jurisdiction	Case status	Monetary loss caused	Resolution type	Total monetary and time cost	Total monetary cost	Total compensation	Court fee	Additional payment	Legal consultancy	Travel cost	Lawyer fee	Legal service fee
Dispute about other kinds of land (or compensation for it)	Project area	Yes	Resolved, but not enforced	64000	A Village Court was formed and made a decision through a "full hearing"	24067.11	12600	0	100		0	500	0	12000
Fraud	Project area	No	Resolved, enforced		A Village Court was formed and made a decision through a "full hearing"	368.4211	0	70000	0		0	0	0	0
Dispute about agricultural land (or compensation for it)	Project area	Yes	Resolved, enforced	4500	A compromise was reached through discussion without forming a village court	1144.737	0	250000	0		0	0	0	0
Physical Fight (without bloodshed)	Control	Yes	Resolved, enforced	5000	A Village Court was formed and made a decision through a "full hearing"	4384.868	2000	5000	0		0	2000	0	0
Physical Fight (with bloodshed)	Control	No	Resolved, enforced	50000	A compromise was reached through discussion without forming a village court	928.9474	600	10000	0		0	600	0	0
Dispute about other kinds of land (or compensation for it)	Control	Yes	Resolved, enforced	6000	A compromise was reached through discussion without forming a village court	3268.421	900	200000	0		0	400	0	500

Nature of the dispute	Area	VC jurisdiction	Case status	Monetary loss caused	Resolution type	Total monetary and time cost	Total monetary cost	Total compensation	Court fee	Additional payment	Legal consultancy	Travel cost	Lawyer fee	Legal service fee
Reclaiming marriage after dispute	Control	No	Resolved, partially enforced	150000	A Village Court was formed but a resolution was reached through discussions in the first hearing	49631.58	22000	0	2000	13000	0	5000	2000	0
Dispute about agricultural land (or compensation for it)	Control	Yes	Resolved, but not enforced	30000	A Village Court was formed and made a decision through a "full hearing"	13736.18	10200	0	200		0	10000	0	0

10 Appendix 3: Some additional statistics

Factors affecting preference for District Court

VARIABLES	(1) Credit dispute of BDT 10 000	(2) Assault of Family member	(3) Land disputes	(4) Resolve dispute related to crops damage
Female respondent	0.023	0.039	-0.031	-0.022
	(0.039)	(0.032)	(0.048)	(0.030)
Per capita expenditure, 1,000 BDT	-0.000*	-0.000*	-0.000	-0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Any type of relationship with UP Chair	-0.000	-0.001	0.002	-0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Any type of relationship with UP Member	-0.007**	-0.004	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Ever went to village court	-0.362**	-0.184	-0.066	-0.432***
	(0.142)	(0.141)	(0.147)	(0.145)
Total knowledge score	-0.229	-0.294	-0.860***	-0.456**
	(0.206)	(0.180)	(0.214)	(0.199)
Constant	0.756***	0.753***	0.839***	0.865***
	(0.078)	(0.065)	(0.070)	(0.055)
Observations	2,115	2,115	2,115	2,115
R-squared	0.025	0.017	0.032	0.036

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Factors affecting preference for Village Courta

VARIABLES	(1) Credit dispute of BDT 10 000	(2) Assault of Family member	(3) Land disputes	(4) Resolve dispute related to crops damage
Female respondent	-0.024	-0.059**	-0.005	0.004
	(0.039)	(0.028)	(0.033)	(0.027)
Per capita expenditure, 1,000 BDT	0.000*	0.000*	0.000	0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Any type of relationship with UP Chair	-0.000	-0.001	-0.001	0.000
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Any type of relationship with UP Member	0.007**	0.004	0.003	0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Ever went to village court	0.327**	0.123	0.048	0.407***
	(0.136)	(0.113)	(0.102)	(0.147)
Total knowledge score	0.117	0.087	0.633***	0.297
	(0.206)	(0.164)	(0.216)	(0.197)
Constant	0.237***	0.260***	0.151**	0.145***
	(0.077)	(0.061)	(0.064)	(0.051)
Observations	2,115	2,115	2,115	2,115
R-squared	0.021	0.014	0.026	0.029

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Factors affecting preference for Shalish

VARIABLES	(1) Credit dispute of BDT 10 000	(2) Assault of Family member	(3) Land disputes	(4) Resolve dispute related to crops damage
Female respondent	0.023	0.039	-0.031	-0.022
	(0.039)	(0.032)	(0.048)	(0.030)
Per capita expenditure, 1,000 BDT	-0.000*	-0.000*	-0.000	-0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Any type of relationship with UP Chair	-0.000	-0.001	0.002	-0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Any type of relationship with UP Member	-0.007**	-0.004	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Ever went to village court	-0.362**	-0.184	-0.066	-0.432***
	(0.142)	(0.141)	(0.147)	(0.145)
Total knowledge score	-0.229	-0.294	-0.860***	-0.456**
	(0.206)	(0.180)	(0.214)	(0.199)
Constant	0.756***	0.753***	0.839***	0.865***
	(0.078)	(0.065)	(0.070)	(0.055)
Observations	2,115	2,115	2,115	2,115
R-squared	0.025	0.017	0.032	0.036

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Reasons for preffering different DRMs

Indicator	Project area					Control area					Overall
	UP Chair	Ordinary UP	UP female	UP secretary	Total	UP Chair	Ordinary UP	UP female	UP secretary	Total	
Reasons for why VC is preferred											
Easy application process	87%	91%	81%	86%	87%	87%	63%	67%	76%	77%	85%
Bound by law	67%	54%	52%	60%	60%	60%	75%	33%	52%	57%	60%
No need of lawyers	50%	34%	16%	40%	40%	33%	25%	0%	29%	28%	38%
Final decision is taken along with representatives by petitioner and defendant	56%	51%	35%	55%	52%	47%	38%	33%	62%	51%	52%
Here final decision is taken considering social and financial status	22%	20%	20%	45%	31%	33%	25%	33%	38%	34%	31%
Disputes can be resolved in a short period of time	72%	66%	60%	82%	73%	60%	38%	33%	76%	62%	72%
Disputes are resolved following law	30%	2%	36%	22%	23%	20%	38%	33%	33%	30%	24%
Documentation is preserved	5%	0%	3%	4%	4%	13%	25%	0%	19%	17%	5%
Possible to appeal against the final decision	5%	0%	0%	2%	2%	20%	13%	0%	10%	13%	4%
Existence of law for implementation of final decision	9%	10%	0%	12%	9%	7%	13%	0%	5%	6%	9%
Poor, distressed people, and women can come to resolve their disputes	17%	10%	8%	14%	13%	0%	0%	0%	10%	4%	12%
All kind of disputes can be resolved here	4%	0%	0%	2%	2%	7%	0%	33%	10%	9%	3%
Reasons for why Shalish is preferred											
Easy application process	76%	68%	65%	67%	69%	65%	69%	66%	70%	67%	69%
Bound by law	25%	24%	20%	16%	22%	29%	28%	17%	27%	26%	22%
No need of lawyers	44%	38%	24%	27%	34%	32%	25%	24%	37%	29%	34%
Final decision is taken along with	32%	39%	32%	32%	34%	21%	17%	10%	27%	19%	32%

Indicator	Project area					Control area					Overall
	UP Chair	Ordinary UP	UP female	UP secretary	Total	UP Chair	Ordinary UP	UP female	UP secretary	Total	Overall
representatives by petitioner and defendant											
Here final decision is taken considering social and financial status	35%	42%	33%	42%	39%	35%	31%	21%	37%	31%	38%
Disputes can be resolved in a short period of time	67%	69%	61%	64%	66%	65%	75%	69%	63%	68%	66%
Disputes are resolved following law	4%	6%	6%	8%	6%	6%	6%	3%	0%	4%	6%
Documentation is not preserved	2%	0%	0%	3%	2%	0%	6%	3%	0%	2%	2%
Possible to appeal against the final decision	0%	0%	0%	7%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
No need to follow rule in resolving disputes	7%	1%	2%	5%	4%	3%	6%	3%	3%	4%	4%
Documentation is not preserved	1%	0%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	7%	2%	1%
Poor, distressed people, and women can come to resolve their disputes	13%	12%	7%	10%	11%	12%	8%	0%	13%	9%	11%
All kind of disputes can be resolved here	5%	6%	1%	14%	7%	18%	6%	10%	17%	12%	8%
Reasons for why Shalish Parishad is preferred											
Easy application process	100%	100%	0%	0%	53%	0%	67%	42%	40%	40%	50%
Bound by law	0%	0%	0%	0%	66%	0%	33%	58%	100%	20%	54%
No need of lawyers	100%	50%	0%	0%	40%	0%	33%	79%	0%	20%	35%
Final decision is taken along with representatives by petitioner and defendant	100%	100%	0%	0%	27%	50%	0%	21%	0%	20%	26%
Here final decision is taken considering social and financial status	0%	50%	0%	0%	21%	100%	67%	21%	15%	80%	36%
Disputes can be resolved in a short period of time	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	100%	67%	42%	0%	80%	31%
No need to follow rule in resolving disputes	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	20%	5%
All kind of disputes can be resolved here	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	20%	5%

Types of cases reported at VCs in the last 12 months

Types of cases reported	Project area (N=5849)	Control Area (N=2396)	Overall (N=8245)
Dispute about agricultural land (or compensation for it)	27%	19%	26%
Dispute about other kinds of land (or compensation for it)	17%	18%	17%
Reclaiming marriage after dispute	9%	10%	9%
Dispute about credit/loan	8%	7%	8%
Physical Fight (without bloodshed)	6%	10%	7%
Fraud	4%	10%	5%
Dispute about due payment as per written/verbal contract	5%	1%	5%
Verbal Fight	4%	3%	3%
Dispute about possession of movable asset (or compensation for damage)	3%	3%	3%
Threat/intimidation	3%	2%	2%
Dowry	2%	5%	2%
Dispute type missing	2%	3%	2%
Theft	1%	1%	1%
Alimony	1%	1%	1%
Violence against women (by someone inside the household)	1%	0%	1%
Physical Fight (with bloodshed)	1%	2%	1%
Claiming ownership or value of movable asset	1%	0%	1%
Divorce	1%	1%	1%
Rioting/rampaging	1%	0%	1%
Claiming compensation for deliberately damage to livestock	0%	2%	1%
Non-return of deposited valuables	0%	1%	1%
Other	0%	1%	0%
Reported cases within VC jurisdiction	N=2370	N=988	N=3358
Dispute about agricultural land (or compensation for it)	34%	24%	33%
Dispute about other kinds of land (or compensation for it)	21%	24%	21%
Dispute about credit/loan	10%	9%	10%
Physical Fight (without bloodshed)	8%	15%	9%
Dispute about due payment as per written/verbal contract	6%	1%	5%
Dispute about possession of movable asset (or compensation for damage)	4%	5%	4%
Verbal Fight	4%	4%	4%
Fraud	3%	9%	4%
Threat/intimidation	3%	2%	2%
Theft	2%	2%	2%
Rioting/rampaging	1%	0%	1%
Claiming compensation for deliberately damage to livestock	1%	3%	1%
Claiming ownership or value of movable asset	1%	0%	1%
Non-return of deposited valuables	1%	1%	1%

11 Appendix 4: Knowledge Test Questions for UP Representatives and Officials

Knowledge test 1.

1 Knowledge about formation and panel members of the Village Court

1.1 How many people are on the Village Court jury?

    1. Number:__

    2. I don't know

1.2 How many people does the defendant appoint to the Village Court?

    1. Number: __

    2. I don't know

1.3 For the defendant who are they? (read out multiple choice answer)

       1=One UP council member and one lawyer

       2=Two UP council members

       3=One UP council member and one local elite

       4=Two local elites

       5=Don't know

2. Knowledge about VC's chairmen

2.1 Do you know, who is the Chair of the Village Court? (do not read out answer's, wait for response) (Single response)

    1. UP Chair (correct answer)

    2. UP Member

    3.UP Secretary

    4. Local elite people

    5. Any other answer

    6. Don't know

2.2 If the ordinary Village Court Chair is not availible, is it acceptable for the UP secretary to act as the Chair of the Village Court? (do not read out answer's, wait for response) (Single response)

    1. Yes

    2. No

    3. Don't know

3 Knowledge about VC's fine

3.1 Does the Village Court have the authority to impose fines on people disobeying the court's orders?

    1. Yes

    2. No

    3. I don't know

3.2 How large of a fine can a Village Court impose to a person for "contempt of the court"?

    1. Number:__

    2. I don't know

4 Knowledge about jurisdiction of VCs

4.1 What is the highest financial value of a case that the court can deal with?

    1. Number:__

    2. I don't know

4.2 What of the following types of cases can the court deal with?

    1. Thefts of values of 20,000 taka (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know)

    2. Abduction of a person (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know)

    3. Land disputes of a value of 100,000 taka (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know)

    4. Dowry, Divorce, women violence, married life crisis etc (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know)

5 Knowledge about fees

5.1 Do you know, how much is the fee for a case in a Village Court?

    1. Yes   2. No (Skip the next two questions)

5.2. If yes, how many taka (fee) for a criminal case?

    1. Number: __

    2. I don't know

5.3. If yes, How much taka (fee) for a civil case?

    1. Number: __

    2. I don't know

6 Decision making process of Village courts

6.1 If 5 members are present in the Village Court which of the following ways are acceptable processes for making a decision in the Village Court?

    1. Decision are taken by UP chair in consultation with the Village Court assistant (1=acceptable, 2=not acceptable, 3=I don't know)
    2. All 5 members vote in the same way (5:0) (1=acceptable, 2=not acceptable, 3=I don't know)
    3. The Village Court Assistant takes the decision based on instructions from the UP chair (1=acceptable, 2=not acceptable, 3=I don't know)

4. Majority (4:1) or (3:2) (1=acceptable, 2=not acceptable, 3=I don't know)

6.2 If the UP chair disagrees with a majority of the Village Court can the UP chair overturn the Village Courts decision?

    1. True

    2. False

    3. I don't know

7 Knowledge about appeal against VC's decision

7.1. Can someone appeal to a higher court if they are unhappy with the Village Court's decision?

    1. Yes

    2. No (Skip the next question)

    3. Don't know (Skip the next question)

7.2. If yes, in which of the following situations can the dissatisfied party can appeal?

    1. In all cases where the judgement is unfair (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know)

    2. Only decision is taken with 3:2 votes (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know)

    3. When the decision is taken with 4:1 votes (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know)

7.3 In which case some one can appeal against the VC decisions for criminal case?

    1. First class magistrate court

    2. Any other answer

    3. Don't know

7.4. What is the time limit, in days, of making appeals against the decision given by VC?

    1. Number of days: __

    2. I don't know

8 Knowledge about the use of lawyers in the Village Court

8.1 Can a lawyer be engaged in the Village Courts proceedings?

    1. Yes

    2. No

9 Knowledge on issuance of summons

9.1 Who does issue summons of VC? (Single response)

    1. Worker own self/Court Assistant   2. Chowkider/Village Police   3. UP Chair

    4. UP Member   5. Any other answer   6. Don't know

Knowledge test 2.

1 Knowledge about formation and panel members of the Village Court

1.1 How many people are on the Village Court jury?

    1. Number:__

    2. I don't know

1.2 How many people does the applicant appoint to the Village Court?

    1. Number:__

    2. I don't know

1.3 For the applicant who are they? (read out multiple choice answer)

    1=One UP council member and one lawyer

    2=Two UP council members

    3=One UP council member and one local elite

    4=Two local elites

    5=Don't know

2 Knowledge about the VC's chair

2.1 Do you know, who is the Chair of the Village Court? (do not read out answer's, wait for response) (Single response)

    1. UP Chair (correct answer)

    2. UP Member

    3.UP Secretary

    4. Local elite people

    5. Any other answer

    6. Don't know

2.2 If the ordinary Village Court Chair is not availible, who should be the Chair of the Village Court? (do not read out answer's, wait for response) (Single response)

    1. Panel Chair (correct answer)

    2. UP Member

    3. UP Secretary

    4. Local elite people

    5. Any other answer

    6. Don't know

3 Knowledge about VC's fine

3.1 Does the Village Court have the authority to impose fines on people disobeying the court's orders?

    1. Yes

2. No

3. I don't know

3.2 How much fine money can a VC impose to a person for "disobeying a summon"?

    1. Number:__

    2. I don't know

4 Knowledge about jurisdiction of VC

4.1 What is the highest financial value of a case that the court can deal with?

    1. Number:__

    2. I don't know

4.2 What of the following types of cases can the court deal with?

    1. Damage to crops and animals of values of 30,000 taka (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know)

    2. Rape (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know)

    3. Beating / fighting / physical assualt (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know)

    4. Dowery (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know)

5 Knowledge about fees

5.1 Do you know, how much is the fee for a case in a Village Court?

    1. Yes   2. No (Skip the next two questions)

5.2. If yes, how many taka (fee) for a criminal case?

    1. Number: __

    2. I don't know

5.3. If yes, How much taka (fee) for a civil case?

    1. Number: __

    2. I don't know

6 Decision making process of Village courts

6.1 If 4 members are present in the Village Court which of the following statements are true about the Village Court's decision making progress?

    1. Decision are taken by UP chair in consultation with the Village Court assistant (1=acceptable, 2=not acceptable, 3=I don't know)
    2. All 5 members vote in the same way (5:0) (1=acceptable, 2=not acceptable, 3=I don't know)
    3. The Village Court Assistant takes the decision based on instructions from the UP chair (1=acceptable, 2=not acceptable, 3=I don't know)
    4. Majority (4:1) or (3:2) (1=acceptable, 2=not acceptable, 3=I don't know)

6.2 If the UP chair disagrees with a majority of the Village Court can the UP chair overturn the Village Courts decision?

        1. True 2. False 3. I don't know

7 Knowledge about appeal against VC's decision

7.1 Can someone appeal to a higher court if they are unhappy with the Village Court's decision?

    1. Yes

    2. No (Skip the next question)

    3. Don't know (Skip the next question)

7.2 If yes, in which of the following situations can the dissatisfied party can appeal?

    1. In all cases where the judgement is unfair (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know)

    2. Only decision is taken with 3:2 votes (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know)

    3. When the decision is taken with 4:1 votes (1=yes, 2=no, 3=I don't know)

7.3. In which court someone can appeal against the VC decision for a civil case?

    1. Assistant Judge court

    2. Any other answer

    3. Don't know

7.4. What is the time limit, in days, of making appeals against the decision given by VC?

    1. Number of days: __

    2. I don't know

8. Knowledge about the use of lawyers in the Village Court

8.1 Can a lawyer be engaged in the Village Courts proceedings?

    1. Yes

    2. No

9 Knowledge on issuance of summons

9.1 Who does issue summons of VC? (Single response)

    1. Worker own self/Court Assistant   2. Chowkider/Village Police   3. UP Chair

   4. UP Member   5. Any other answer   6. Don't know

12 Appendix 5: Baseline indicators according to AVCB log-frame

Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh Project Phase-II
Baseline status of different indicators

Sl. #	Indicators	Baseline Status		
		Project Area	Control Area	Overall
1.	% of Union Parishads that have fully self-sustaining village courts ('Self-sustaining' is measured by three components: Assistant Accountant cum Computer Operator (AACO) appointed, hearings carried out weekly on designated hearing days, and compliant with VC Act and Rules)- (source: administrative data)	0%	0%	0%
2.	Average number of VC cases registered per year per UP (Source: Administrative data)	16.46	18.64	17.05
3.	% of female complainants registered at VC (Source: Administrative data)	20%	24%	28%
4.	% of recorded resolved cases among the cases those fall under VC jurisdiction	7%	3%	6%
5.	% of registered cases in village courts which are resolved within 6 weeks (Source: Administrative data)	68	70%	68%
6.	Average days required to resolve a dispute (Source: Administartive data)	40	34	40
7.	Average money required including opertunity cost in BDT to resolve a dispute in VC (Source: HH data)	3064	10669	5780
8.	# of cases in VCs referred by court (Source: Administrative)	18	16	34
9.	% of women involved as panelists in village courts' decision making process.	2%	3%	3%
10.	% of UPs which correctly maintain all VC forms and registers. (Source: Administrative data)	1%	0%	1%
11.	% of resolved cases which are enforced (Source: HH data)	80%	78%	79%
12.	% of cases heard in AVCB area which are within the VCs jurisdiction and in compliance with the correct procedure (Source: Administrative data)	0%	0%	0%
13.	% of UPs which submitted last quarterly report to UNO (Source: Administrative data)	4%	4%	4%
14.	% of VC complainants who are poor or extreme poor (using World Bank definition). (Source: HH)	66%	0%	42%
15.	% of people who have experience of disputes related to village courts received services from village courts (Source: HH)	1%	2%	1%
16.	% of people who say VC has reduced petty crime (Source: HH data)	31%	26%	29%
17.	% of people who say they would first approach the VC to resolve petty disputes (Source: HH)	19%	11%	17%
18.	% of UP representatives and officials who gave correct response to 9 key knowledge questions (Source:KAP)	0%	0%	0%
19.	% of People who say they are aware of VCs and its functions. (Source: HH)	9%	11%	9%
20.	% of male respondents who are aware about VC	12%	15%	12%

Sl. #	Indicators	Baseline Status		
		Project Area	Control Area	Overall
21.	% of female respondents who are aware about VC	7%	9%	7%
22.	% of people in the project areas able to correctly answer that VC deals with minor conflicts and disputes (Source: HH)	1%	2%	1%

13 Appendix 6:Dispute Intensity Map
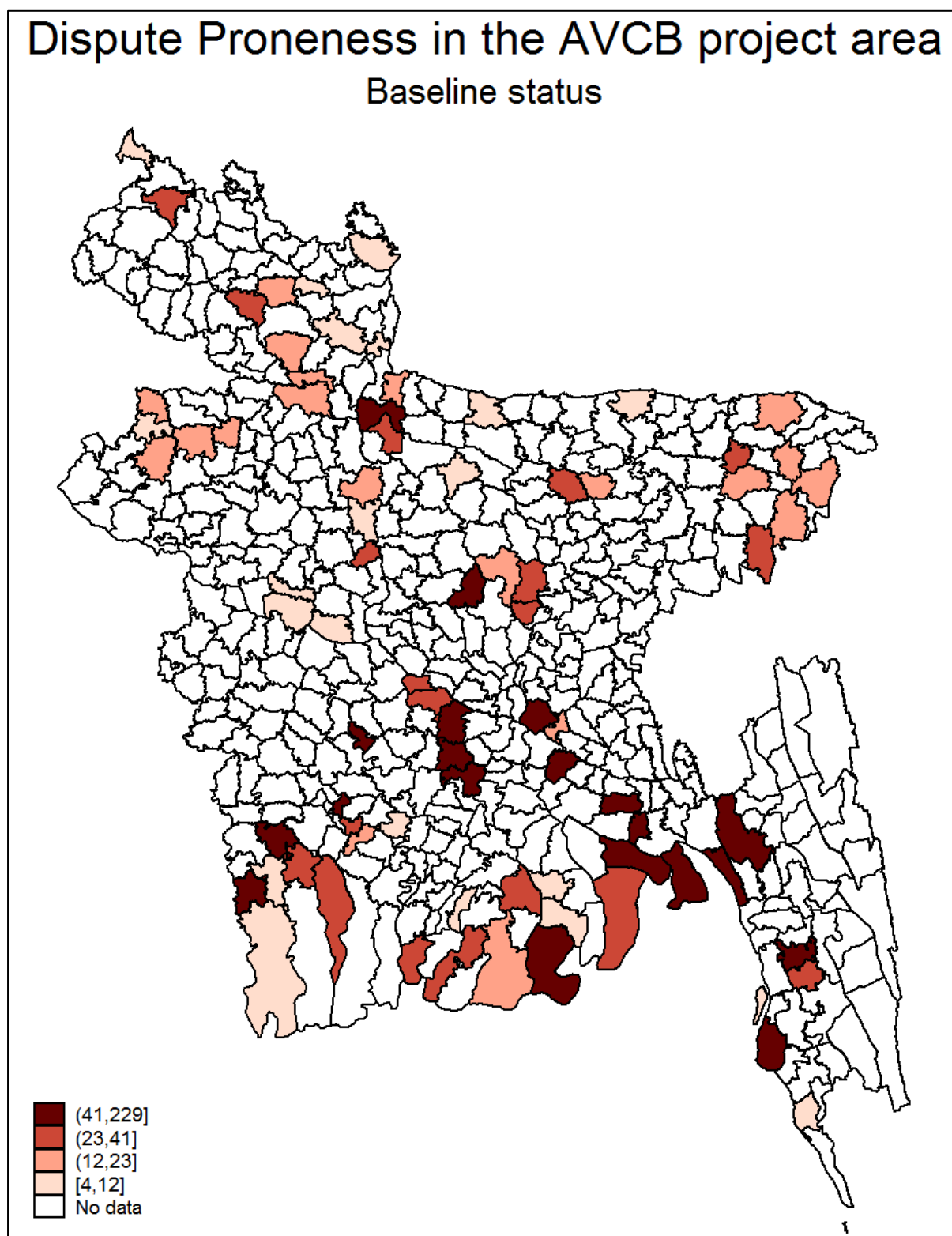
Unresolved disputes in the AVCB project area

Baseline status

Legend:
(23,96]
(11,23]
(6,11]
[1,6]
No data