



The Struggles of Taslima & the Women's Group

to protect their land from corporate land investment



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Taslima Begum and many other habitants of Boro Durgapur and Churashikuro Mouzas of Rajnagar union in Rampal upazila have been occupying land properties for ages in various plots and khatians (Record-of-Rights). These landowners depend on their lands for livelihood by cultivating paddy and fish. Note that Rampal Thermal Power Station already completed land investment. However other private corporates are still acquiring lands in this mouza for their plants.

Recently, a private corporate called Orion Group started acquiring land in this Mouza to generate electricity. This company hired brokers to purchase and acquire lands for them in various ways. Brokers continue to apply temptation and pressure to take possessions of lands for a nominal price or for free. But many are not willing to sell their lands and properties as their only source of income.

The company has bought lands from some of the owners and harasses others who are not willing to sell their lands. At one point, the company demarcates their purchased lands with barbed wires. **Afterwards it appears that the company is illegally taking possession of the land next to the border of their purchased land and merging them together in order to facilitate the construction of their plants.** They ended up taking the unsold land inside their territory with the barbed wires.

When the landowners tried to stop them, they harassed some of them including Taslima. The women tried to stop them combinedly and informed the Union Council, the Police Station, and the UNO office concerning the matter. Heated arguments start to generate about the documents of these lands that have been occupied by the inhabitants for ages. But still no action was taken to evict the barbed wires.

The company did not stop their activities. Rather they continued filling the soil, putting barbed wires, and constructing roads. Landowners (who have not sold their lands) are threatened that they will not be allowed to walk on the roads built by the company. **Brokers insult women landowners in obscene language. Even the family members are harassed in various ways.** When repeated arbitration and negotiation did not work, then other women including Taslima started demolishing the barbed wires on their own. The company was then forced to purchase the lands at a reasonable price.

As many women landowners including Taslima are the members of Badaban Sangho's women groups of Kalekharde, Rajnagar and Boro Durgapur, which works to protect ownership of women landowners; women groups stood firmly beside these women to fight for their rightful demand.