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Anti poverty in Bangladesh

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Introduction

Bangladesh is one of the South Asian developing countries. In the beginning of antipoverty in Bangladesh, I wish to tell simple concept of poverty before going to make clear about antipoverty there. So, what is caused poverty in Bangladesh? We could say poverty as an economic deprivation or deficiency of family or a country. A way of expressing this concept is that it influence to people's lack of economic resources (e.g., money or earnings) for utilization of economic goods and services (e.g., food, housing, clothing, transportation). Thus, a poverty standard is based on a level of family resources (or, alternatively, actual expenditure of family) measure required for Bangladesh to obtain a satisfactory standard of income and livings.

To create or intend to decrease poverty from Bangladesh is antipoverty. Hence, real solutions of the poverty turn goodwill into effective action for the family or that country (Online). Now I could briefly explain about antipoverty in Bangladesh here.

The most important and practical issue in Bangladesh is economic growth which has a positive impact on poverty reduction. In this concern I could say from the report of Tanzi and Chu (1998) that the relationship between economic growth and the distribution of income; and the relationship between the distribution of income and poverty are important. Increased income per capita would generally lead to lower poverty if the rate of growth is continued at a reasonably high level. Higher economic growth does not lead to any serious deterioration of the distribution of income.

Government of Bangladesh (GOB, 2003) has set out two main targets by the year 2015 i.e., (i) remove the "ugly faces" of poverty by eradicating hunger, chronic food insecurity, and excessive difficulty and (ii) reduce the proportion of poverty line by 50% of people's standard of livings.

But Sen and Hulme (BIDS, 2005) have reported that the experience of chronic poverty in Bangladesh has both external and internal dimensions. Externally, the country is seen as a chronically poor country, carrying on the "below-poverty level equilibrium trap" for decades. Internally, the society is not homogeneous even at overall very low per capita average wealth. Direct divisions exist among the various population sub-groups, based on land, income, status, and power across different segments, but, more importantly, within the poor community itself. The other major elements cover human development, women's advancement, social protection, and participatory governance.

Especially I could say in the case of physical infrastructure in Bangladesh may also be taken as a classic example of an outcome of poverty reduction. Physical infrastructure has a high potential to expand the productive capacity of the economy and sustain rapid economic growth. As for example in one hand Asian Development Bank has Reported (1998) that for cross-cutting infrastructure development, arguments are often put forward that (i) infrastructure investment has little weight to poverty

reduction though these are important for economic growth; (ii) actual benefits from infrastructure investments in many cases are less than expected benefits particularly for the poor; and (iii) infrastructure's potential contributions are difficult to achieve due to the awareness of weak governance and institutions and neglected maintenance.

World Bank (2002) on the other hand has reported that the income charts of the poor household shows a high dependence on daily wage labour as the major source of income. The report also indicated that labour is the main asset and the income source of the poor in the country. For reducing poverty Mujeri (2003) also has given same opinion that the policies, must focus on increasing the returns to labour in both agriculture and non-agriculture sectors and on creating an environment for the poor to get more jobs.

However, my main concern here very concisely to focus the reasons of poverty and its proper elimination, with a view to motivate the government, political leaders, private sector organisations and other NGOs of civil societies, to come in cross and work together as a means of support to bring poverty into the end from Bangladesh, for standard way of living to every body as civil society.

Discussion

I have stated earlier that I could pointed out some causes about poverty which would be reduced and make the country as way of standard livings for all and those are as follows:

1. Flood and other Natural Disasters
2. Structural Reform, Adjustment and Political Unrest
3. Economic Democracy
4. Corruption
5. Strengthening Government Capacity (including road, transportation and telecommunication)
6. Others
 - Education
 - Foreign Policy
 - Free and Fair Trade for Agricultural Commodities
 - Women's Rights
 - Health Issues, Disease and its Consequences

1. Flood and other Natural Disaster

Flood caused in Bangladesh due to Farakka Barrage which built in 1974 on the Ganges in India at the border of Bangladesh for unilateral withdrawal of water and by divert the course of the river violating all international laws on rivers and maritimes. This barrage two different affect during the two seasons. During the dry season India withdraw the water in huge quantity and in moonsoon period she opens the gates of Farakka Barrage that is cause of over flood in Bangladesh. In one hand the consequence of this barrage : 40 millions peoples manily farmers and poor workers are directly affected; 70 millions people have been infected with arsenic disease as people utilise the underground water for their drinking and agricultural purpose. India

is not only withdrawing the water from the Ganges but also from other 53 common international rivers shared by two countries. More than one third territory of Bangladesh has been getting threatening the very existence of Bangladesh by this Farakka Barrage during dry season caused draught and moonsoon caused flood and also provoking the world ecology. Therefore, we could say that all of the man made artificial natural disaster which could be resolved by good understanding.

Major economy of Bangladesh is based on the agriculture. Without water for irrigation and over flooded situation made Bangladesh one of the poorest countries of the World. Whole social, economic and political systems are directly co-related with this Farakka Barrage. The decree of poverty has provoked to be victims the women and child smuggling. Mamun Quazi (2000) reported that five million Women and girls have been already smuggled and kidnapped and sold to the prostitute markets of the foreign countries. So Bangladesh needs a formal request to the international institutions like UNESCO, UN, FAO, ILO etc. through different people's and humanitarian organisations to convince the member-states of these organisations for a proper solution for peace and harmony as well as a way of standard livings for both countries.

2. Structural Adjustment and Political Unrest

Potential infrastructure and economic growth of Bangladesh are apparently important for higher growth of poverty reduction. Greater attention needs to be paid to meeting the infrastructure requirements of the economy in Bangladesh which would improve the investment climate and establish stronger linkages for the provision of basic social services. According to the report of Asian Development Bank (ADB Report, 2004) since the 1970s—like transport, power, water, sanitation, telecommunications, irrigation and other physical infrastructure services are poorly and publicly managed which is reflected in inadequate infrastructure coverage, poor management and cost improvement, and inefficiency of the infrastructure services. Policy Reforms in Infrastructure of Bangladesh like most of the developing countries the Government of Bangladesh also owns all infrastructures, operates and finances. So it is important for expanding regional and political cooperation in potentially beneficial areas e.g. energy and power, water resources, transport, tourism, environment, trade, investment and private sector cooperation. And also need expansion (ADB, 2003) regional and sub-regional cooperation through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC). In this case for Bangladesh, it is to ensure greater participation of the non-government providers as for example NGO's and other civil society organisations. To achieve these goals all political leaders need to resolve internal conflicts and unrest.

3. Economic Democracy

The contribution of productivity growth for the economy of Bangladesh is low. Therefore, for higher growth of economy, productivity needs to increase technological progress and efficiency in all sectors of the economy. So Bangladesh needs economic reforms to bring powerful changes in the long-run growth of the economy. For the effective economic democracy, Bangladesh needs fair and proper understanding with oppositions. The government and other private organisation should run smoothly, foreign policies should support them with a view to bring them with civil societies.

4. Corruption

Corruption is the abuse of public power for private gain. It is a problem in Bangladesh and comes under many different forms as bribery, misappropriations of public goods, favouring family members for jobs and contracts, influencing the formulation of laws or regulations for private gain are common examples of wrongdoing or misconduct and those caused poverty as well.

It is a major cause at all levels of society, from administration, police, judiciary functions, military and other services such as political leaders, private organizations and so on. The impact of corruption in Bangladesh on the poorer members of those societies is even more tragic. Hawley (2000) said that corruption caused the adverse situation in the country such that:

- Increase debt
- Benefit the company, not the country
- Bypass local democratic processes
- Damage the environment
- Circumvent legislation and
- Promote weapons sales.

For the above situation Shah (January, 2006) has been reported in the Bangladesh Observer that direct or indirect causes are also linked with these corruptions as:

- Natural Resources; Inviting corruption
- Rich Countries involved in corruption abroad
- IMF and World Bank Policies that Encourage Corruption

It is necessary to build infrastructure by foreign company, such as ports, pipelines, roads and dormitory towns for their staff; to make this worthwhile, a whole oil field. Hence company or donor agent could be a significant source of corruption for the administration to gain the work. Sometimes foreign policies on foreign trade, remove entry barriers to private industry, and privatize state firms in a way that ensure competition will all support the pros and cons and invite loans with very easy conditions which so far shown no signs of taking back this. Mr Hawley again said (2000) in his report that this corruption which Creditors gives as military and political aid to those corrupted dictator governments—knowing arms might be used to suppress popular opposition. Therefore, successor democratic governments and their supporters, who may have been victims of corruption and oppression, cannot be trusted. These policies must not be used as for eradication of poverty in Bangladesh.

5. Strengthening Government Capacity

Income poverty reduction targets in Bangladesh urgently need to accelerate the growth process. In order to achieve a GDP growth rate of 7% per year or more is needed for realizing the income poverty reduction goals (ADB, 2004). The Government has embarked on a program of economic and structural reform. This need to improve the investment climate, increase government's effectiveness with improve service delivery, particularly to the poor. So, stronger institutions for public

management and stronger accountability framework are required. The World Bank has approved an *Economic Management Technical Assistance Project* (EMTAP) in 2004 which was aimed to strengthen institutional capacity, contribute to better policy management and improve the functioning of the public administration and the corporate sector.

6. Others: Education

Nearly two decades ago the government had been declared that within 5 years time 100% peoples would get at least primary education. But still it did not come into force. Most of the peoples of rural areas poor and orphan children and adult (male and female) do not get opportunities for learning due to lack of food, clothes and other formal learning materials. Electricity, transportation, roads and advance technological instruments and machineries are not available for vocational and adult learning.

It is hoped and imagined that even the poorer and less fortunate people of the world can use the Internet and the World Wide Web to learn and experience things that would previously have seemed next to impossible. Various communities and people that were previously minor have now got the potential to be more allowed they have been before. But in rural areas and poorest areas of Bangladesh are not well of than that of cities and towns. The reality of the internet revolution, with current trends, may not be as bright for all, as made out to be, because some major obstacles need to be overcome, such as

- Poor telecommunications
- An inability to afford computers
- Lower levels of education
- Higher cost of providing Internet services

Government, NGO's and civil societies could support and improve their way living with proper care for all that would reduce the poverty for the poorest peoples.

Foreign Policy

All foreign policies need to be created within the broader area of developing human capital including health, education, nutrition and social, political and other non-economic assets that will enhance the capabilities of the poor. The policy measures need to cover several areas, such as increasing yields and cropping intensity; ensuring the availability of effective institutions and infrastructure to attract private investments in new and more profitable cropping and farming systems; providing better technologies, supportive infrastructure, credit and related services; and removing policy inconsistencies and legal/institutional inadequacies. Similarly, actions are needed to support favourable transformations in land, labour, water and credit markets; remove the barriers in input and output markets; expand irrigation coverage and improve the efficiency and productivity of ground and surface water irrigation; adopt regional and site-specific focus in agricultural production.

Free and Fair Trade for Agricultural Commodities

Bangladesh is far behind for free and fair trade in competition with other countries.

Still it has very strong terms and conditions to import and export common goods and have high custom duty. Therefore in one hand medium and low merchants, corporations and traders can not export and import essential equipments in order to produce their commodities on the other hands they can not export their own products and earn proper money. These include industrials products and agricultural products. As for example nearly a half century ago it used to earn a lion share of foreign currency exporting jute and jute goods which were provide jobs for men and women as well as cash money for the farmers. But it is more or less stop now and farmer lands also becoming unfertile due to low amount of biomass which comes from green leaves and roots of jute plants.

Therefore, government, private sectors corporations and civil societies should increase to buy natural products as made from jute and cotton rather than synthetic products. Because in one hand synthetic products are not good for the health on the other hand poor farmers and jute industries of Bangladesh are facing problems.

Women's Rights

It said in a report (Online) that thousands of women and children are trafficked from Bangladesh each year. One of the poorest countries in the world, poverty provides traffickers with people who have no alternatives for survival. They trust the offers of work or marriage abroad, which promise security but instead lead to slavery. Approximately 50% are female of total population in Bangladesh. They have honour like male and could play a major for the country. The government, NGO's and other civil societies organisations could help for education and training and allow them opportunities to take part into abolition of poverty. Women could make the progress and remove poverty.

In a report of Grameen Bank which has shown that Bangladesh's largest provider of micro credit for women. The other major microfinance institutions (MFIs) are the Bangladesh Rural Action Committee (BRAC), the Association for Social Advancement (ASA), and Proshika. However, loans are also provided by community development funds, 681 NGOs, 19 government agencies, and eight commercial and specialized banks.

Micro credit has allowed millions of poor people to overcome these obstacles and improve their lives. Through such programs, loans and training are provided to individuals, who have never been involved in the economy, and to small business person to help them improve their activities and create employment for the poorest people. Here most of the borrowers are women.

Micro credit borrowers hold up their passbooks. Most micro credit financiers lend only to or give priority to women, and women make up over 80 percent of the total borrowers in Bangladesh. Studies have shown that when the women have decision-making power over household expenditures, they spend more on education and health of the children. As such, whole families, and society at large, benefit.

Health issues and Disease

More than 80% of the total populations have no jobs. They are either day labours or small and poor farmers. Due to natural disaster like flood, draught, hill storm and heavy rain fall destroy their crops and make them poor and poorer every year. For this reason most of the children and women facing starvation and malnutrition and poor pregnant women and elderly peoples can not get proper treatment. So they are suffering from ill health and during over floods period they face diarrhea, cholera, dysentery and other epidemic disease. In my opinion, I could urge to the civil societies and other foreign donors to support them by medicine and establish as well as natural hazards emergencies treatment and care centre maternity and children hospital, elderly care center.

Environment and human health have to be free from pollution. Industrial wastes have become a serious threat to the environment. The industrialists should set up waste purifying plants in their factories in the cities and towns in order to free from disease. So the foreign donor health project would be expected to benefit the health, nutrition and population programmes in Bangladesh saving money for the government in the long run and improving efficiency and effectiveness of health services.

Conclusion

According to World Bank Report (2002) the central message that emerges from the above simulations is that the aggregate growth possibilities of the Bangladesh economy depend critically on the success in mobilizing adequate resources for investment. If adequate domestic resources are not available, the resource gap has to be increasingly met through borrowings from both domestic and external sources. In my opinion the policies which I have discussed above should be considered within the broader area of developing human capital including health, education, nutrition and social, political and other economic and non-economic assets that can contribute to enhancing the capabilities of the poor.

In addition for instance the performance of the public sectors are very weak which needs of setting the government accounts in order through restructuring and rationalizing the public revenue and expenditure systems. As we have noted, the reforms can be powerful instruments to improve the economy's long-run growth prospects provided credible reforms are implemented. The priority agenda in the context is to create a growth-augmenting policy framework through ensuring stable internal and external balances and sound macroeconomic management, removing infrastructure bottlenecks, and ensuring socio-political harmony stability. Similarly, with factor market reforms, good governance, and a credible reform program to consolidate the past gains and combat the unfolding negative tendencies.

However, in implementing the higher growth agenda, the agriculture sector needs to play two critical roles: first, ensure a relatively cheap supply of the staple food (e.g. rice which could remove poverty) which will have a positive impact on real wages along with a serious effect on the demand for nominal wage scale. This will increase the country's competitiveness in labour-intensive non-agriculture and manufacturing activities.

Furthermore, the above agenda could contribute to increasing the rural income, which is needed to provide the demand and motivation for expanding the non-farm sector, by accelerating the speed of commercialization of agriculture. For this, the major channels will be (i) the diversification to value-added crops; and (ii) the expansion of non-crop agriculture such as poultry, dairy, fishery, forestry and related activities.

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