



Household Profile – Subir and Mumtaz Dhaka, Bangladesh

Subir and Mumtaz patch together small sums from irregular and unpredictable sources to support their family. They are active money managers, not despite being poor, but because of it.

The couple and their five sons live on government-owned land in Dhaka. Their rent-free timber and bamboo hut is lit by a single light bulb, the electricity for which constitutes their only monthly bill. The family falls into the poorer half of the Bangladesh sample.

Subir earns most of his income pedaling a hired rickshaw but the physical demands of pedaling mean that he can only work four days a week. On occasion he has the opportunity to drive a motorized rickshaw, where he can earn \$2.50 a day. Subir's earnings fluctuate with weather conditions, political strife, and police harassment. His income is supplemented with rent from a temporary boarder, Mumtaz's income as a maid, and two of their son's wages. Throughout the financial diaries, household income peaked at \$.45 per person per day, and fell as low as \$.27 per person per day.

Despite their meager earnings, their balance statement (see below) shows microfinance savings, loans, home savings, money-guarding, and shop credit.

End-of-year Portfolio Summary for Subir and Mumtaz

	Closing Balance	Turnover
Financial Assets		
Microfinance savings	\$10.20	\$49.40
Private Loans out	30.00	117.00
Home Savings	5.00	18.00
Sub-total	45.20	184.40
Financial Liabilities		
Microfinance loan	30.00	47.00
Interest free loan	14.00	84.00
Private loan	15.00	105.00
Pawn loan	0	10.00
Moneyguarding	2.00	66.00
Shop credit	4.00	50.00
Sub-total	\$65.00	\$362.00
Financial net worth:	-19.80	
Total Turnover		\$546.40

Juggling and stretching uncertain income flows to put food on the table every day is a constant preoccupation for the couple. While Subir could earn more if he owned, rather than rented, a rickshaw, long-term goals like this were not the primary financial concern of the family. Their highest priority was simply to feed their family every day.

Subir and Mumtaz place a premium on the flexibility and convenience of their financial tools, even though these tools are not always reliable. They would benefit from cash-flow management tools that combine convenience with capacity, like small-scale savings of any value with the right to withdraw at any time, and modest loans that can be taken quickly, on demand, and repaid in small (and, if necessary, irregular) installments.