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# লোক প্রশাসন সাময়িকী



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মোঃ সানোয়ার জাহান ভূঁইয়া



## লোক-প্রশাসন সাময়িকী

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## **Role of International Development Agencies in Policy Formulation of Bangladesh: The Nexus between and among the National and International Stakeholders**

Md. Ziaul Hoque\*

***Abstract:** The Multilateral Agencies and Donors i.e. the Development Partners are pivotal part for facilitating and operating development process in the developing countries. Through their course of action a nexus and alliance take its shape with the local agents on the basis of which they implement their agendas for their own shake. Taking this advantage the upper echelons of the society continue to use their authority for this purpose. This paper overviewed on this relation and the consequent societal impact on the country in its policy formulation and management with a glance on the environmental policy related issues in Bangladesh.*

### **Introduction:**

The transformation of the colonies into independent state didn't necessarily change the nature of dominance over the countries, later named as developing countries. Super powers and the leading countries in the world economy continued their way of controlling in terms of economically and politically. Societies with strong zeal of independence and the urge for getting free from the exploitation was primary force for the independent struggle. But the resources for achieving economic emancipation were not enough for those countries. Persistent surplus extraction from the periphery virtually made those countries resource scarce. The new agents of colonies were emerged as the savior for the economy. Mode of intervention was named as aid and the new era of exploitation started. Institutions involved in this purpose both in the form of bilateral and multilateral organization are called donor agencies. They some times in the form of bilateralism and some times in the form of multilateral process employed their full endeavor to invest the surplus capital accumulated through the history. In course of their action they built strong nexus with the local political authority, the government machinery, social elites, influential intellectuals, business class and other

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related part of the society. Through this interaction among and between those actors the agencies for the external assistance are making the public policy domain of the developed countries as their social laboratory for experimentation which ultimately converted those countries into dysfunctional one. This paper attempts to have a glance into the dynamics of the relations of the stakeholders and their contribution to the formulation of the public policies, whether in the interest of them in the guise of assistance.

### **Scheme of the Paper:**

This paper first identifies the different stakeholders in the national-international public policy nexus. Thereafter tries to explain the way in which International Development Agencies, as key players, operate with diverse stakeholder interest and how they influence public policy and management in Bangladesh with a glance over the environmental policy related issues in the country.

### **Stakeholders in the National-international Public Policy Nexus:**

The main stakeholders in the national-international public policy nexus are divergent groups. Those are multilateral agencies, donors, political party in power, public bureaucracy, professionals political elites, and experts in related fields. Internationally the multilateral agencies are the reflection of the multi-stakeholders concepts which includes the interest of different countries in the international level and the stakeholders for the national levels. These also include the policy makers, public bureaucracy, business people, and the press. There are 40 multilateral and 14 bilateral major agencies working in the country (Economic Relations Divisions).

In the international scenario the stakeholders and actors are now the economically developed western countries, multinational companies, the intelligentsia engaged in the formulation of their policies. All of them are playing the role of facilitation of the interest of the donor country's and establishing their ideological stronghold in the recipient country. International politics is also playing a vital role in this environment of donors. Though the world is now uni-polar, the earlier scenario was full of tension in the race of injecting the alien ideas and establishing dominance through external aids. The experts and executives of the multilateral agencies are also influential actors of this process.

### **The Nexus from the Historical Perspective:**

From the Pakistan period the donors in 60s were actively influencing the internal affairs of the recipient countries. The matter of aid was full of conditionalities in consonance with the interest of the donors and the also in the interest of the recipient country's vested groups. The multilateral agencies were prone to make strategic alliance with the vested interest groups for their own interest. In making such alliance they employed the political elites, state bourgeoisie, the trading bourgeoisie and industrial bourgeoisie. Sobhan and Ahmad (1980) in 'The Role of Public Enterprises in an Intermediate Regime' mentioned extensively the complex and interconnected interest of the social classes at that time for grabbing the foreign aid for their social elevation and the mode of using public enterprise for their gain. This study also portrays the nature and character of the donors in realizing their own interest and the influence and the extent of the negative role played by them. At that time the whole bourgeoisie class was busy with their act of surplus extraction using the public enterprises. The donors were very active in policy influences at that time. They were in favor of the expansion of private sector to facilitate the industrial and trading bourgeoisie in capital accumulation, though the whole environment was conducive to the flourishing of public sector.

Intimate to the state machinery the and the beneficiary of the liberation war the new emergent class always kept pressure to the state for managing the investment flow alive and the state had to manage the resources from the external sources. Here the tripartite relations among the donors politicians and bureaucrats created an environment of win - win situation for all of them. Donors were pleased to play their role in an absolute impunity and the politicians were complacent to have their share in the bill of development programme and the bureaucrats having both present and future benefits.

It is evident that the public bureaucracy acted for the interest of the private sector. They in some careful acts played the role of the portraying the public sector management negatively in terms of their management, inefficiencies and corruption. The authors premised in the way that some of the bureaucrats with the background of the rural feudal class structure married the daughter of the businessmen which ultimately favours them in working for the business class. The multilateral agencies with their influence were successful in formulating the investment policy favouring



the private sector. The important impact on the economy was that the state sector became weak and the way for the multinational corporations was opened.

The first confrontation with the World Bank was related with the repayment of the loan of the Pakistan period. The Bank was in a position of not forfeiting the loans in any terms and the country with its strong nationalistic zeal and fervor disagreed to repay, though finally had to agree on certain portion.

Sobhan (1982) in other work on aid titled as *The Crisis of External Dependence*; The political economy of foreign aid to Bangladesh explained the role of the World Bank in dealing with the state machinery and the way designed for different types of humiliation of those institution and also the blueprint of categorically tarnishing the images of those institutions. The target was on the Planning Commission for their first Five Year Plan. In 'Green Cover' reports the Bank blatantly belittled the spirit of the plan. By this time the political and economic situation of the country were turned volatile and the image of the government gradually depicted as the failed one. Both national and international media acted on behalf of the donors in highlighting the failures of the government. Later the Planning Commission replied those comments categorically, but the damage was done by this time.

After 1975 August tragedy the scenario changed in favour of the Bank because by this time the planning commission metamorphosed and the experts favouring the interest of the Bank since the Pakistan period, became member of the Planning Commission. Government strategy and its articulation began to reflect the Bank's position in every area of policy-making (Sobhan 1982). The Bank was involved in most major policy decisions and, in some cases, even contributed to the staff work, as in the case of the review of Flood Policy (Flow of External Resources cited by Sobhan in *ibid*, p196)

The World Bank acted in flourishing the capitalism in the country through pursuing the policy for private sector investment and the arrangement of credit for the private investment by providing loans. This provision of aid finance to support the development of capitalism in Bangladesh has become an important demonstration of the use of aid in the service of ideology (*ibid* , p197).

From this explanation it is understood that the prevailing nexus between the stakeholders of the policy process, donors and multilateral agencies has its origin in the history and it has several facades and dimensions from the very beginning. The nature of this relation though not changed fundamentally till now but the tendencies of the multilateral agencies are strongly skewed towards favoring the elites of the country. Sobhan (1982) in mentioning the contradictions of donors aid philosophy expressed that the

*"The aid recipients in Bangladesh know that in the final analysis all aid coming into Bangladesh has to be filtered through a bureaucracy and an elite social formation which exercises state power. The donor's pressure to direct aid projects to the poor thus generates a drama of deception, where both donor and recipient combine to fabricate projects ostensibly designed to serve the poor but which in practice largely perpetuate the wealth of the elite. The vocabulary of aid may have thus changed in recent years but its distributive bias has largely remained intact. The donors and particularly those within their community who speak for a change in donor strategy, will thus have to realize that the search for an equitable aid strategy, will thus have to realize that the search for an equitable aid strategy in inequitable societies is a chimera".*

In the changed scenario at the later part of the 80s the World Bank found the regime welcoming to the extension of Western influence and was fully receptive to every idea put out by donors (ibid). The Bank and Fund have now, under cover of their multilateral format, emerged as highly effective proxies for the western powers (ibid).

Sobhan (1982) had also showed the gradual elevation of the Bank as the perpetrator in the policy formulation of the country. Within the framework of the entente cordiale which prevails between the World Bank and the policy-makers of Bangladesh, the Bank continues to remain as a major political force in Bangladesh (ibid).

Contribution of the Foreign Aid to this Nexus:

The pivotal part of influence and the nexus between the actors and stakeholders are related to the flow of aid and the benefit originated from the aid. Foreign aid to Bangladesh is classified as Food aid, Commodity aid and Project aid. If we identify the groups who are beneficiaries of the



foreign aid it reveals that the list contains suppliers of goods and services from specific countries abroad where the bulk of the aid funds are spent. This category of fund recipients include the foreign consultants, construction contractors, equipment suppliers and indeed the workers who contribute to the production of this equipment, farmers growing food for aid, shipping companies, banks, insurance companies, indeed all categories of people into whose hands aid funds will flow (Sobhan, 1990). The premium earned by these suppliers of equipment and material at non competitive prices, use of U.S shipping line (for U.S. aid) and employing foreign consultants who are not really needed or can be locally substituted represents an unrequited appropriation from the Bangladesh aid budget.

A considerable volume of aid funds are now locally disbursed and from those local indentors can be benefited. Because they receive commissions for providing their services in importing machinery for the project, though here again all or part of this commission may be paid abroad. Local consultants receive fees for designing and supervising the project: contractors are engaged in projects for construction and installation of equipment (ibid). The bureaucrats and the policy makers are not out of this part. They receive unofficial compensation for facilitating the flows of aid to particular beneficiaries (ibid).

It has been argued in the (Sobhan, eds 1990, p167) that the aid has created a new rich class in the Bangladesh all of whom are urban residents. The emergence of this class follows the pace of aid flow in Bangladesh since 1971. Upper echelon bureaucrats have played a pivotal role in supporting this development in the way that most of the members of this group (indentors, consultants, contractors, bureaucrats) have strong social ties whether through intermarriage or by being part of a social milieu. Ex-bureaucrats become business directors, indentors become industrialists, traders become contractors, and many continue to cocurrently operate in these various groups of whom are dominating the economic life of country (ibid).

#### Radical Transformation of the Development Partners:

The sole dependence on aid was actually crippled the political sovereignty of the country for the decades after the liberation (Sobhan, 2004, p139-141). The first two decades after liberation was of absolute dependence on aid for Annual Development Plan implementation. It was nearer to 100% and reached at 100% for some years. Due to the extent of

dependence on aid the development partners were prone to intrude into the policy arena in whatever situation to uphold their interest.

In the 1990s Bangladesh's aid dependence declined significantly (ibid). The development partners perspective on aid to Bangladesh was in a course of radical transformation. These changes originated in the changing perspective to aid at the global level (ibid). The major change in the world after the fall of the Soviet Union made the indispensability of U.S.A more visible to the world and the developing country like Bangladesh remained in constant understanding that its future lies in maintaining friendly relations with the United States. This conviction was no longer driven by our aid dependence on the U.S but by the fact that the U.S.A was the largest single market for Bangladesh's readymade garment exports and that continued and increased access to the market was crucial to the economic sustainability of Bangladesh (ibid p142).

#### Aid and Bureaucracy:

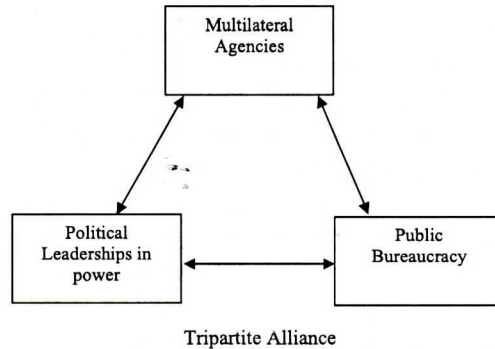
The constant relationship between the bureaucracy and development partners remain as it was from the very beginning. Sobhan (2004,165) reiterated that the underlying logic of bureaucratic support for aid articulated in the author's volume on External Dependence written in 1982 remains no less valid today. He had then observed that a segment of the upper bureaucracy continue to benefit from aid as consultants and hope that these favours will continue even after they retire.

Sobhan (2004) also observed that

*Bureaucrats as a group remain the least restraint to the extension of development policy influence and the most inclined to promote donor policy agenda..... At a more general level, most bureaucrats in the ministries, executing agencies and aid projects view aid as a means easing their administrative burden as well as providing some personal benefit. Access to vehicles, improved office equipment, per diems, foreign travel are freely incorporated into aid budgets along consultancy opportunities for line officials servicing the aid negotiation and presiding over project implementation.*

Aid thus became and now remains the soft option for covering up operational inefficiencies, ineffective and uneconomical use of public

resources, lack of creative policy responses and discourages effective or innovative governance (ibid).



International Development Agencies, their operation with diverse stakeholder interests and influence on public policy and management in Bangladesh:

From the inception even from the earlier days of 60s the international development agencies are operating with the diverse stakeholder interests and continued to sustain their position as one of the key player in the policy direction of Bangladesh, which has already been mentioned earlier in this paper. Their first intervention in the policy process to pursue political objectives was in 1974 when the US government, then under President Richard Nixon, used Bangladesh's dependence on food aid to pressurize Bangladesh to discontinue export of jute goods to Cuba (Sobhan, 2004). Apart from this other areas were the intervention in the investment policy for facilitating private sector basing on the aid credit to serve the interest of few elites who had continued in keeping the act of surplus extraction using the state machinery.

One of the principal areas where pressure from the donors comes to be exercised relates to the formulation and conduct of economic policy. In Bangladesh donors have tended to freely express their views on the suitability of various policies enacted by the government of the day, the quality of the administration and the integrity of the political leadership. This attitude originates in the belief that the size and importance of their contribution to Bangladesh development effort gives them a right to dictate how it should conduct its development affairs. Indeed there is no area in the development field where donors do not choose to exercise a say. They have attempted to influence policies on state ownership, the



role of the private sector, the monetary and fiscal policies of the regime, pricing policy, distribution policy, the use of administrative controls, the structure of development expenditure, the external value of currency, the pattern of development administration and a variety of other operational, policy-oriented and ideological issues.

At the beginning the multilateral agencies were reluctant to speak about the state of corruption in the country in the name of interference into the domestic affairs but now the concerns for the donors are exclusively related to governance issues and the aid flow depends on the state of governance of the country which is measured on the basis of some implausible and non-contextual indicators.

The development partners and the domestic alliance interact in such a way that the interest of them is to get highest priority. The issue of poverty alleviation is now the major area to deal with the donors assistance. The longstanding issue of poverty has been successfully traded by the policy makers to get aid from the development partners. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper has been imposed over Bangladesh as the policy prescription prepared for the poverty ridden countries of the developing countries. Bangladesh had no option in denying this prescription like almost all of the policy prescription by the development partners. The politicians kept mum because some fund will be available. Bureaucrats didn't attempt for any sort of resistance because the political authority assented for. The local consultants and experts welcomed it rather than analyzing the viability and applicability of it.

Two of the surveys conducted in Bangladesh on the attitude, perception and relational status of the donors and multilateral agencies can make some real picture before us. Centre for Policy Dialogue in its Pre-election Policy Briefs: Results from the Identification Exercise report (CPD,2000:7-9) identifies that policy-making in Bangladesh remains almost entirely within the domain of the Bureaucracy. 69.2 percent of the respondents identified it as the most important actor in policy formulation. The Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, took second place with MPs coming third. The people's belief in the influence of NGOs has been reflected with it emerging as the fourth most important actor in policy-formulation. The Local Government and Private Sector Leaders came fifth and sixth respectively, with Government Party Leaders/Workers bringing up the rear.

In that survey (ibid) the respondents were also given the option of naming other agents they believed to be important in policy formulation. Most of those who exercised this option stated that aid donors to Bangladesh were core actors in this regard. Some had even named donors as the most influential actor. Most of these respondents spoke of the World Bank and the IMF as the most influential of the donors. Other donor countries and agencies, as well as various multi-national corporations and American imperialism were also mentioned. It is very interesting to note that in one of our evaluations, donors emerged as the most influential actor in policy-formulation. Civil society, including intellectuals and the media, have also been considered to be important, while one of the respondents particularly mentioned CPD as being influential in this regard. On the other hand, it was also stressed that the opposition parties have a substantial role to play in the formulation of public policy in Bangladesh. A few other respondents expressed their opinion that there were other actors involved but did not mention any names.

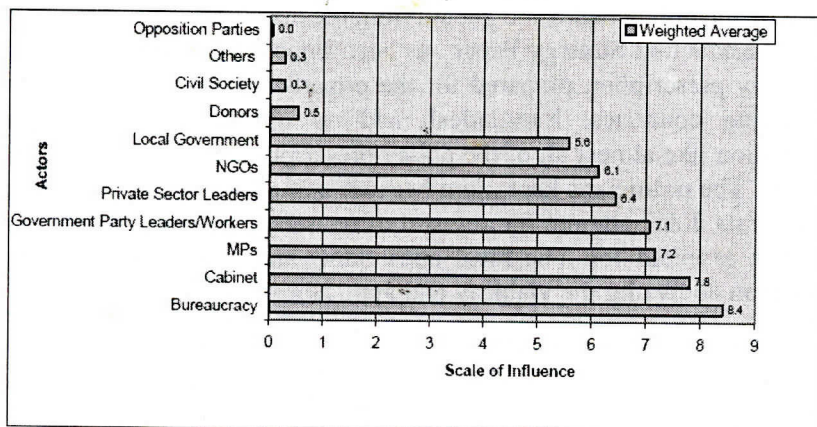


Figure: Influential actors in Policy formulation

Source: Study conducted by CPD, 2000

The other study conducted by Aminuzzaman (2007) was about assessing the views of senior level bureaucrats on the role of the donors relating to the policy reform in Bangladesh. From that study the observations made are:

- a. Views of the members of public bureaucracy/professional are not duly recognized and or appreciated by the donors.
- b. Donor assigned international and national consultants take a lead role in setting the reform agenda.

- c. Political leadership plays a weak/inactive role in setting the policy guidance or reform agenda.

Members of bureaucracy and policymakers as well as managers of the economy usually complain against the harshness of the donors' reform proposals and they observed that because of political constraints as well as lack of effective institutional capacities, the pace and outcome of reform has been weaker than actually committed to the donors (ibid).

#### NGOs, Multilateral Agencies and Foreign Aid:

In contrast to the professional classes, Bangladesh's large and growing NGO constituency is emerging as a much more potent force in the aid relationship (Sobhan, 2004, 161). The NGOs has attained in such an alternative image for receiving the foreign aid that to some extent government have to lag behind in this respect. The NGOs are now one of the prime beneficiaries of the foreign aid in Bangladesh. Large portion of foreign aid is allocated for the NGOs in Bangladesh. To some extent they are acting on behalf of the donors in this country. For most of the programmes ranging from non-formal education to health care, nutrition, skill development, etc., aid plays a crucial role even for the big NGOs (ibid). So the human resources working in the NGO sector can be categorized as one of the most aid dependent portion of the country. They are playing the role of poverty alleviator, which perpetuates the dependence on foreign aid.

#### The Nexus and Foreign Direct Investment:

Alam and Hossain (Monash University Working Paper) mentioned the impact of the nexus between bureaucracy, politics and business on foreign direct investment. The paper observes that the powerful but ineffective bureaucracy is one of the main deterrents of foreign direct investment and also argued that it is possible due to the close link between politics and bureaucracy in Bangladesh. However, the nexus between politics, bureaucracy, and domestic and foreign businesses is a feature in the economy, which does not allow the country to link with the global economy, as policy reforms fail to work through corruption (ibid). This paper has mentioned earlier that the investment environment for the foreign investors has been created at the behest of the multilateral agencies and donors. But the investment scenario couldn't further improved due to the constant failure of establishing some environment desired by the foreign investors.



In mentioning the role of multilateral organization and donors in corruption an foreign direct investment Alam and Hossain identifies that aid of donor countries could increase corrupt practices through misuse of funds from the parts of both donor agencies and recipient countries and through the collusion of both parties (Cooksey, 2000 cited in Alam and Hossain). While explaining the liberal FDI regime of Bangladesh Alam an Hossain (ibid) mentioned that the FDI regime as a part of its trade liberalization process, has largely resulted from the pressure of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and some donors through the structural adjustment program (SAP).

Alam and Hossain also expressed the concern about mentioning corruption from the World Bank perspective in the following way:

However, the World Bank, other multilateral organizations and aid agencies could not suddenly blame Bangladesh for corruption and deny their responsibility for promoting corruption in Bangladesh and other developing countries. It could be argued that multilateral organizations and aid agencies are now implementing governance-related strategies which they could have initiated before their wholehearted endeavor to ensure trade liberalization. Last things came first in the mistaken strategies of donor agencies, which were implemented through loans and grants to developing countries in spite of their governance problems.

The nexus between politics, business and bureaucracy is nurturing corrupt practices and the indifference of multilateral organizations in addressing corruption factors thereby fortified corruption (ibid).

#### Changed Scenario of the Relationship and Influence:

Sobhan (2004,160) argues that the class of aid intermediaries remain alive and well even today as those were in the 80s. A large number of aid financed capital-intensive infrastructure development projects in such areas as power, telecommunications, transport, irrigation, water supply and sewerage provide opportunities for earning significant commissions from aid financed infrastructure projects (ibid). The trading and industrial bourgeoisie, who were one of the main beneficiaries of aid, have now moved on to the ranks of the trade-dependent classes. The commission agents and construction contractors, who used to benefit from aid still remains intact. However, the social and political influence of this class is no longer as significant as it was in the 1980s because of the growth in the contribution and influence of the trade dependent bourgeoisie.

Sobhan (2004, 163) further argues that the other significant and growing group of aid beneficiaries from the NGOs and professional community are as yet not significant political players in Bangladesh. The public as well as political position of this class, where it is declared, tends to be somewhat inimical to DP influence, if not aid. Those segments of this community who do take public positions on policy issues have tended to be supportive of greater self-reliance in our development strategies as well as greater autonomy in our policy choices. They are in some cases quite hostile to development partner driven policy agendas. Sobhan (2004, 164) also stated that those NGOs and professionals are a bit cautious about expressing their opinion in public about the development partners due to their dependence for institutional survival.

Sobhan (2004, 166-168) in concluding part expressed that, as things today, development partner-recipient relations remain publicly cordial but discordant in practice. The successive regimes in Bangladesh privately feel and occasionally publicly state that the development partners have no business lecturing them about governance and particularly the politics. At the same time the regimes are unwilling to challenge the right of the development partners to introduce such issues into the development discourse. They are incorporating different governance issues in which Bangladesh have failed according to them, with the term of availability of the aid. The contradictory proposition here is that they are not postponing the aid on the ground of failure to meet the governance parameters. In some occasions they stopped the disbursement. But it never perpetuates. Bangladesh in its course was also not showing the desire to fulfill those terms and conditions provided by the donors at the time of the loan signing the agreement.

Terming this situation as flawed one (Sobhan, 2004) it has been argued that it is less apparent how the development partners will expect to seek compliance from the GoB in the areas of governance and politics. Sobhan recollects

That at the end of the 1970s quite a number of development partners stopped aid to Vietnam after it invaded Cambodia in order to overthrow the Pol Pot regime. In sharp contrast, no development partners suspended aid to Tanzania when it invaded Uganda to overthrow Idi Amin regime. This contradiction in development partner practice is worth pointing out because their intervention in rather murky world of politics, security and

strategic concerns remains a grey area riddled with subjectivity and overridden with double standards.

In such circumstances the development partners of Bangladesh should spell out a global policy on these issues before they develop a specific policy towards Bangladesh as to what they may do about malgovernance and dysfunctional democracy (ibid).

Consequent effect of World Community's and donor's step in formation of Environmental policy and legal regime of Bangladesh:

This paper has already identified the pervasive contribution and influence of the multilateral agencies donors and world community in policy formulation of Bangladesh. This paper now intends to bring some light on the policy intervention and integration of the environmental issues in the policy making arena of Bangladesh where the world community and the donors have contributed equally.

Increasing awareness of resource degradation and pollution has formed a new and complicated cross-sectoral challenge to development policy and aid programmes and the bilateral as well as multilateral development community has had to address pressing environmental concerns, and adjust organizations and policies to new demands and expectations relating to the nature of development assistance (Laugen, T & Lunde, L., 1996).

The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), more popularly known as the Brundtland Report, had a strong influence in shaping the development and the environmental activities in Bangladesh (Khan and Belal, 1999:312). The increased importance to environmental issues can be measured from the establishment of the separate ministry for the environment with forest and forming the department of environment in 1989 (ibid).

The Task Force report of 1991 contained the suggestion and recommendation on different measures to strengthen the environmental institutions and legislation (Task Force Report 1991 cited in Khan and Belal, 1999:312).

K. Alam (2005) mentioned that during the 1990s, there was considerable progress in Bangladesh regarding the formulation of environmental policies and strategies. Much of this development resulted from the signing of different International Conventions, Treaties and Protocols



(ICTPs) and the overwhelming emphasis on environmental issues by the global community. So far Bangladesh has signed a significant number of ICTPs that include environmental considerations. Some noteworthy milestones framing policies and strategies, include: Environmental Policy 1992, National Environment Management Action Plan 1995, Environment Conservation Act 1995, Environment Conservation Rules (ECR) 1997, Environment Court Act 2000, and Environment Conservation Act (Amendment) 2002. A new ministry named the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF) was established and the Department of Environment (DOE) was upgraded in 1989. Despite these achievements, little progress has been made in the area of integrating environmental concerns into policy-making (ibid).

Environmental issues from donors perspective was incorporated in the reform agenda of the nineties. The list of reform suggested by the donors included the provision for environmental impact assessment of major new projects during the Fourth Five-Year Plan, and strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Environment which is considered as fallout of the Rio conference on the Global Environment (Syeduzzaman, 2004).

Following this course the environmental issues have been integrated into the development agenda in Bangladesh. In 1992, the Government made provisions for 'environmental scrutiny' of all development projects, which mandates input from the Ministry of Environment and Forest during project appraisals in the Planning Commission. Almost all of the contemporary international environmental movements by the international community in the form of signing conventions, protocols and treaties are assented by the country. Though the environmental performance of the country is not satisfactory from the part of compliance and remained in mere enactments, the issue of environment has been started to be considered in designing the development activities in the country. Through the interaction and compulsion by the development partners and the international organization for environmental movements the environmental policy issues has now gained its prominence in development literature.

### Conclusion:

It is evident from the literatures available on the political economy of the aid and on the nexus between multilateral agencies and their national facilitators, that the situation has been improving gradually though not in a considerable pace. Still many sectors of the divergent stakeholders have the same relation and stake keeping the motive of private gain and ignoring the interest of the country, with the multilateral agencies and donors. Some times it has been turned into the state of portraying the country as the perpetual dependent on their assistance, apart from achieving some of the successes in the field of reducing dependency. But the nexus persists in the form of metamorphosing and transforming of the class into new shape and dimension.

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## Food Security in Bangladesh: Role of Public Policies

Md. Kamrul Hasan\*

**Abstract:** Ensuring food security for a huge population in Bangladesh with scarce land and limited resources is largely dependent on increasing domestic food production, proper management of food grain coupled with effective population control. Although the country has made good progress in increasing rice production through technological improvement and the supply of subsidized agricultural inputs; but the growing number of always create pressure on the increasing production. Again domestic food production is very frequently damaged by the natural calamities lead to sudden shortfall in food grain production. Inadequate production of food grain hampers the proper stock management of the government to run the social safety net program. As still 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, income inequality is prevalent; lack of proper management of food is distinct, growth of population is continuing, so any sort of mismanagement and price hiking hits the poorest, landless household severely. In this situation the present study assesses the current trends of food security in Bangladesh both at micro and macro level. The study identifies the factors addressing food insecurity in Bangladesh and suggests the role of government policies in ensuring food security of the citizen.

### 1.0 Introduction

Despite some commendable progress in several development indicators like reducing population growth and child mortality rate, achieving gender and urban-rural parity in primary education, coping with natural disasters, doubling the food grain production compared to the decade of 1970s and pro-poor changes in different policies related to food and agriculture, ensuring safe and nutritious food for all is still great concern for the government of Bangladesh. Due to pervasive poverty, 40.4 percent of the total population cannot afford an adequate diet necessary for an active and healthy life (BBS: 2007:7). Again the typical rural diet in Bangladesh is repeatedly not well balanced. The main food in Bangladesh is cereals, largely rice. Nearly two thirds of the daily diet consists of rice, vegetables, a little amount of pulses and small quantities of fish. Milk,

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milk products and meat are consumed occasionally in very small amount. Fruit consumption is seasonal and includes mainly papaya and banana (FAO: 2007:1). To address the issue of balanced diet and to ensure minimum food for all, government of Bangladesh has taken initiatives formulating and implementing different policies. In view of the facts, the current study attempts to identify the areas where and how food security of the citizens is being hampered, how it can be achieved and what role public policies can play in ensuring food security in Bangladesh. The suggestions of this study will hopefully help attaining food sufficiency and to ensure food security in Bangladesh.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

To ensure the food security of the poor, the issue of addressing hunger has been repeatedly articulated in various national, regional and international forums. The right to food has been incorporated in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh as a fundamental principle. Article 15(a) of the Constitution of Bangladesh says that 'It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the state to attain ... basic necessities of life, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care...'. To comply with the constitutional obligations, the Government of Bangladesh has formulated different policies like National Agriculture Policy, National Food Policy, and Disaster Management Policy etc. and to implement policies different programs like Poverty Alleviation Programs, Public Food Distribution System (PFDS) etc. have been taken. Along with other policies National Food Policy, 2006 has been formulated with the objectives of ensuring availability of sufficient, safe and nutritious food; ensuring accessibility of food with the increase of purchasing power of the people; and ensuring nutrition for all especially for women and children. Accordingly Government has adopted United Nations Millennium Development Goal in 2000 targeting to halve the proportion of people who suffers from hunger between 1990 and 2015 (World Bank Group: 2003: 2) with the implementation of National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (NSAPR). With the present reality sudden increase in global food prices have triggered a wide variety of policy responses around the world. So, ensuring food security has become a great concern for the policy makers of Bangladesh.

### **1.2 Objectives**

The objective of the study focuses:



- To explore the current status of food security in Bangladesh on the basis of availability, accessibility and utilization of food; and
- To identify the role of public policies in ensuring food security.

### 1.3 Methodology

Research has been conducted on the basis of both quantitative as well as qualitative data. Both primary and secondary data were used for the purpose of the study. As secondary sources of data different books, journals, survey reports, articles from daily newspapers, periodicals and websites have been consulted. As a policy research different government policies related to food and nutrition have been consulted. Primary data has been collected through a semi-structured questionnaire. For collection of primary data 50 families were randomly selected from two villages namely Kustia Namapara and Putiali of Sadar upazila under the district of Mymensingh. Data have been processed and analyzed by using MS Excel. To get the overall status of food security in Bangladesh secondary data has been analyzed on the basis of time series data based on different HIES report. Due to time and resource constraint primary data have been collected only from two small villages of Mymensingh district namely Kustia Namapara and Putiali.

### 1.4 Organization of the Paper

The paper is prepared under six sections. Section one is Introduction which includes background of the study, objectives, methodology and organization of the paper. Section two contains literature review, section three is written on the conceptual framework, section four discusses about the current status of food security in Bangladesh. Section five identifies the factors affecting food security followed by role of public policies in ensuring food security with recommendation and conclusion.

### 2.0 Literature Review

A number of books, journals, reports presented in different conferences, seminars and articles published in dailies and periodicals related to food security have been consulted to conduct the study. A report entitled Food 2000: Global Policies for Sustainable Agriculture published by World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) depicts on world regional food production that gave emphasis on the factors of agricultural production with some suggestions as action points for ensuring sustainable food and livelihood security. The book suggests the ways of government intervention for sustainable livelihood security.

Another work titled *Food Security in South Asia* written by Dr. B. M. Bhatia discussed on the food security problem of the countries of South Asia individually as well as of the region as a whole in the perspective of international effort at building a world food security system (Bhatia: 1985:43). He has suggested a plan of action on world food security by adopting food grain stock policies, special arrangement for food security assistance and collective self-reliance of developing countries with increased agricultural growth, ensuring distribution of agricultural inputs, exchange of technical education and training facilities, managing pest as well as increasing regional cooperation for joint development of water, power and other resources essential for agricultural development.

Alan G. Smith (1997) in his book titled *Human Rights and Choice in Poverty: Food Insecurity, Dependency, and Human Rights Based Development Aid for the Third World Rural Poor in Bangladesh* chapter titled as 'The Scope of Food Supply and Health Care Insecurity in Bangladesh: Calorie intake and malnutrition' the author mentioned about the geo-climatic circumstances of Bangladesh favorable to agriculture. He mentioned about the problem of rural poverty and food insecurity of Bangladesh with available data of daily calorie intake based on different HES. Leather and Foster (2005) in their book titled *The World Food Problem-Tackling the Causes of under nutrition in the Third World* illustrates the causes and effects of under nutrition and related policies. Felix W. Charles (1987) in his book titled *Food Protection Technology* mainly focuses on the utilization of food based current and protected technologies for food protection.

Ahmad in his work titled *Towards Ensuring Food Security in Bangladesh* has dealt with wide range of issues relating to food insecurity in Bangladesh including the nature and magnitude of the problem, the way its resolution may be approached, the constraints faced and how those may be addressed, and the need for social mobilization and community empowerment for solving the problem (Ahmad: 2001: 161-181). Hossain et al. (2005) in their study on 'Food Security and Nutrition in Bangladesh: Progress and Determinants' mentioned that Bangladesh has made good progress in increasing rice production through technological progress facilitated by private sector investment in small scale irrigation. The paper assesses the trends in factors that affect food production, availability of food and their impact on nutrition outcomes. He has suggested for policy measures to enhance food security with the review of Agricultural Policies with the increased access to food through market.

Talukder (2005) in his article titled 'Food Security, Self-sufficiency and Nutrition Gap in Bangladesh examined the status of food security and self-sufficiency of Bangladesh using both time series and cross section data. He has suggested for the elimination of nutrition gap with different sorts of food intervention programs with the existing programs.

A report published by FAO in 2008 on 'The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2008' focuses on high prices, which are having a serious impact on the poorest populations in the world, drastically reducing their already low purchasing power. They mentioned that high prices of food have increased the level of food deprivation specially the poor people of the world.

In view of the above discussion it is found that some have made importance on increasing food grain production; some argued for fair distribution, some has made importance on sufficient stock of food grain with targeted intervention as a Social Safety Net Program (SSNP). So, food security as a multidisciplinary issue draws attention to be addressed from various aspects of policy measures.

### 3.0 Conceptual Framework

The concept of food security has evolved over a period of time. Until 1970s, emphasis was placed on food self-sufficiency at the national level, principally through domestic production. In 1974, World Food Conference added another dimension to food security when it emphasized, apart from the overall availability, stability of food supplies within and over the years.

In 1985 Anderson, J. R. and J. A. Roumasset have developed a series of inequalities for conceptualizing the risk of food insecurity on a national scale (Anderson and Romumasset: 1985). By adapting these inequalities to the household level, we can better understand the concept of food security as well as what delivers the risk of food insecurity to a household. According to them the equation is:

Value of food production deficit in a household (HH)  $\leq$  Income  
and liquid assets available to purchase food

In its simplest form, the food security equation compares the value of the food production deficit in a household with the income and liquid assets that household has available to purchase food. The left-hand side of the equation can be factored into two components, the food purchase



requirement and the price of food, for the value of the food production deficit is the product of these two variables. So the equation can be rewritten as follows:

$$\text{Food purchase requirement} \times \text{Price of food} \leq \text{Income and liquid assets available to purchase food}$$

In case of above equation the household's food purchased requirement can be shown as the difference between household (HH) food consumption requirement and HH production. Again we can rewrite the equation as follows:

$$\{\text{HH food consumption requirement} - \text{HH food production}\} \times \text{Price of food} \leq \text{Income and liquid assets available to purchase food}$$

For any given family, to the extent that we can adopt policies to assure that the left-hand side of the above equation is smaller than the right-hand side, we will reduce the risk of food insecurity. From the above equation it is clear that household food security is dependant on families' ownership of land, the quantity and quality of technology and capital available, how this technology and capital are used, and a set of government incentives and disincentives which includes tariffs, taxes, price controls and subsidies to agricultural and purchased inputs. With the production of food prices of food, income and liquid assets of the households also determines the food security of the family. The price of food is influenced by amount of food demanded, quantity produced, the size of the population as well as the per capita income and the tastes and preferences of consumers. The income and liquid assets positions of a household is the result of complex factors, among them education of its members, its capital position, its land position, its employment opportunities, attitude towards work, the cost of transportation to and from work, health and tendency to savings.

With above discussion the term food security is defined by different authors differently. Reutlinger and his colleagues defined the term Food Security as 'access by all people at all times to enough food needed for an active and healthy life, its essential elements are the availability of food and the ability to acquire it' (Reutlinger: 1986:3).

Amartya Sen (1981) has mentioned the term 'entitlements' to refer to an individual's ability to acquire food. Sen points out that hunger can exist when there are not food shortages in the aggregate. In this framework,

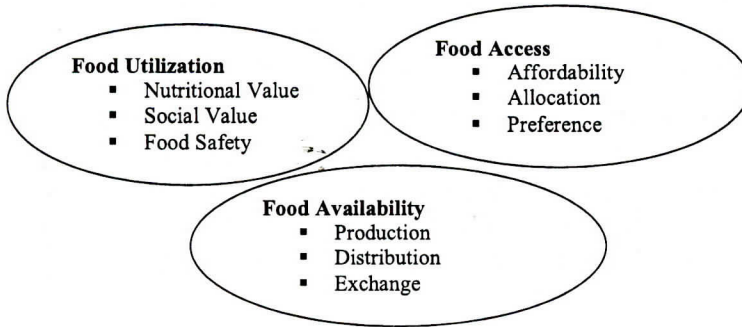
hunger can be seen as 'entitlement failure' - the failure of a person to assert an entitlement right to a quantity of food large enough to provide adequate nutrition. Production, income and price all work together in defining a person's entitlement; and entitlement depends on social, political and cultural systems in which the person lives.

The Plan of Action of the World Food Summit, 1996 defines 'Food Security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'. Thus food security is defined as availability, access, and utilization by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.

Availability of food depends on the domestic production, food import or export and food aid, security stock, exchange of food and the efficiency of distribution through market and other channels. Of these, domestic production is the major concern to ensure availability at both national and household level. The critical factors which influences the availability of food is the number of total population, population growth, per capita consumption of food and utilization of food grain for further production preserved as seed and losses of food grain due to some obvious reasons like floods, droughts, cyclones and other natural calamities like saline water intrusion in the coastal areas etc. Even availability is ensured household's income, government transfers, assistance from relatives and friends; remittance from abroad and assistance from (Non Government Organization) NGOs, lack of purchasing power, intra household disparity in food allocation, landlessness, seasonal unemployment of agricultural labor, poor wages, rising inflation, depreciation of taka against dollar at different times, improper functioning of market, unholy alliances of business syndicates and inadequate budgetary allocation to SSNP are affecting accessibility to food.

Utilization of food is determined by intra household food allocation, dietary habit, storage, processing and cooking practices, food preferences as well as knowledge on health and sanitation.

The components of food security mentioned above corroborates with the description of the Global Environmental Change and Food Systems (GECAFS) shown in diagram 1. The diagram indicates the complexity of food system with three main factors namely availability, access and utilization with some sub components, all are very much related to its security.

**Fig. 1: Components of food system with their main elements**

Source: Ingram *et al.* (2005)

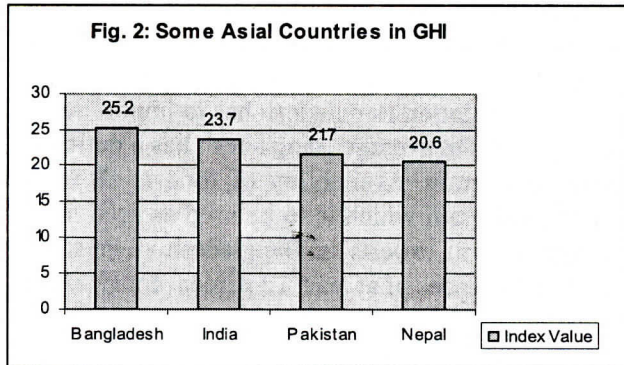
#### 4.0 Current Trends of Food Security

In an agrarian economy like Bangladesh domestic production has an important role to play in the quest for food security. But the natural calamities like recurrent floods, droughts, cyclones, tornados, tidal surges, river bank erosions, water logging and salinity hampers domestic food production very frequently. Despite such barriers domestic production has been increased reasonably. With increased productivity further improvements on access to food and utilization is essential. In view of this the current status of food security in Bangladesh is being described in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) standard, domestic food production, food import and food aid, food and calorie intake, pattern of food intake, households income and expenditure, share of food expenditure, households entitlement to land, fluctuation of prices, share of public expenditure, population growth, prevalence of undernourishment and infant mortality both from micro and macro level.

##### 4.1 Food Security in GHI Standard

Recently the world is suffering from chronic hunger mostly living in Asia and African countries. Among the 832 million chronically hungry people of the world 65 percent is living in only seven countries: India, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ethiopia (FAO: 2008:12). International Food Policy Research Institute (IFRI) states that Bangladesh is one of the 33 risky countries regarding food insecurity. According to IFRI the degree of food insecurity in some Asian countries as measured in the GHI is shown in figure 2.





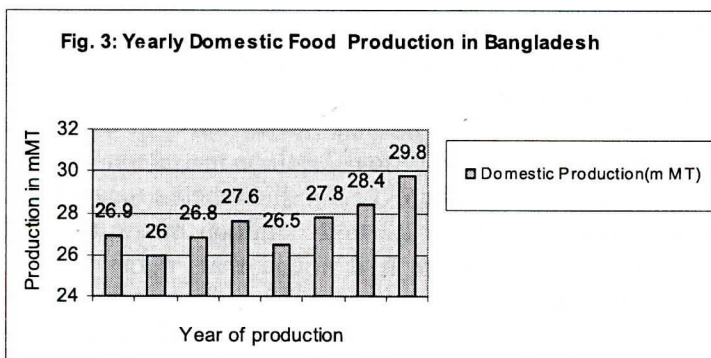
Source: International Food Policy Research Institute, 2008.

Among the food insecure countries with 25.2 points Bangladesh is at 70th position and among the 25 malnourished Asian countries Bangladesh is in 18th position (Khan: 2008:3).

#### 4.2 Availability of food

Availability of food is determined by domestic production in addition to the amount of food import and food aid.

Domestic food production: In spite of doubling the domestic food production over the last three decades, Bangladesh is still a food deficit country. At present food grain requirement in Bangladesh has been estimated at about 32 million metric tons. Against this in 2007-2008 production was 29.7 million metric tons (BBS: 2008-2009). Trends of food production are shown in Figure 3.



Source: Self compiled from BBS 2006 and BBS 2008-09

In 2000-01 the domestic production of food grain was 26.9 million metric tons and in 2005-06 the domestic production of food grain was 27.8 million metric tons. The increase was only 0.9 million metric tons. But due to increasing population Bangladesh has to import 0.4 million metric tons more every year. On average Bangladesh has a deficit of 1-2 million metric tons of food grain. Availability of food is also affected by the preservation of food grain which is to be used as seed in the next year's production. Agricultural experts in Bangladesh suggest seed, feed and wastage (SFW) allowances of at least 12 percent for rice and wheat in the country (Talukder: 2005:38).

Food import and food aid: Despite increase in domestic production mainly of cereals Bangladesh still is heavily dependant on imports of all food items to meet the demand for growing population. Except shrimp export, Bangladesh is the net importer of all food items. The long term trend of import of major food items is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Trends of imports of major food items (000 tons)

| Food Item  | 1980-82 | 1990-92 | 1999-01 | 2005-06 |
|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Rice       | 295     | 140     | 872     | 543     |
| Wheat      | 1366    | 1413    | 1969    | 1249    |
| Pulses     | 3       | 113     | 245     | -       |
| Milk       | 211     | 291     | 334     | 56      |
| Edible Oil | 104     | 297     | 904     | 687     |

Source: FAO: 2004, Food Balance Sheet and BBS: 2007 a: 276

Table 1 shows an upward trend of import of major food items over the time. The import of rice remains stagnant at around 0.5 million metric tons per year, with substantial amount of wheat import. In the year 1980-82 the average volume of wheat import was 1.4 million metric tons which increased in 2000-01 to 2.0 million metric tons. In a normal year, Bangladesh imports rice from 0.3 to 0.7 million metric tons but in year of natural calamities it increases up to 1.5 million metric tons. On the other hand, wheat import is around 1.7 to 2.1 million metric tons (Mandal: 2009). From the above figure it is found that in the year 2006-07 Bangladesh imported rice and wheat of 2.3 million metric tons and in 2007-08 imported 3.5 million metric tons of food grains following two floods and cyclone Sidre in 2007. The other food items for which imports have been growing very fast are pulses, milk and edible oil. The volume of import of pulses was 3 thousand metric tons in 1980-82 which has

raised to 245 thousand metric tons in 1999-2001. In 1980-82 the volume of milk import was 211 thousand metric tons which has increased to 334 thousand metric tons in 1999-01 and then fallen continuously to 2004-05 remaining at 56 thousand metric tons. Increase in import of edible oil has been growing faster. In 1980-82 the volume of import of edible oil was 104 thousand metric tons which has increased to 904 thousand metric tons. In the early years of independence, the country faced major food deficits, most of which was taken care of through grain imports from the United States under the PL 480 program. Between 1975 and 1977, more than 1.3 million metric tons of food grains came into Bangladesh as food aid, which was more than 85 of the total inflow of food grain (Shahabuddin et al.:2005:108).

#### 4.3 Access to food

Access to food is discussed on the basis of the household's entitlement of land, level of poverty of the household, household's income and expenditure and the distribution of income both at micro and macro level on the basis of primary and secondary data.

Household's entitlement of land: The entitlement of food based on household's own production would depend on the access to land. Percentage share of population below the poverty line by size of owned land in rural areas is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Share of poor population by size of owned land in rural area

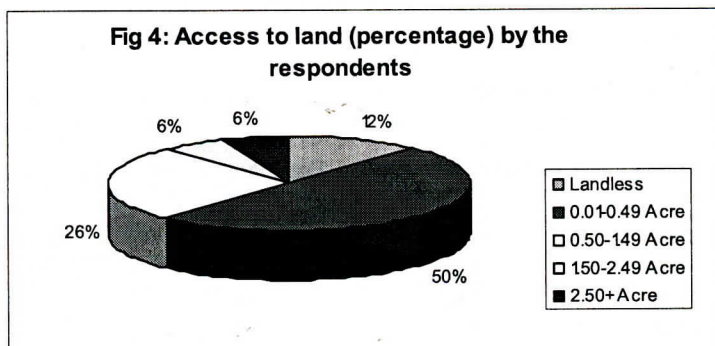
| Size of land owned (Acre) | <2122 K. cal<br>Absolute poverty | <1805 K. cal<br>Hardcore poverty | <1600 K. cal<br>Ultra poverty |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2005                      |                                  |                                  |                               |
| Landless                  | 59.57                            | 33.15                            | 15.26                         |
| 0.01-0.49                 | 47.87                            | 23.61                            | 9.57                          |
| 0.50-1.49                 | 36.97                            | 14.52                            | 4.60                          |
| 1.50-2.49                 | 32.10                            | 11.19                            | 3.59                          |
| 2.50-7.49                 | 23.35                            | 7.32                             | 1.61                          |
| 7.50+                     | 12.34                            | 5.45                             | 2.74                          |
| 2000                      |                                  |                                  |                               |
| Landless                  | 55.9                             | 27.8                             | 15.6                          |
| 0.01-0.49                 | 48.7                             | 23.4                             | 9.1                           |
| 0.50-1.49                 | 37.7                             | 14.9                             | 6.1                           |
| 1.50-2.49                 | 31.1                             | 9.5                              | 1.8                           |
| 2.50-7.49                 | 25.3                             | 8.2                              | 2.5                           |
| 7.50+                     | 15.2                             | 2.7                              | 1.7                           |

Source: BBS: 2007:75



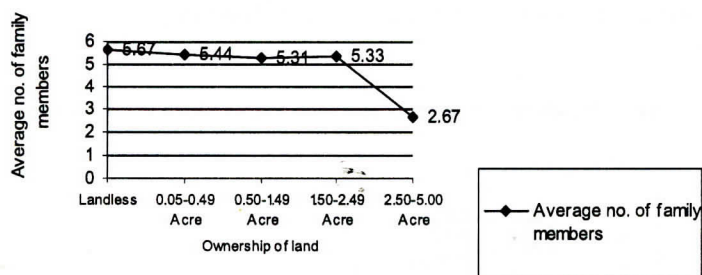
Table 2 shows the information on absolute poverty, hardcore poverty and ultra-poverty by the size of owned land in rural area. All the three parameters show a strong negative correlation with the size of the land owned in 2005 and in 2000. It shows that the hardcore poverty increased but ultra-poverty decreased for the landless in 2005 over the year 2000. It also shows that except for the range of land owned 0.50-1.49 acre, hardcore poverty increased for all other cases in 2005 over 2000. But in case of ultra poor it varies for different ranges of land owned people. In case of landless it has decreased in 2005 over 2000. But in case of 0.01-0.49 acre, 1.50-2.49 acre and 7.50 acre intensity of ultra poverty has increased in 2005 over 2000. At the same time it has decreased for the range of land owned from 0.50-1.49 acre and 2.50-7.49 acre. In case of absolute poverty it has increased among the landless, but decreased among the people holding land of 7.50 acres and above in 2005 over 2000.

Level of poverty has a direct relation with the access to asset base mainly access to land. The possession of land on the basis of primary data is shown in figure 4. The figure shows that among the respondents 12 percent families are landless, 50 percent have only 0.05 to 0.49 acres of land, 26 percent have 0.50 to 1.49 acres of land, 6 percent have 1.50 to 2.49 acres of land and another 6 percent have a land of 2.50 to 5.00 acres.



Generally in Bangladesh against the poor possession of land, average size of the households is large. Statistics show that average household size of Bangladesh is 4.9 and the average size of the household in Mymensingh district is 4.6 (BBS: 2007a:88, 89). But in the study area the size of the average household was more than that of both national and district average. Average size of the household in the surveyed area was 5.28. The average family members and the possession of land are shown in figure 5. The figure shows that families with less area of land have more population.

**Fig. 5 : Average no. of family members by the ownership of land**



It is found that landless families have average population of 5.67; where as, families with 2.50- 5.00 acres of land have average population of 2.67. The amount of food intake by the ownership of land is shown in figure 6.

**Figure 6: Average per capita per day food intake(gram)by the ownership of land**

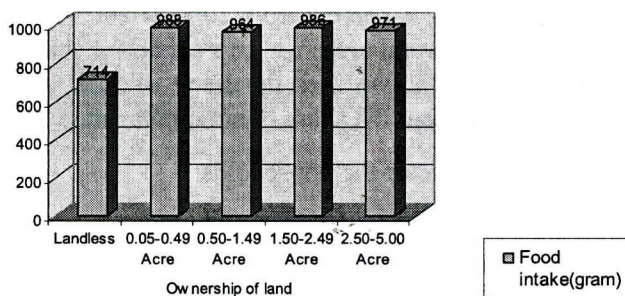
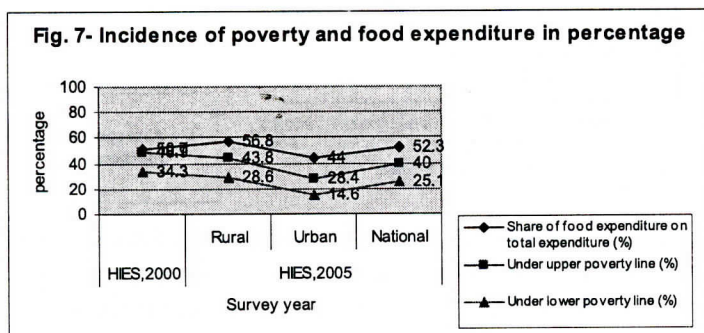


Figure shows that families with less area of land having large number of family members suffer from food insecurity. On average landless can intake only 714 gram per capita per day against the recommended level of 934 gram per capita per day. The rest of the groups' intake is more than the recommended level but imbalanced due to high intake of carbohydrates. The above statement also corroborates with the national food intake by different area of land owned group. National statistics shows that among the landless 59.57 percent are absolute poor, 33.15 percent are hardcore poor and 15.26 percent are ultra poor where as among the highest land owner group only 12.34 percent are absolute poor, 5.45 percent are hardcore poor and 2.74 percent are ultra poor respectively.

Poverty and food expenditure: Level of poverty indicates the status of household's access to food with the share of food expenditure. The level of incidence of poverty with the share of food expenditure is shown in Figure 7.



Source: Self Compiled based on HIES, 2005

The figure shows that the share of food expenditure has been increased from 50.7 percent to 56.8 percent from 2000 to 2005. In 2005, the share of food expenditure in rural areas was more than the share of expenditure in the national and in urban area the share of food expenditure is 44 percent which is less than the share of national average.

Income and expenditure of the households:

The access to food is largely determined by the income and expenditure of the household and the disparity in the share of income and expenditure is determined with the use of Gini Co-efficient. The more the value of Gini Co-efficient the more inequality exists. The trends of income inequality from 1983 to 2005 is shown in table 3

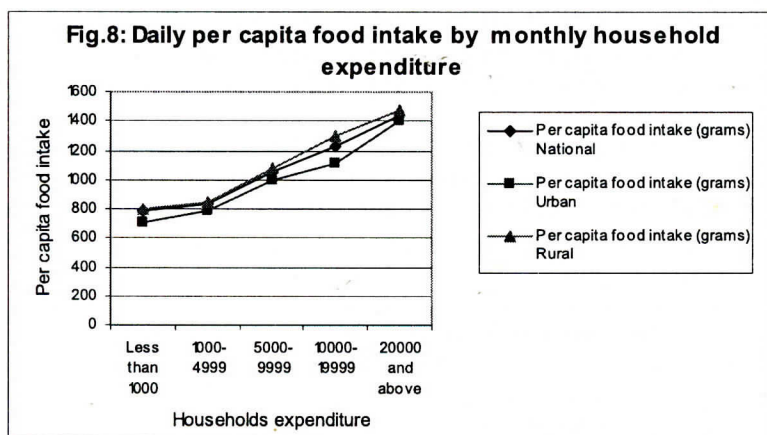
Table 3: Income Gini Co-efficient from 1983-2005

| Year of Survey | Income Gini Co-efficient |       |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------|
|                | Rural                    | Urban |
| 1983-84        | 0.246                    | 0.298 |
| 1988-89        | 0.265                    | 0.326 |
| 1995-96        | 0.384                    | 0.444 |
| 2000           | 0.393                    | 0.497 |
| 2005           | 0.428                    | 0.497 |

Source: BBS: 2007:28 and BBS: 2003:21



Table 3 shows that incomes are highly unequally distributed and have been worsening day by day. The concentration of income, as measured by Gini co-efficient, was estimated 0.246 for rural areas and 0.298 for urban areas in 1983. As compared to 1983-84, in 2005 the percentage of Gini co-efficient in rural areas has increased to 74 percent and in urban areas it has increased to 67 percent. In 2000 the lowest 5 percent people had 0.93 percent of income which has decreased in 2005 at 0.77 percent. In 2005 the top 5 percent had 26.93 percent of total income, where as lower 5 percent had 0.77 percent share of total income(BBS: 2007: 28). With the above mentioned inequality average per capita per day food intake by monthly household expenditure groups is shown in figure 8. The figure shows that per capita per day food consumption of the lowest expenditure group was about half of the consumption of the highest expenditure group for rural, urban and national level. At rural level the gap of per capita per day food intake between the lowest and highest level is 679 grams per capita per day which in urban area is 696 grams. At national level, the lowest expenditure group of less than Tk.1000 per household per month is consuming only 788 grams per capita per day compared to 1432 grams per capita per day consumed by the highest expenditure group. Thus, inequality of consuming food by different expenditure groups leading to malnutrition as well as obesity for the lowest and highest expenditure groups respectively.



Source: Self compiled from BBS: 2007: 303,304

Due to pervasive poverty with low asset base and low income most of the households spend more than their income which is shown in figure 9.

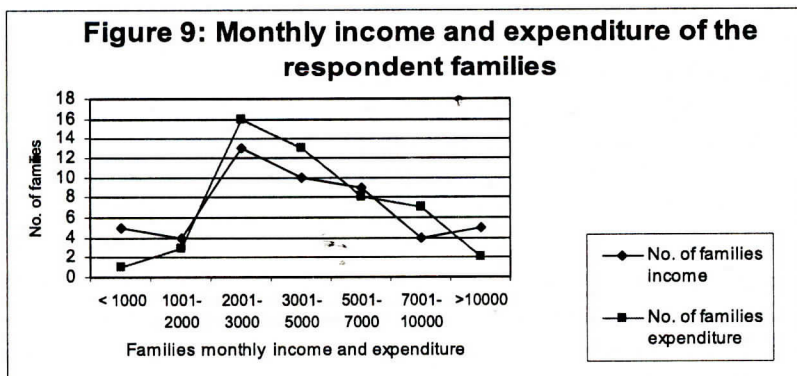
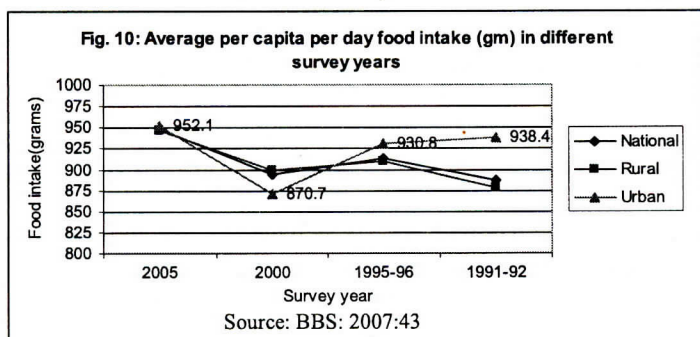
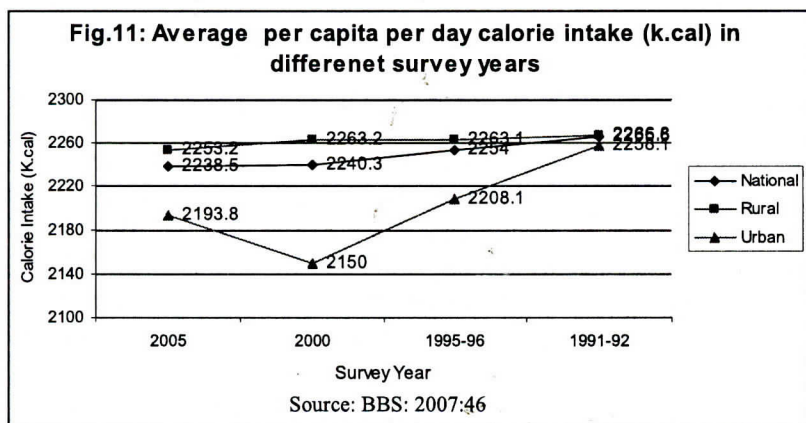


Figure shows that most of the families spend more than their monthly income. Only families in the income group less than 1000, 1001-2000, 5001-7000 and more than 10000 spend less than their monthly income, but their number in the surveyed people is less. It indicates that as many of the families are spending more than income, so they are not able to purchase enough food as they required. Due to weak purchasing power families with less income suffer more from food insecurity. Using the equation of Anderson and Roumasset we can say families with bigger left hand side than the right hand side are food insecure. It indicates that food purchased requirement of these families are more than their income and liquid assets available to purchase food. At the same time price hike at different periods both at national and international market makes the left hand side more unequal. As a result the people of mid-income group are the most vulnerable to food insecurity in the rural area of Bangladesh.

**Food and calorie intake:** Consumption of food and nutrient indicates the status of food security of different socio-economic group of people. Data of different HIES is presented in figure 10 and 11 to show the pattern of food and calorie intake respectively for rural, urban and national level from 1991-92 to 2005.



In 2005 at national level the average consumption were 947.8 grams per capita per day which was 893.1, 913.8 and 886.2 grams per capita per day in 2000, 1995-96 and 1991-92 respectively. The survey years shows an uprising trend of food intake from 1991-92 to 2005 except for the year 2000. In 1991-92 the consumption of food at rural level was 878.1 grams per capita per day which rises to 946.3 grams per capita per day in 2005. In urban area in 1991-92 the average per capita per day food intake was 938.4 grams which rises to 952.1 grams per capita per day in 2005. Food intake at national level per capita per day has increased by 6.12 percent in 2005 over 2000. Figure 11 shows that at national level average calorie intake was 2238.5 k. cal in 2005 which was 2240.3 k. cal, 2254.0 k. cal. and 2265.6 k. cal. in 2000, 1995-96 and 1991-92 respectively.



The rural pattern of calorie intake is mostly similar to that noticed at the national level. It was 2253.2 k. cal. in 2005, 2263.2 k. cal. in 2000, 2263.1 k. cal. in 1995-96 and 2266.8 k. cal. in 1991-92. It is clear that calorie intake has been reduced from 1991-92 to 2005 both at national and rural level. In urban area, the intake of calorie shows ups and downs over the periods. The graph shows the downward trends of urban calorie intake from 1991-92 to 2000 and again in 2005 it shows the upward trend of calorie intake which reaches to 2193.8 k. cal. Although the average calorie intake was always more than standard of 2122 k. cal. set by FAO, but income disparity among the rich and poor severely affect the food security of the country as a whole especially of the poor. As amount of food intake is one of the most important indicators of food security, so, in response to a question either they get sufficient food or not, 68 percent said they can afford three meals a day and 32 percent said they can afford



only two meals a day. It corroborates with the data that nearly 40 percent of the total population are the hardest victim of food insecurity. Average food intake by different occupation is shown in figure 12.

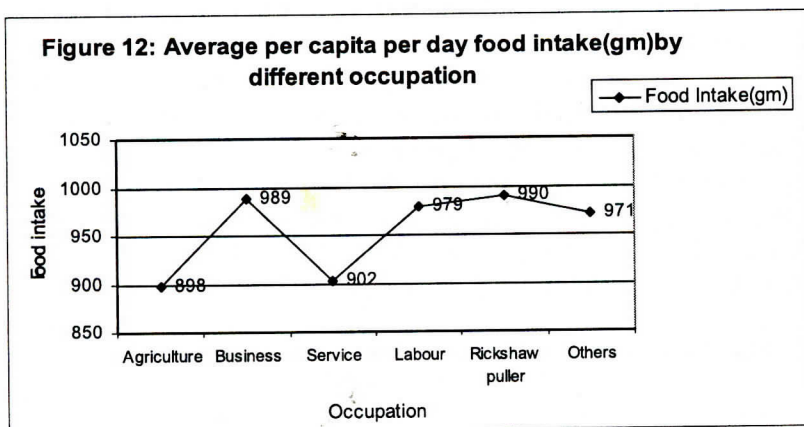
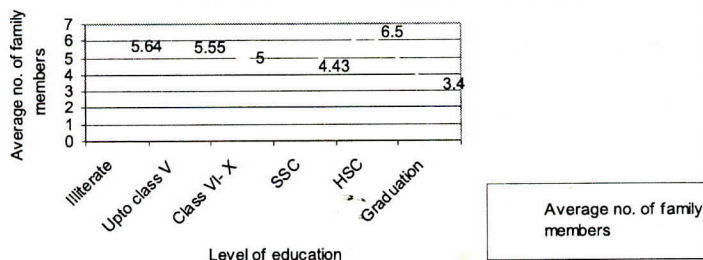


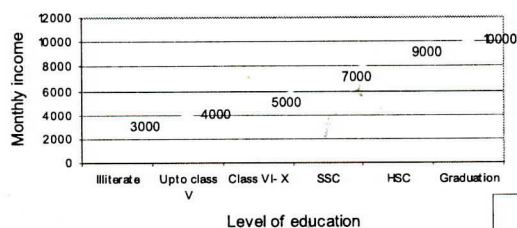
Figure shows that among the respondent's farmers food intake is the lowest which is 898 gm per capita per day followed by the service holders whose average food intake per capita per day is 902 gm. Both of the groups' average per capita per day food intake is much less than the average of national food intake in 2005. So, in respect of average food intake both the farmers and service holders are suffering from food insecurity.

Education has a direct impact on population growth and income of the family. Average number of family members and their monthly income by different level of education is shown in figure 13 and 14 respectively. Figure shows that illiterate people have the maximum number of family members on average of 5.64 per family where as families headed by graduates the least average number of family members of 3.4 per family has. Except for the group of HSC level education, number of family members is adversely correlated with level of education. Families with higher education earn more. Figure 14 shows that those who are illiterate earn 3000 taka per month and the families headed by the graduates earn more than 10000 taka on average. With the level of education food intake is also correlated from illiterate to the level of class X. After completing matriculation it varies in different levels.

**Fig.13: Average no. of family members by different level of education**

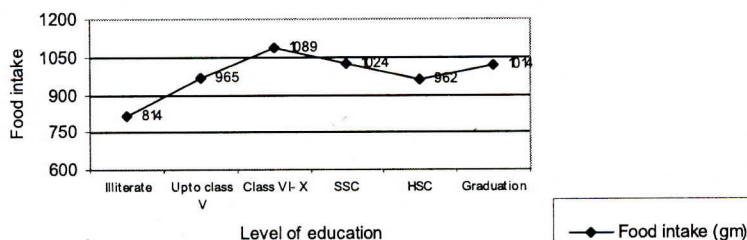


**Fig. 14: Average monthly income by different level of education**



Again as the level of education helps to utilize food properly with the better understanding on health and sanitation, it also ensures utilization of food by the educated families. Average per capita per day food intake (gm) by the respondent of different level of educational background is shown in figure 15.

**Fig. 15: Average per capita food intake (gm) by different level of education**



Consumption pattern of food: Consumption of food is the real indicator of food security of different socio-economic groups. The normal diet of Bangladeshi people is seriously imbalanced, with inadequate consumption of fat, oil and protein and with more than 80 percent of calories come from cereals. Consumption pattern of food item in rural

areas is presented in Table 5 on the basis of primary data collected by the researcher and secondary data taken from the report of HIES 2005.

Table 5: Comparison of food intake between 2005 and 2009 at rural level

| Food item          | Balanced requirement | National rural food intake(2005) | Respondents food intake(2009) |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Rice               | 390                  | 460                              | 421                           |
| Other cereals      | 100                  | 26                               | 15                            |
| Potato& other veg. | 225                  | 218                              | 290                           |
| Pulses             | 30                   | 13                               | 24                            |
| Fish               | 45                   | 40                               | 72                            |
| Meat & Eggs        | 34                   | 18                               | 21                            |
| Milk               | 30                   | 31                               | 51                            |
| Oils & Fats        | 20                   | 14                               | 18                            |
| Fruits             | 50                   | 32                               | 28                            |
| Others             | 10                   | 95                               | 8                             |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>934</b>           | <b>947</b>                       | <b>948</b>                    |

Source: HIES, 2005 and Self Compiled

The table shows the picture of average intake of different food items in different period in comparison to normative food requirement prescribed by the National Nutrition Council for the average Bangladeshis for a balanced diet. From the table it is found that in 2005, average food intake in rural area was 947 gm per capita per day which was 948 grams per capita per day in the surveyed area in 2009. But the food is imbalanced due to high intake of carbohydrate. Although the intake of carbohydrate has been decreased to 421 gram per capita per day in 2009 from 460 gram per capita per day, but still it is high in comparison to balanced diet. The amount of fish and milk intake in the surveyed area which was 72 grams and 51 grams per capita per day, this is due to the cultivation pattern of the surveyed area. The surveyed area was fish and poultry dominant area. It indicates that the amount of food intake is satisfactory in the surveyed area but due to weak utilization of food, people of the surveyed area very often suffer from common diseases like diarrhea, fever, abdominal pain etc. It also supports the observations made by Harun et al. in 2005. They pointed that the diet of Bangladeshi people is very much imbalanced leading to poor nutritional outcomes. High consumption of cereals but low intake of edible oils, vegetables and fish may result in low level of



absorption of micronutrients and high level of anemia and other deficiencies.

From the above discussion it is found that although in some cases availability of food is satisfactory but due to weak purchasing power and poor asset bases the access to food especially by the poor people is not ensured. Even availability and access to food is ensured somehow, lack of knowledge on health and sanitation is hampering the proper utilization of food. As a result the food security of the common people especially of the downtrodden population is in jeopardy.

### **5.0 Reasons for Food Insecurity**

Despite significant achievement in food grain production food security at national, household and individual level remains as a major concern for the Government of Bangladesh. No single factor is responsible for this. Number of factors affecting the food security has been identified by the respondents of the surveyed area are scarce land and huge population, insufficient earnings, high prices of commodity, lack of employment opportunity, low wages and lack of government assistance. These factors are interrelated. Negative impact of one factor affects the others negatively. With the above discussions factors responsible for food insecurity at different level can be mentioned as scarce land, huge population, natural calamities, climate change, loss of biodiversity, production of bio-fuels from plants, scarcity of irrigation water, lack of timely supply of agricultural inputs, poverty, income inequality, dietary habit, depreciation of money, and international price raise of food grain, slow technology generation, lack of sufficient investment in research and development in agricultural sectors.

**5.1 Scarce Land and Huge Population:** Paraphrasing Malthus, Heilbroner mentioned that 'Land, unlike people ... does not breed' (Heilbroner: 1953:82). The above quotation shows that land does not increase rather it decreases day by day due to rapid urbanization all over the world. The situation is more appropriate for Bangladesh. Even after long 38 years of our independence we failed to manage our land properly leading to decreasing cultivable land day by day due to rapid urbanization, industrialization, construction of roads, bridges, dams, unplanned markets, shopping malls etc. Statistics shows that in Bangladesh 1% arable land is declining per annum coupled with depleting soil fertility and micronutrients. If the rate continues in the year 2050 we will hardly get any land for agriculture and fishery.

**5.2 Natural Calamities:** Natural calamities like recurrent floods, draughts, cyclones, river erosion and huge land slides make the food security situation more vulnerable. The November 15 cyclone named as Sidre has destroyed acres of rice paddy, ruined the shrimp farms of the southern coast, and, according to the World Food Program, left 2.3 million people in need of urgent food aid (The New York Times: 2007). The government estimates that 6 million people were affected by the storm. Due to the victim of natural calamities some people are becoming environmental refugees, some are becoming unemployed for a long time, some are losing their agricultural land and some are losing their planted crops before harvesting facing double loss. Thus they remained unfed or underfed.

**5.3 Climate Change:** Climate change along with many other dimensions is also adversely affecting the issue of food security. Changes in climate not only increase the temperature of the world it also increases the intensity and frequency of drought, floods and cyclones. Climate change will impact the agriculture of Bangladesh by extending flood specially intensifying flash flood, increasing temperature leading to droughts, causing water scarcity for irrigation and domestic uses in north-west Bangladesh, increasing inundation and salinity intrusion, limiting crop cultivation with the existing varieties, especially in the coastal regions, increasing loss of land to river erosion, reducing land-based livelihood opportunities, and increased drainage congestion and water logging due to sedimentation of rivers, limiting production options for the char dwellers. According to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) prediction, global temperatures will rise between 1.8 degrees and 4 degrees (Celsius) by the last decade of the 21st century. Bangladesh will be one of most victims of this temperature change. According to IPCC by 2050, changing rainfall patterns with increasing temperatures, flooding, droughts and salinity (in coastal belt) could cause a decline in rice production in Bangladesh by 8 percent and wheat by 32 percent, against 1990 as the base year. The recent estimates using different models with changed assumptions predicts for 2050 reduction in production by 1.5-25.8 percent for aus rice, and 0.4-5.3 percent for aman due to the effect of high temperature. For boro rice, production could be increased by 1.2-9.5 percent, assuming the temperature would not exceed the 35° C threshold limit for rice production (Daily Star: 2009). Thus climate change has a direct impact on the production of food grain. Any loss in production of food grain will intensify the problem of food insecurity.



5.4 Loss of Bio-diversity: Loss of biodiversity is adversely affecting the production of food grains. Without preserving bio-diversity, we cannot expect sufficient and diversified production of food grain and other elements of subsistence. According to FAO, 75 percent of biodiversity was lost in the 20th century. As different plant and animal species form the ecosystem and the interaction among plants and animals along with non-living organism creates a balanced environment for the production of food and medicines, so any loss in the biodiversity will make loss in the pollination, loss of variety in different food grain and it will damage the soil characteristics. With the loss of bio-diversity the ecological balance will be hampered which will seriously effect the production of food adversely contributing to the food of the world, where Bangladesh is not an exception.

5.5 Lack of timely agricultural inputs: Supply of agricultural inputs like irrigation water, quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticides etc. are the key factors of production. Without ensuring timely and quality agricultural inputs we cannot expect optimum production. Without optimum production we can not provide sufficient food at the time of need to ensure food security.

5.6 Poverty and Unemployment: The basic causes of endemic food insecurity of millions of people are the limited access to productive employment opportunities. Due to unemployment or underemployment they lose their purchasing power. Thus incidence of poverty and huge unemployment is an important denominator to the food security in the country.

5.7 Income Inequality: Income inequality is one of the important reasons for food insecurity in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh top 5% household earns 33471 taka per month per household where as bottom 5% household earns 1605 taka per month per household. Nationally top 5 percent spend 33.2 percent of their income for food expenditure and 66.8 percent for non-food expenditure and bottom 5 percent spend 67.9 percent for food expenditure and 32.1 percent for non-food expenditure (BBS: 2007:41). Thus higher income groups are taking more food leading to obesity and lower income groups are taking less food leading to malnutrition which are against the notion of food security.

5.8 Depreciation of money: Depreciation of money results less amount of food import which creates scarcity of food. Due to depreciation of taka imports become expensive and the price of food grain increases which affects the purchasing power of the poor.



5.9 Prices of food grain: Price rise of the commodities hit hardest to the rural poor. Among the poor landless and female headed households are the most vulnerable. A recent analysis by Bayes and Hossain based on a nationwide survey cited by M. A. Sattar Mandal in his work reveals that a 50 percent increase in rice price takes away 25 percent of poor household's income, meaning a negative effect on meeting other basic needs. The researchers analysis shows that average quantities of rice and protein rich foods have significantly fallen in 2008, compared to 2007 and that 72 percent families have not only consumed lesser foods but also lower quality rice (Mandal: 2009: 58). Due to price hike 20 lac children are not getting sufficient nutritious food and suffering from malnutrition at the age of 6 months to 5 years. 5 lac children are suffering from long-term malnutrition. More than 37% children are living with underweight. (Prothom Alo: 2009). Thus price hike in the national and international market seriously affecting the poor to meet up their daily requirement of food leading to food insecurity.

5.10 Hoarding and Syndicates: Hoarding of food grain illegally increases the price again and disrupts the distribution of food grain. Marketing and distributing bottlenecks lead to access problem, particularly on the poorer segments of the society. Hoarding by syndicates make the market unstable. Thus the poor people become more food insecure.

5.11 Dietary Habit: Dietary habit mainly high consumption of cereals, but low intake of edible oil, vegetables and fish result in a low level of absorption of micronutrients and a high level of anemia and other deficiencies.

5.12 Insufficient Social Safety Net Program: In a disaster prone country like Bangladesh social safety net programs are must to insulate the poor and vulnerable from shocks of the sudden natural disasters. To insulate the disastrous people the coverage of SSNP's is inadequate. Less than 1% of GDP is allocated to various SSNP's, far less than the average allocation of 5% of GDP in South Asia (World Bank: 2004). Approximately 10% of the poor and 5% of the ultra poor is covered by any SSNP. 50% of eligible old age people are not covered by any pension scheme. Mismanagement in the distribution processes of social safety net program also jeopardizes the food security.

5.13 Lack of Health Education: Very often the available and accessed foods are not properly utilized due to improper storage, processing and cooking practices. Processing also greatly affects physical and chemical properties of food. Careless and excessive washing of food items before

cooking often causes huge loss of food values. Sometimes too much of heating impairs color, flavor and nutritional value of food. So, lack of health education our people is being deprived of taking balanced diet.

## **6.0 Role of Public Policies for ensuring Food Security**

Most of the increased production and management of food grain is related to the application different public policies. The macro policy interventions include the agriculture policy, land use policy, import substitution or export orientation in other words trade policy. In addition, in a country with huge population nothing will work until or unless the population will be controlled. From the above discussion policy recommendation broadly covers the area of population control, increasing agricultural production, providing subsidies to agricultural inputs, stabilizing prices of food grain, managing stock properly, liberalizing trade, managing the environment, managing risk and addressing health related causes for under nutrition as policy measures.

### **6.1 Policies to Population Control**

Although we have been able to double our food production still we are running behind our targeted food production. Of course, question comes is it not food verses population?

To discuss about the question we can take the examples of Leather and Foster. As mentioned by Leather and Foster that if the population grows by 50 percent, and population characteristics cause a food demand to grow by 5 percent per capita, total demand grows by more than 50 percent- the demand will be 57 percent as calculated by the author (Leather and Foster: 2005:183). From above examples it is clear that without controlling population addressing the issue of food security is totally impossible especially for an overpopulated country like Bangladesh. More importantly growth of population among the down trodden population is the key factor to be taken into consideration with utmost sincerity for ensuring food security.

With the above discussion if we calculate the amount of food needed for the total population by 2050, what will happen? As per statistics, if population grows at the current rate by the end of 2050 total population will be 217.54 million (BBS: 2007a:140). Taking the current rate of consumption of food we get, in 2050 the amount of food will be needed 49.82 million metric tons. At present we can produce around 30 million metric tons of rice with the cropping intensity 1.81. So, for the added population to meet the demand of food in 2050 cropping intensity will

have to be increased up to 3.02 as calculated by the researcher remaining other things constant which is nearly impossible, because soil health is already in jeopardy due to unscrupulous use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, so only way to remain population under control. Considering the present birth and death rate for ensuring food security for all the growth of population should not be allowed more than 1 percent, even all other aspects of food security is improving at the current rate. So, control of population is the first and most important task.

For this The Chinese Glory Certificate System can be accepted and strictly implemented. In Bangladesh to control population the following incentives can be provided:

- ❖ Couple with one child may get free and priority medical care for the child, priority admission to kindergartens and other government schools,
- ❖ Priority should be given in allotting government lands and accommodations,
- ❖ Parents with single children should get priority regarding government incentives.

## 6.2 Macro policy interventions

As a policy measure macroeconomic intervention including growth of GDP, overall development through industrialization, trade liberalization, maintaining low level of inflation should be ensured. Development in some of the industrial sectors like RMG, pharmaceuticals and ship building is satisfactory. With the improvement in macroeconomic indicators we will be able to invest more which will create more job facilities and reduce poverty which will eventually ensure food security of the poor.

## 6.3 Ensuring optimum use of land and water resources

Bangladesh already faces formidable challenges of keeping up the present momentum of food production in a declining land and water resource. For ensuring food security proper use of land can be done with the implementation of following steps:

- ❖ Creation of land database for planned management of agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial lands, and



- ❖ Vertical expansion of land for the maximum utilization of land. Indiscriminate use of land for housing should be stopped rather to start community living even in the rural area
- ❖ Water productivity has to be increased through dissemination of water saving technologies, on-farm water management training and wherever possible promoting rain water harvest.

Promote growth of food production: To promote agricultural growth following steps can be taken as policy measures:

- ❖ Ensuring quality seeds and sufficient fertilizers, pesticides and supply of electricity at subsidized rate to the farmers as per their requirement,
- ❖ Providing agricultural loan, fishery loan and bank loan for small business without collateral at a minimum rate of interest with 1 year moratorium period and ensuring optimum price of the produced goods and
- ❖ Adopting High Yielding Varieties (HYV).

Investment for technology generation: Investment in agricultural research can contribute in the following manner:

- ❖ Yielding potential to available chemical fertilizers and pesticides;
- ❖ Adaptation to growing period, drought tolerance; disease and pest resistance;
- ❖ Improvements in quality, palatability and consumer acceptance; storage, transport and other handling qualities with available technology;
- ❖ Changes in labor requirements in production and processing in relation to the available mechanical technology.

Improving access to food to the disadvantaged: Lowering food prices can be done providing subsidies for the agricultural inputs, investing in rural transport and information systems and mechanization in agriculture with improved technology with sufficient marketing facilities. Improvements in customs facilitation, logistics performance and efficient grain storage can enhance producer responses as well as benefiting consumers. Sufficient social safety net programs, creation of sufficient job facilities and raising wages of labor and the implementation of public food distribution system can ensure access to food by the poor.

**Preserving Bio-diversity and cropping diversity:** Preserving bio-diversity will help to meet the demand of dietary requirement with optimum production. With the implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and environment friendly agricultural technology we can preserve our bio-diversity which will help to diversify our food basket. In the process of preserving bio-diversity and maintaining cropping diversity emphasis should be given on the production of vegetables, pulses, fruits etc. other than rice and wheat. Fish, cattle, and poultry production should also be encouraged. **Mitigation to Climate Change and natural calamities:** Institutional capacity must be strengthened so that we can adapt with the vulnerability of climate change and natural calamities. This should be included in mainstreaming climate change adaptation in government policy discourse, mobilization of trained manpower, awareness building, and incorporation and upgrading of university curricula on disaster management and climate studies and research.

**Effective stock management:** Ensuring procurement is most important to create sufficient buffer stock. For ensuring procurement following steps should be taken:

- ❖ Price of food grain should be fixed in such a way so that the producer gets maximum benefits, allowing maximum scope of operation for private traders,
- ❖ Number of godowns and stocking capacity of godowns should be increased so that sufficient food grain can be procured at the peak season to meet the demand of conducting relief and other subsidized state operated programs,
- ❖ Procurement process should be free from corruption. Any lapses by the personals involved in the process of procurement should be taken seriously,
- ❖ Lastly, small farmers should be provided with loans at a low interest rate so that they are not compelled to sell their product immediate after harvesting at low prices.

**Lowering and stabilizing price of food grain:** Management of food grain through efficient cereal stock policy, effective trade and tariff policy, development of non-cereal food market with appropriate market intervention strategy can play a vital role. Lowering food prices through price control directly or reduction of import tariff may be another effective mechanism. Taxes or subsidies can be another effective tool for

stabilizing food markets. To do that market should be free from syndicates and illegal hoarding.

**Liberalizing trade:** Ensuring functional global market in food products should be a priority in our foreign policy. Bangladesh should explore an Asian agreement on rice trade. With food import food aid will also play a vital role in ensuring food security. **Raising budgetary allocation:** With sufficient budget it will be possible to conduct more agricultural research which will help to introduce HYV and high technology to plant, harvest them in an improved manner.

**Creating employment opportunities:** With policy intervention employment can be created with the following steps:

- ❖ The capability of the people should be improved through education, training and healthcare facilities;
- ❖ Raising wages of labors employed and promoting rural and agro-based industries and enterprises.
- ❖ Undertaking productivity enhancing programs for rural, agro-based enterprises, investing in productivity enhancing technology and
- ❖ Public investment in transport and communication.

**Enhancing Social Safety Net:** Food based intervention can reduce the vulnerability of the poor. For this following steps can be taken:

- ❖ Support to women in income generating activities;
- ❖ Initiate special program for disaster mitigation for agriculture;
- ❖ Undertake emergency distribution from public stock;
- ❖ Encourage private sector initiatives to augment domestic food supplies;
- ❖ Undertake extensive public education and marketable skill development program; and initiate more gender responsive programs to promote women development.

**Providing sanitation and health education:** For ensuring quality of food proper knowledge on sanitation and health education should be ensured. For these following steps to be taken:

- ❖ Reduce prevalence of water and food borne diseases;



- ❖ Improvement in water quality, infrastructure development by public investment in water supply and sanitation facilities;
- ❖ Investment in safe storage, safe market places & safe handling facilities;
- ❖ Harmonization of standards by developing and enforcing grades, standards and quality; and enforcing proper labeling and packaging rules/standards;
- ❖ Creating food safety database and food safety research;
- ❖ Initiating awareness build-up programs and co-coordinating mechanism to control indiscriminate use of harmful additives, preservatives, emulsifiers or toxic elements in food production, processing and marketing chain.

Promoting PPP: Promoting Public Private Partnership (PPP) can play an effective role for ensuring food security. Under the PPP following tasks can be done:

- ❖ Establishment of new godowns and cold storage so that food can be easily stored after a bumper crop;
- ❖ Small agro-based industries can be set up in the rural areas for perishable goods like fruits, vegetables, fishes etc. to ensure maximum utilization;
- ❖ Rural communication can be developed under PPP to get the maximum benefit by the producers without the interference of middleman;
- ❖ Research and investment can be done for improving agriculture technology, introducing the technology and generating HYV.

Strengthening Coordination and Monitoring: Strengthening coordination among different institutions and organizations for developing market facilities, developing infrastructure, transport network and Information Technology is essential for optimizing production, distribution and marketing and stabilizing prices of food grain. It can be done by initiating major sectoral review of agriculture.

Ensuring effective governance: For ensuring food safety and quality control many rules, regulations and laws have been promulgated by the Government but lack of proper implementation of rules and regulations seriously hampers in ensuring effective governance. Governance free

from corruption, and bureaucratic procrastination and hindrances are the precondition for implementation of any policy or programs efficiently and effectively. So, ensuring effective governance can help to ensure quality of food which is one of the key components of food security.

### **7.0 Conclusion:**

Despite progress in some development indicators existing pervasive poverty all over the country leading to a large group of people unfed or underfed. So, investment and reforms on multiple factors including human resources development, agricultural research, building rural infrastructure, water resources management, and farm and community based agricultural and natural resources management to be ensured. Along with the above recommendations an efficient public food distribution system can play a vital role in government's food policy and make a significant contribution to the food security of households who receive transfers. Taking these into consideration, Bangladesh should concentrate on agricultural development, especially, self-sufficiency in food grain production, mitigating and adapting climate change and of course, pro-poor growth with effective population control under the implementation of a proper population policy. Solving these problems will require decisive action by the government, the private and individual households. Implementing all these efforts will help in sustainable food production as well as in ensuring food security and will ensure better nutrition, and better livelihood.

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## Improving Public Service Delivery through Citizen's Charter in Bangladesh: Rhetoric or Reality?

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**Abstract:** The "Citizen's Charter (CC) initiative" is a response to the quest for solving the problems which a citizen encounters, day in and day out, while dealing with organizations providing public services. The impressive feat of the citizen's charter in the West has made this administrative tool popular across the globe and Bangladesh is no exception to this trend. But the success of CC hugely depends on its organizational environment and the quality of the CC. There are many environmental barriers in Bangladesh and CC will remain merely a paper exercise of limited value if the government does not make a timely and concerted effort to remove the barriers.

### 1.0 Introduction:

"A consumer is the most important visitor in our premises. He is not dependent on us, we are dependent on him. He is not an interruption in our work; he is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider to our business, he is part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him; he is doing us a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so." Mahatma Gandhi

As public services are funded by citizens, either directly or indirectly through taxes, they have the right to expect a particular quality of service that is responsive to their needs and is provided efficiently at a reasonable cost. The "Citizen's Charters initiative" is a response to the quest for solving the problems which a citizen encounters, day in and day out, while dealing with organizations providing public services. The purpose of this paper is to explore the nature and extend of barriers that inhibit the effective implementation of the charter programme in Bangladesh.

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## **2.0 Some Important Aspects of Citizen's Charter**

### **2.1 What is Citizen's Charter?**

A Citizen's Charter is the expression of an understanding between citizens and the provider of a public service with respect to the quantity and quality of services the former receive in exchange for their taxes. It is essentially about the rights of the public and the obligations of the public servants.

As public services are funded by citizens, either directly or indirectly through taxes, they have the right to expect a particular quality of service that is responsive to their needs and is provided efficiently at a reasonable cost. Government of India (GoI) defines "The Citizen's Charter as a written, voluntary declaration by service providers about service standards, choice, accessibility, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability. It should be in accordance with the expectations of citizens".

### **2.2 Why Citizen's Charter?**

The major objectives of the Citizen's Charter are to give priority to customers, make the public service transparent and accessible, reduce red-tape and delay, make the Government more accountable, provide all necessary information to customers and make service providers responsive to clients' needs (Osborne 2000; Torres 2003).

## **3.0 Citizen's Charter: General Theoretical Considerations**

Charters are part of the much bigger new public management (NPM) agenda that, in the words of one leading academic commentator, has 'dominated the bureaucratic reform agenda in the OECD group of countries from the late 1970s' (Hood 1992: 3-4). But it must be recognized that charters come in many different guises, and with a variety of labels attached (Drewry, 2005).

The ideas of NPM basically come from two schools of thoughts. The first set of ideas comes from economic school, which includes theories like public choice, principal-agency relations and transaction cost economics. The second set of ideas comes from the managerialist school of thought which focuses on the need to re-establish the primacy of managerial principles in the bureaucracy.

For Public Choice theorists, the Citizen's Charter could be represented, at least retrospectively, as one of a sequence of steps in a revolutionary transfer of power - "downwards from government and its bureaucracy, and into the hands of ordinary citizens"(Pirie, 1992:5) - orchestrated by the Conservative Governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major. The first and probably most dramatic step had been the privatisation, between 1979 and 1982, of virtually all the country's state industries and utilities (Game and Vuong, 2003).

Politically constrained from a similarly full-scale privatisation of the 'human services', the Government's next step in the Public Choice revolution was the establishment of internal markets in education and health. The services remained free to users at the point of consumption, but the allocation of most government funding increasingly by-passed the local education and health authorities and followed parents' choices of schools and patients' choices of doctor.

The third key policy change was the creation of executive agencies (known as Next Steps agencies) in the civil service. The service's traditional departmental structure was divided into discrete units (agencies), "each with independent management, clearly delineated functions and responsibilities, and full accountability for its operations" (Game and Vuong, 2003).

The fourth policy initiative was the Citizen's Charter - essentially a contract between each state service and its public, replacing "a vague public duty to provide some undefined and unspecified level of performance ... [with] specific performance targets which each service is expected to achieve"(Pirie, 1992: 8), and containing mechanisms to make it enforceable. In addition, the Charter required each of these contracts to contain some mechanism under which members of the public would have access to some form of redress - ranging from a public apology to financial compensation - if the promised performance failed to materialise (Game and Vuong, 2003).

Free market economists claimed that they could see not merely a chronological order in these policies, but a common thread running through them: the thread of Public Choice Theory:

"the policies of privatization, internal markets, executive agencies and the Citizen's Charter are all horses from the same stable; they have arisen in the light of Public Choice analysis. They all attempt to engineer a society

which will be determined spontaneously by the interaction of its citizens, and to transform those elements of it which are planned and directed from the centre." (Pirie, 1992: 9 cited by Gameand and Vuong, 2003)

In its application, the Citizen's Charter initiative represents 'a systematic attempt to focus on four main themes across the public services: quality, choice, standards and value' (Wilson, 1995: 94). According to the original Charter document (Major, 1991: 4-5), these would be pursued through a range of reforms by which the public sector would operate more in line with its private sector counterpart: privatization, competition and contracting-out, performance measurement, clear complaints procedures and better forms of redress for citizens (see Falconer, 1996). All these attributes are in line with the principles of NPM.

#### **4.0 Citizen's Charter: The Global Experiences**

Citizen's charter initiatives (variously named) have been launched in many countries around the world. (Drewry, 2005). They have different names and different contents. The idea of the Citizen's Charter began in the UK in 1991 when the Conservative government introduced it as a national program with a view to improve the quality of public sector services based on the needs and expectations of service users (Sharma and Agnihotri 2001: 733). The six principles of the UK Citizen's Charter movement as originally framed were:

- (i) Quality: Improving the quality of services;
- (ii) Choice: Wherever possible;
- (iii) Standards: Specifying what to expect and how to act if standards are not met;
- (iv) Value: For the taxpayers' money;
- (v) Accountability: Individuals and Organisations; and
- (vi) Transparency: Rules/Procedures/Schemes/Grievances.

These were later elaborated by the Labour Government as the nine principles of Service Delivery (1998), which are as follows:- i. Set standards of service; ii. Be open and provide full information; iii. Consult and involve; iv. Encourage access and the promotion of choice; v. Treat all fairly; vi. Put things right when they go wrong; vii. Use resources effectively; viii. Innovate and improve; and ix. Work with other providers.



Subsequently, this British model of the Charter has been adopted in various developed and developing countries under diverse titles. Some of these initiatives are very similar to the UK model, whereas others break new ground by leaning on the service quality paradigm of the 'Total Quality Management' (TQM) movement. Some other initiatives are pitched somewhere in between. Some of such initiatives include the Public Service Users' Charter in Belgium (1992), Service Charter in France (1992) and Australia (1997), Client's Charter in Malaysia (1993), Quality Charter in Public Services in Portugal (1993), Service Standards Initiative in Canada (1995), Citizen's Charter in India (1997) and so on (Sharma and Agnihotri 2001: 733).

Table 1: Citizen's Charter: Around the World

| Country | Name                                                                                   | Principles/ Focuses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Inception Date                          |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| UK      | Citizen Charter                                                                        | Emphasis on the publication of service standards, openness and public scrutiny, non-discrimination in service provision, consumer's choice and priority, convenient access to various services, improvement in quality, mechanism for expressing grievances, review of performance standards and regular updating of the Charter (Bridge 2000) | 1991                                    |
| Italy   | Service Charter (Carta dei Servizi)                                                    | Emphasizes the principles of equality and fairness with regard to customers' rights and choices, effective participation of users in the provision of services and public sector accountability for quality standards (Torres 2003).                                                                                                           | Launched in 1993 and relaunched in 1995 |
| France  | The Public Service Charter (La Charte des Services Publics)                            | Emphasizes the principles such as service quality, responsibility, transparency, accessibility, reliability and accountability (Nikos 2000; Drewry 2003).                                                                                                                                                                                      | 1992                                    |
| Belgium | The Charter for Public Service Users (La Charte des Utilisateurs des Services Publics) | Aims to improve service quality, and sets the principles of flexibility, transparency and legal protection for the users of various public services (Torres 2003).                                                                                                                                                                             | 1992                                    |
| Finland | Service Charter                                                                        | Highlighted the rights of public service users, specification of service standards, customer-driven service delivery and customers' feedback for further improvement (Nikos 2000; Torres 2003).                                                                                                                                                | 1997                                    |
| Canada  | Service Standards Initiative                                                           | The Government launched the Service Standard Initiative in response to people's expectations for friendly and courteous services, faster responses, longer office hours and so on (Sharma and Agnihotri 2001: 733).                                                                                                                            | 1995                                    |

|           |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |      |
|-----------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Australia | Service Charter  | To enhance the quality of public services, expand customers' access, treat customers with respect, specify service standards based on customers' choices, improve performance standards and so on (Sharma and Agnihotri 2001; Torres 2003). | 1997 |
| Malaysia  | Client's Charter | Each state agency to deliver services in accordance with the quality standards based on customer expectations and to respond to customer feedback and complaints (Sharma and Agnihotri 2001; UNDP 2002a)                                    | 1993 |

### 5.0 Citizen's Charter: Bangladesh Perspective

The impressive feat of the citizen's charter in the UK (Clark, 2000) has made this administrative tool popular across the globe and Bangladesh is no exception to this trend. On 8th May, 2007 Citizen Charter initiative was adopted by the Government of Bangladesh. It may be mentioned here that the Public Administration Reform Commission (PARC) suggested the adoption of Citizen's Charter for a few ministries in 2000 (Jahan, 2006). Later on the importance of Citizen's Charter as a way of ensuring good governance was stressed in the PRSP (II).

The Citizen's Charter has been adopted as a device by the Government of Bangladesh to induce client in the bureaucracy. Its main agenda was to make administration more accountable, responsive, transparent and people-friendly. The charter programme initiatives in essence propose to make public service provision less bureaucratic-dominated and more citizen-led. It aims to empower citizens by mentioning their rights, privileges and duties. Further, the Citizen's Charter strives to develop partnership between citizens and officials in administration to promote joint decisions.

The Cabinet Division led the Citizen's Charter initiative and later on the Ministry of Establishment communicated the decision in terms of a circular to most of the Government Ministries/Divisions/Departments and subordinate offices. In Bangladesh, the policy decision to implement Citizen's Charter was adopted at the central level first and later was dispersed to different divisions and districts with their discretion in which specific areas to implement it. In other words, it depicts more top down approach in policy initiation (citizens' charter) rather than bottom up.

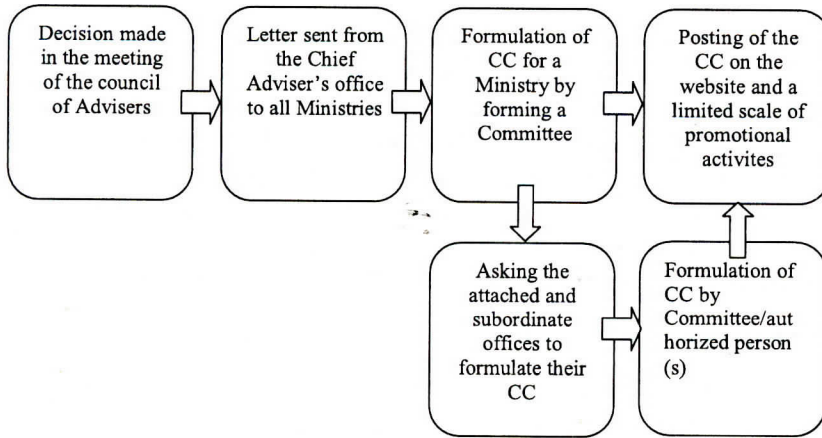


Figure 1: CC Formulation Process in Bangladesh

Now it is responsibility of the individual ministry to formulate and implement its own Citizen Charter. However, there is no internal mechanism within the ministries to monitor the formulation or implementation of the Citizen's Charter.

### 6.0 Objective of the Study

The aim of the study is to explore the barriers those are acting as the impediments of the effectiveness of CC and suggests enabling the government ministries/departments to successfully implement CC by overcoming the barriers. The major objectives of the study are:

- ♦ To examine why and how the Charters have been formulated in Bangladesh.
- ♦ To assess the global trends on Citizen's Charter.
- ♦ To explore the barriers to effective implementation of Citizen's Charter in the context of Bangladesh.
- ♦ Finally, to suggest measures as to how the Citizen's Charter can be made effective in the context of Bangladesh and analyses in this section would also offer some important lessons for other developing countries formulating or implementing their own Citizen's Charters.

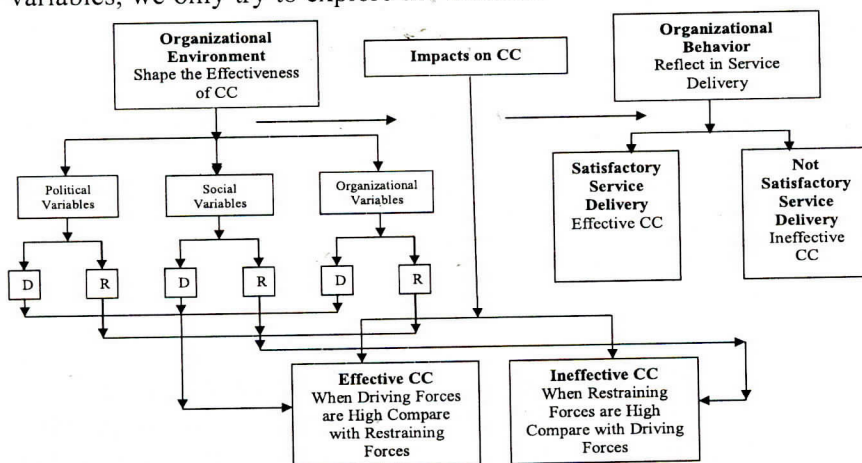


## 7.0 Methodology Used for the Study

The research for this study was conducted by interviewing key informants who are involved with various service delivery processes in the three different departments in Bangladesh- police, passport and post office and FGD (Focus Group Discussions) with the groups of people who received services from aforementioned departments. The groups were targeted in order to explore the barriers of CC from the diverse cross-section of Bangladeshis. All available literatures were also reviewed on CC to get a thorough understanding and for further lessons.

## 8.0 Analytical Framework

From the preceding discussion we can understand that the Citizen's Charter is a tool devised to provide better public service with an aim to acquire more public satisfaction on government services and above all to establish a citizen-centric governance system. But the success of CC hugely depends on its organizational environment. Organizational Environment can be defined as "the set of forces surrounding an organization that have the potential to affect the way it operates and its access to resources" (Gareth, 2004). We examine three sets of environmental variables e.g. political, social and organizational variables which can influence the operation of CC in Bangladesh. These variables can be act both "Driving Forces" and "Restraining Forces". Through these variables, we only try to explore the barriers.



Note: Here "D" for Driving Forces and "R" for Restraining Forces

Figure 2: Relations among Organizational Environment, Citizen Charter and Service Delivery

When "Driving Forces" are high compare with "Restraining Forces" then the CC of an organization can be effective and when the opposite happen i.e. when "Restraining Forces" are High Compare with "Driving Forces" then the CC of that organization may become ineffective. This is illustrated in the above figure. We define these restraining forces as the barriers to the implementation of CC.

On the basis of the relation between "Quality of CC" (Excellent and Poor)<sup>1</sup> and "Organizational Environment" (Non Favorable and Favorable)<sup>2</sup> we can derive "Four" scenarios. These "Four" scenarios can be explained by the following figure:

|               |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                   |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Excellent     | <b>Scenario 3</b><br><b>SD-</b> Not Satisfactory<br><b>RA-</b> Create Favorable Environment                     | <b>Scenario 4</b><br><b>SD-</b> Satisfactory<br><b>RA-</b> Maintain Quality and R&D Works for Further Improvement |
| Quality of CC | <b>Scenario 1</b><br><b>SD-</b> Not Satisfactory<br><b>RA-</b> Create Favorable Environment and Prepare Good CC | <b>Scenario 2</b><br><b>SD-</b> Satisfactory/ Not Satisfactory<br><b>RA-</b> Prepare Good CC                      |
| Poor          |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                   |
|               | Non Favorable                                                                                                   | Favorable                                                                                                         |
|               | Organizational Environment                                                                                      |                                                                                                                   |

Note: Here "SD" means "Service Delivery" and "RA" means "Required Actions"

Figure 3: Relations between Organizational Environment and Citizen Charter

Scenario 1: Here an organization has both "Non Favorable" environment and "Poor CC". So the "Service Delivery" is not satisfactory for the

<sup>1</sup> "Excellent CC" means a quality CC mentioning all the requirements of CC for providing satisfactory services and "Poor CC" means the opposite i.e. lack of elements required for satisfactory services.

<sup>2</sup> "Favorable Environment" means the optimum supporting environment for the implementation of CC and "Non Favorable Environment" means the opposite.

consumers. To address the problems, both the creation of favorable environment and the creation of good CC are required.

Scenario 2: Here an organization has "Favorable" environment but "Poor CC". The organization can go either way- provide satisfactory services or unsatisfactory services. Because of the existence of the favorable environment, the organization may deliver satisfactory services. But this satisfaction may not endure. To make it long lasting the organization has to prepare an "Excellent CC". On the other hand, if the service is not satisfactory, then that organization also has to formulate an "Excellent CC".

Scenario 3: Here "Service Delivery" is not satisfactory. In spite of having an "Excellent CC", the organization fails to provide satisfactory services for the lack of favorable environment. To address this problem the creation of favorable environment are required.

Scenario 4: Here because of the existence of an "Excellent CC" and "Favorable Environment", the "Service Delivery" is satisfactory. But to maintain and for the further enhancement of satisfaction, the organization should enhance R&D (Research and Development) works.

## **9.0 Analysis of the Findings**

This section is based on our research especially on the findings of the FGDs and in-depth personal interviews with the key informants. We organized the write-up in the line with our three variables- political, social and organizational variables. Further, these major variables are sub-divided into a number of factors.

### **9.1 Social Variables**

#### **9.1.1 Illiteracy**

Citizen Charters are the declarations about the service standards and other associated issues by the service providers which are available in the written form in the service delivery points and official websites. So one must have the capacity to read to obtain benefits from the Charters. But in Bangladesh the adult literacy rate (population 15 years+) of Bangladesh is 53.68 percent (BBS: 2008). That means half of the population is illiterate who can't read. Under this scenario, such information sources are inaccessible to the majority of the citizens who are illiterate. Thus, Citizen Charters will fail to bring its expected outcome keeping almost half of the population excluded from its benefit.



### 9.1.2 Social Connections and Networks

The process of receiving public services in Bangladesh is largely influenced by personal connections and existing social networks<sup>1</sup> in which social identity plays a central role. A recommendation from an influential person acts like a magic wand. It creates a "demonstrative effect" on others and induces them to follow the same path. Thus this norm embeds in the psyche of the people. If we want to get any services—say for passport or any other services, we always try to find someone who is influential and can recommend for us. These connections promote favoritism which is not only unfair but also sometime impose negative externalities on the others. It creates the deprivation of other consumers' rights.

### 9.1.3 Interest Groups

Interest group can be defined as the groups who are organized and involved in a process with an interest to be benefited. Like other country, in Bangladesh, government machineries are sources of various types of benefits for the various sections of people in the society. This is also applicable for the various interest groups organized encircling government agencies. Some of which are legal and beneficial to the society and some of which are illegal and detrimental to the society. For example— an organization organized under the level CAB (Consumer Association of Bangladesh) to protect the interest of the consumers are beneficial to the society. On the other hand, in many offices like— in passport offices, Thanas (Police Stations), there are some interest groups known as "Dalal" (Broker). They are benefited from the existing setup by working as middlemen. A study conducted by Center for Administrative Research and Innovation, University of Dhaka revealed that 79.72% people believe that there is existence of Dalal in the Thanas (Monem and et.al, 2008: 37). Another report published in a local daily newspaper also reported that around 80% of work in BRTA (Bangladesh Road and Transport Authority) is performed through the Dalal (Prothom Alo, 2009).

<sup>1</sup> A social network is a social structure made of nodes (which are generally individuals or organizations) that are tied by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as values, visions, ideas, financial exchange, friendship, sexual relationships, kinship, dislike, conflict, trade etc. implementation of CC and "Non Favorable Environment" means the opposite.

Table 2: People's Perception on the Existence of Dalal in Thanas (Broker)

| Existence of Dalal | No Existence of Dalal | Don't Know |
|--------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 79.72              | 6.02                  | 14.26      |

These brokers try to create a felling in the mind of the service recipients that if he/she follows the due process then he/she will be in troubles and even may not get the expected services. So, it is better for service recipients to come in a contract with the brokers which will assure about the service in exchange of broker's benefits (usually financial). In many occasions corrupt officials also joined with them. This unholy nexus between officials-brokers make the system ineffective, leaving no room for the consumers for justice or remedy. Thus citizen become helpless and under this circumstances CC can play a little role to provide satisfactory services.

#### 9.1.4 Poverty

CC can help the people as a "bargaining tool" who have the power to exercise. This is more or less applicable to the people belong to the upper strata. But in Bangladesh many people live below poverty line. According to Bangladesh Economic Review, 2008, 40.4 percent (based on Direct Calorie Intake) and 40 percent (based on Cost of Basic Needs-CBN) people live below poverty line. They are the marginalized people who have little power to raise their voices. Their voices hardly can penetrate the existing power structure. For example- if any poor people go to hospital for treatment, then it's very difficult for them to get proper treatment. Sometimes the poor also complain that they are even denied to admit in the hospital by the officials showing the reason of not having seats to admit whereas at the same time they notice that someone can admit in the hospital by paying bribe to the officials. The poor have little to do under this situation. They are so weak to protest against this injustice. And even if anybody tries to protest, it brings nothing but add some extra misery for him. CC does have little role to empower the poor to protest against these injustices and to claim their rights.

#### 9.1.5 Power Distance

Hofstede (2005: 46) termed power distance as "the extent to which the less powerful member(s) of the institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally".

In the societal perspective high power distance exists where citizens have a perception that the officials are quite powerful. This leads to an authoritarian culture which is reflected in the way the officials deal with the citizen in catering services and has an adverse effect on the implementation of CC. On the other hand, lower the power distance within and with outsiders, the greater the likelihood of a participatory culture which creates a favorable environment for the implementation of CC.

In Bangladesh, high power distance is embedded in the very fabric to its civil service system. It is a legacy from the days of the British Raj. This is reflected in how different services have been organized within the civil service system and how civil servants interact with citizens. For example-one has to go to DC (Deputy Commissioner) office to issue/renew the trade licenses. In many occasions one has to wait days after days for the licenses and suffer various kinds of harassments. If he wants to complain against these harassments to the higher officials then he has to face another difficulty- difficulty to access higher officials. Thus the power distance destroys the very principle of CC - a principle to serve the people.

#### 9.1.6 Urban-Rural Disparity

Still Bangladesh is a village centric country. Most of the people live in the rural areas. Various important services like health, education, sanitation etc. are better in urban areas than rural areas. If we compare the health service facilities between urban and rural areas then we can see that there is a huge disparity between them. Urban hospitals are comparatively better in terms of number and quality of doctors, availability of necessary equipment and medicines or any other required facilities. So having the same CC, the authorities of the hospitals in the rural areas have little to do for the treatment of the patients.

#### 9.1.7 Digital Divide

The ICT swung open the opportunities for many people. But at the same time it is creating "Digital Divide" among the people. The concept of the digital divide has been used to highlight difference in electronic access to information based on economic, race, ethnic or social group and/or geographical location. The term digital divide has been applied to the gap that exists between those people with ready access to the tools of ICTs, and those without such access or skills. It is a gap, which tends to deepen the disparity among the people.



In Bangladesh, most of the CCs are available in the websites. The people having internet access can easily get the respective CC at any time. But other people have to travel to the corresponding offices. This creates a hassle for them. Again the government provides most of the government forms by online. For example- forms for the issuance of passport is available in the web portal: [www.forms.gov.bd](http://www.forms.gov.bd). Anyone having access to internet can easily download the forms. All these electronic facilities are helpful for better service delivery. But in our country the internet penetration rate is very low. According to United Nations e-Government Survey, 2008, only 0.31 % people use internet and only 2.42% people have access to personal computers (UN, 2008: 195). So very few people can enjoy these facilities in Bangladesh.

#### 9.1.8 Legal Protection

A country's legal environment must be conducive to protect the interest of the people. A government must be able to regulate itself via laws, regulations and policies, which encompass well-defined rights and duties, mechanisms for their enforcement and impartial settlement of disputes. One of the key features of every CC is the grievance redress mechanism. But in a country like Bangladesh where legal protections for the ordinary people are limited, this provision may not be effective. For example- if an ordinary citizen is intimidated by a police and he wants to complain against the police, then there is every possibilities for further intimidation on him, instead of getting any justice. So there is a tendency not to complain against anyone for his/her irregularities. Thus the corrupt and inefficient officials enjoy an unwritten immunity which effects adversely on the entire service delivery system.

#### 9.1.9 Social Audits

The process of "Social Audit" helps to evaluate the activities of the government agencies. It helps to identify the anomalies of the agencies and create pressures to rectify the problems. For example- if Public Works Department goes to built any infrastructure or Water Development Board goes to built any embankment then through "Social Audit" we can identify the problems like- corruption or low quality of construction and can create pressure to the concerned authorities to take steps to solve the problems. Thus "Social Audit" can create a favorable environment for the implementation of CC. But in our country there is hardly any such culture.

## 9.2 Organizational Variables

### 9.2.1 Low Motivation

The remuneration and facilities for the civil servants are inadequate to lead a modest life in Bangladesh. Moreover the high inflation rate is continuously eroding the purchasing power and is worsening the scenario. This erosion of real pay and compression of cash compensation by government are creating dissatisfaction among the civil servants. But a rational and just pay policy can uphold the general quality, tone, efficiency and integrity of public servants. While payment of high salary will not by itself guarantee honesty, integrity and efficiency of public servants, it is also true that payment of salary, which does not satisfy minimum requirements for decent living of a public servant leads to corruption and inefficiency. Under this context, with too much stick and no carrot, CC may not be effective that much that we are expecting.

### 9.2.2 Participation

According to the Human Development Report (UNDP 2002b), "Participation is the process through which stakeholders' influence and share control over priority setting, policy-making, resource allocations, and access to public goods and services." So it can be said as a technique to identify and incorporate stakeholders' interests.

In the traditional system, citizens have been assigned a passive role in governance. Citizen participation is more symbolic than real. Citizen's Charter seeks to establish public control on decision making by allocating them an activist role through consultation, delegation, and partnership building. But in Bangladesh, citizens have been assigned a passive role in governance. The public at large are side tracked in the process of decision making, at the best, information is gathered from mass, and issues used to be solved unilaterally by officials without any substantial voices of the governed [public]. Under this situation formulation of a public friendly CC is very difficult. During the formulation of CC in Bangladesh, there was no involvement of the citizen. So it didn't accommodate the aspiration of the people. Such CC will certainly face difficulties during the implementation.

### 9.2.3 Performance Appraisal Process

Performance appraisal is the process of reviewing an individual's performance and progress in a job and assessing his potential for future

promotion (Armstrong: 1984). Actually it is a process by which an employee's contribution to an organization during a specified period of time is assessed. In Bangladesh, a gazetted class 1 officer is evaluated by his superior officer confidentially once in a year through the traditional Annual Confidential Report (ACR) system. This is considered as a subjective system of evaluation. There remains a scope of arbitrary evaluation. Some times one competent officer may have an adverse remark and some less performed officer may be evaluated as excellent in this traditional method. Moreover, everyone those who are meeting the standards and not performing, getting the same treatment. Nonperformance hardly has any effect on the salaries, promotion and other benefits. Consequently, such kind of arrangement fails to motivate those who are working hard to meet the standards. They have no reason to put extra efforts. Under this milieu it is difficult to implement CC effectively.

#### 9.2.4 Transfer/Job Rotation

One of the reasons for the poor performance of the public sector personnel is their frequent job rotation. This hampers the development of professionalism in civil servants. Without the development of professionalism, we can't expect quality services from them. They need certain time to understand pros and cons of their job descriptions and job environment. In Bangladesh many officials are transferred within a very short span of time after joining the post or transferred when they just began to understand their organizations. But CC demands a full understanding of the organization and its services from its officials to provide quality services.

#### 9.2.5 Accountability

According to the United Nations Human Development Report (UNDP 2002b), accountability is about power. It is about people having not just a say in official decisions but also the right to hold their rulers to account." To put simply, accountability is a strategy to secure compliance with accepted standards. It is a tool to minimize the misuse/abuse of power and authority by public functionaries.

CC focuses to establish accountability through its grievance redress



procedure. The Citizens' Charter aspires to establish the bottom-up version of accountability where civil servants are placed directly under the citizens. Public service being accountable means that the officials' actions are continuously scrutinized and monitored; there may be mounting pressure on them to be result-oriented. In Bangladesh there is hardly any culture of bottom-up version of accountability whatever exists are all top-down. So without major changes in the government apparatus, just a declaration through CC may make little differences.

#### 9.2.6 Responsiveness

Responsiveness is quite different from accountability. The former connotes sensitiveness of public officials to public preferences, needs and demands while the later emphasizes answerability of one's own action and use of resources. Ostrom (1975) defines responsiveness as, "the capacity to satisfy the preferences of the citizens", especially those "who are dependent upon the institution."

Under the existing system, bureaucrats are largely unaccountable and unresponsive. The traditional notion of responsibility underlines too much bureaucratic discretion, but new measures under the umbrella of NPM in general and CC in particular address the problem of bureaucratic responsiveness by putting them directly under the public domain. It puts premium on the public satisfaction as a criterion for their valid and legitimate actions. Bangladesh is yet to create this culture in the public sectors.

#### 9.2.7 Transparency

Transparency refers to the availability of information to the general public and clarity about government rules, regulations, and decisions. It can be strengthened through the citizens' right to information with a degree of legal enforceability (ADB website, accessed: 2009). Transparency in government decision-making and public policy implementation reduces uncertainty and can help inhibit corruption among public officials

The CC attempts to allocate citizen an active role in governance. It, therefore, is about to establish a system in which information would be made easily available to all stakeholders. But in Bangladesh there is

culture of secrecy which is backed by various laws and regulations, such as, Official Secrets Act 1923, Evidence Act 1872 and Government Servants (Conduct) Rules 1979. These laws should be emended to ensure transparency. Recently the government passed the Right to Information (RTI), 2009; but it is yet to operate effectively. It should be made effective as early as possible. Otherwise, under the culture of such secrecy, CC will not be effective to deliver services.

#### 9.2.8 Decision Making

In Bangladesh, the organization structure is like a pyramid. This means that the organization configuration is hierarchic. Authority and power is mainly vested at the top echelons, and little is left to the lower rungs of the hierarchy. To a large extent, decision-making is based on the 'whims of the top'. The seniors usually do not consult and discuss different issues with their subordinates before making decisions; rather they make decisions unilaterally and single handedly. This leads to alienation among the subordinates and engender a sense of lack of ownership. Further, subordinates usually do not argue and debate with seniors but accept and follow whatever asked by the boss. Such practices impede effective implementation of the CC.

#### 9.2.9 Rigidity

Rigidity means bureaucrats attached more importance to rules and regulations where they rarely prefer to break and or by pass specified rules of the game regardless of the urgency of the situation.

Through analyzing Bangladesh civil service we can reveal that bureaucrats have strong predilections to follow the rules. In other words, they are not flexible even in the case of urgency. To some extent, for them means are ends rather than means to realize goals and objectives. This in turn affects efficient and effective delivery of services. In other words, the officials are not flexible enough to deal cases on contextual basis. Such an attitude undermines flexibility and eventually stalls implementation of CC.

#### 9.2.10 Orientation

There are two types of orientation in the public service delivery viz.

process orientation and result orientation. In the former, the issue is whether bureaucrats fulfill certain rituals and procedures or pursue predetermined goals and objectives.

There is a standardized and codified procedure to accomplish tasks in the civil service. Everyone in the hierarchy is supposed to pass all the levels irrespective of the importance of the matter. The citizens viewed this system as time consuming. To focus on process, make system less responsive to the needs of citizen. In way to serve citizen is less important than to complete formalities. This delays the outcome in many instances and users get services after quite late. Even some cases needful are delivered after it become immaterial to user. Hence, process orientation undermines the importance of goals and objectives and, therefore, affects the effective implementation of the CC.

#### 9.2.11 Stability/Status Quo

The civil servants in Bangladesh maintain more traditional values which foster the status quo orientation. Though some officials have favor for change but to a large extent, they uphold old beliefs, norms and values. But CC needs switching to new values and norms, acceptance to new concepts, ideas and innovation to serve the people. The officials have least tendencies to venture in experiments, change, and innovation. Further, seniors hardly encourage both subordinates as well as citizens to bring new ideas, schemes, plans and suggestions. Therefore, the officials' resistance to change is a big hurdle for the implementation of CC.

For example, recently a lot of modernization, in the shape of computerization, was carried out in most organizations. The government invested a lot of funds to revamp its old system through introducing computers and e-governance initiatives. But ultimately little has been improved in both employees' expertise as well as working procedures. Rarely officials are using computers, but use these as typewriters to process officials' letters and documents. Many of the websites of the ministries/department are not even regularly updated, let alone establishing interactive website for better public services. All this illustrates that the officials are not keen to innovate and change the old system rather they enjoy it. Under such prevailing circumstances there are least chances that the CC will be implemented successfully.



### 9.2.12 Resources

In an organization, the managerial and technical resources are required for successful implementation of the citizen's charter. Resources may include manpower, funds, technology etc required in the particular program to facilitate effective implementation and vice-versa. Sabatier and Mazmanian (1989) mentioned that the need for adequate funding is critical in the implementation of any program. Rothstein (1998:69) observed that to ensure effective program implementation, available resources should be placed in the hands of skillful and motivated organizational actors. To him, "the basic idea is simple enough - that any program, however cleverly designed it may be, will fall if its implementation is entrusted to an organization unsuited to that purpose." Similarly, in every public organization of Bangladesh also requires specific resources like skilled and trained manpower, adequate funds, infrastructure etc. to implement citizen's charter successfully.

If the government does not possess the required resources for the implementation of the CC, then the charter program may be affected adversely. According to the CC of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), its cleaners have to clean garbage from the city everyday. But due to the shortage of cleaners and required vehicles DCC can't perform its duties regularly. Thus the lack of the resources is impeding the effective implementation of the citizen's charter in various organizations.

### 9.2.13 Training

To tune the administrative apparatus in the light of the changing gazes, training is perhaps the most useful device. Because it helps to enhance the knowledge, skills and capabilities of the administrators to accomplish their tasks efficiently. It is an important instrument which helps to inculcate right values and attitudes among civil servants and keep them abreast with changes taking place in various spheres. As Robbins states "competent employees don't remain competent forever. Skills deteriorate and can become obsolete. That's why organizations spend billions of dollars each year on formal training." (Robbins, 2001:480)

The training efforts in our public organizations specifically directed to the upper echelons i.e. Class 1 and to some extent Class 2. They all together constitute 14.77 percent of the civil service. The rest of the two classes

i.e. Class 3 and 4 which constitute 85.23 percent of the total workforce, receive almost no training (BBS, 2008: 162). Many of them are left to fate to learn while doing rather than providing any organized training. They mainly learn while doing. In other words, they lack coherent training packages for employees instead they learn largely through a trial and error process.

On the other hand the training system in Bangladesh still remains divorced from social realities. The main emphasis is on the understanding of administrative techniques rather than on the improvement of human relations skills and the broadening of the outlook of civil servants (Khan and Zafarullah, 2005:142). The course contents of the training includes excessive emphasis on subjects like culture, history, law and learning about rules- as opposed to developing quantitative and analytical skills (Ahmed, S. G. 2004:149). Thus, in the absence of required training, effective implementation of the citizen charter will be a challenging task.

#### 9.2.14 Corruption

The term "Corruption" covers a wide range of human actions which may take many forms. It has been defined as misuse of public office for private gain. Public office is abused for private gains when an official accepts, solicits or extorts a bribe or an undue advantage. Continuance of corruption in a country leads to economic malaise and squandering of public resources, lowers governmental performance, adversely affects general morale in the public service, jeopardizes administrative reform efforts and accountability measures, and perpetuates social and economic inequalities (UN, 1990).

Corruption pervades public life and public administration in Bangladesh. The general perception of people is that almost all important institutions of public life - the law and order agency, the judiciary, the revenue collection departments, the service sector, the financial sector, to name a few, and majority of public servants of all categories working in them are involved in corruption (PARC, 2000: 83). This is reflected in TI's (Transparency International) Corruption Perception Index (CPI). Bangladesh was ranked as the most corrupt country for successive times. Still this country is ranked as highly corrupt. Under this milieu, we hardly can expect the proper implementation of CC without any major overhauling.

### **9.3 Political Variables**

#### **9.3.1 Commitment**

Political executives are the highest authority in a country. They are liable for running the state apparatus. So the success of the implementation of any policy/reform initiative largely depends on them. But at times politicians pursue specific reforms or changes for symbolic value. The argument is that an implementation process is used to justify political action. Similarly the success of CC depends on whether this device is only a political symbol that is employed to legitimize the government's efforts to improve public services, or whether the government has required will to enforce.

In Bangladesh CC is formulated on the basis of the special interest of last Caretaker Government. Now it is the duty of the present political party to carry forward this system. If this present government does not give special attention and provide required support, CC will not be effective. Government has to prove that it is not a decorative piece rather it is a substantial tool for the mass empowerment and to curb down bureaucratic maladies.

#### **9.3.2 Efficiency**

The success of government is largely influenced by the efficiency of its political executives. They should have sufficient knowledge and experience to run the state machineries. Unfortunately many of our ministers and MPs (Member of Parliament) do not have sufficient knowledge and experience. Many of their education level are very low. Even many of them do not complete the school education. This pathetic picture also affects the performance of their works. CC which try to ensure quality service- requires efficient and dynamic leadership from the political executives. So the lack of sufficient knowledge and experience of our political executives acts as an impediment for the proper implementation of CC.

#### **9.3.3 Coordination**

The coordination- both vertical and horizontal is important for the successful implementation of any policy/reform initiatives. When the top executive take decisions then it should be passed through all the arteries



of the government- all the ministries/departments should work in line with the directives. If there is any missing link then there will be difficulty-specially to provide quality services. For example- for the installation of a new company, an investor has to take a series of permissions and services from the government. Failure of a single agency-say failure to give gas connection in time can make the entire initiative in vain. Though other agencies work properly and provide necessary services in due time but without gas connection the company may fail to go for production. Thus with out coordination CC fail to achieve its main objective-satisfactory service delivery.

#### 9.3.4 Public Support

Politician are wind of change, harder the wind blow the more they change. So Public support is very crucial for new changes and reforms to be implemented successfully. Implementation may be affected by conditions within the implementation environment: the behavior of the group affected by policy, socio-economic conditions and public opinion (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1989). Without public involvement and their support, there are low chances to put into effect policies especially the CC that need wider public participation.

Without information about the CC, the citizens may not form their opinions, and hence may not lend their support for it. Further, the extent of public support to proposed change(s) depends on the costs and benefits offered by the particular reform. The more the benefits to public, the greater may be the public participation, and eventually the higher may be the support for the reform. It is evident that the CC offers more benefits and least costs to the public. Therefore, the citizens may have high participation and support for it. It is evident that the CC offers more benefits and least costs to the public. Therefore, the citizens may have high participation and support for it. But in our country we don't see any such participation which is not favorable for the implementation of CC.

#### 10.0 Concluding Remarks

Citizen's Charter aims to ensure the delivery of services based on quality, promptness, transparency and customer choice realized through the display of information related to services expected, their quality standards, feedback options and complaint and redress mechanisms

(Haque, 2005:391). But the Charters of Bangladesh will remain merely a paper exercise of limited value if we can't remove the aforementioned barriers. Now the question what can be done to address the concerns related to the Citizen's Charter? In this regard, the problems and barriers explored here should themselves determine the remedial options.

The most important factor for successful implementation of the citizen's charter is political commitment. A strong political commitment established through proper mechanism viz. rewards and sanctions, will make public service more performance oriented which ultimately will enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the public services. Further, political determination can also dismantle the strong bureaucratic cartel and make the system more transparent, open and responsive.

Any new change requires resources and overhauling processes to tune the existing system with the changing gaze. In the words of Howlett and Ramesh (2003: 185), for effective policy implementation, "funding must be allocated, personnel assigned, and rules and procedures developed." If sufficient resources are not available for different activities then implementation may suffer adversely. Government should provide resources for increasing administrative capacity to meet the demand, for organizing training especially for the frontline staff to revamp and update them, for marketing the CC to inform about it and for such other related activities. Government should remove the rules and regulations which stifle the implementation of CC and amend them in line with the spirit of CC and. In this regard, government should take steps to ensure effective implementation of Right To Information (RTI) act immediately.

In Bangladesh, there is no monitoring authority of CC. In India, there is an authority "Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)" who oversight the over all implementation process of CC and provide necessary instructions to the corresponding organizations. We should develop such monitoring body to oversight all the activities. Immediate formation of a monitoring Cell within the Ministry of Establishment can be a good option.

Though under this study we don't examine the details of the contents of the various CC in Bangladesh which is mentioned in our analytical framework, but on the basis of cursory view we can remarks that there are many weaknesses in the contents of various CC. The contents of the CC

should be enriched in line with the people's aspirations. It should be formulated taking the opinions of the people.

In addition to these measures, for effective implementation of the Citizen's Charter, it should be supplemented by addressing some other issues. The citizens' voice can be sought through various mechanisms such as citizens' survey, citizen panels, customer feedback cells or cards, consultations, focus groups etc. For effective charter program, it is not only important to build rapport and harmonious relationships with the citizens, but to involve street level bureaucrats in the charter program. It is also crucial to publicize the Charter through most publicly accessible means (radio, television, poster, etc.) to disseminate the basic messages of the Charter; and provide adequate training to public officials in the Charter's objectives and strategies, the principles of citizen-centered governance and the rights of citizens as service recipients. These initiatives related to the Citizen's Charter, however, would remain futile if the people continue to suffer from severe corruption committed by public officials. It is essential to eradicate opportunities and incentives for corruption from all spheres of the public sector - including the political realm (political parties, prime minister, ministers, MPs) and the administrative system (from top-most secretaries to manual workers at the bottom) in all sectors - by building effective and clean anti-corruption agencies, creating a non-corrupt social culture through public education and grassroots campaigns and so on. Last not the least, there is a need of an active, vigilant and regular oversight by various stakeholders and watchdogs agencies like - media, NGOs, citizens, researchers, potential users and staff to make charter program successful.



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## Consequence of Press Freedom for the Promotion of Democratic Governance: Bangladesh perspective\*

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**Abstract:** The paper attempts to focus the press freedom and democratic governance in analytical perspective. It is pointed out that freedom of press is indeed, an essential force that plays critical role as one of the main 'conscience keepers' of the nation, and for the protection of those who have no other redress in a democratic country like Bangladesh. For the welfare of the society and the maturity of democratic governance, none can deny the magnitude of freedom of press. Specially, democratic governance and its sustainable development are fully meaningless without the freedom of press. The press freedom acts as an essential safe guard of democratic governance. But in the developing country like Bangladesh, there are numerous restrictions behind the free flow of press. That is the reasons why democracy and responsible governance is not carrying out properly till today. Moreover, the democratic journey of the country is at a stake. The paper also considers the current state of freedom of press in Bangladesh and contributions of it for the promotion of democratic governance.

### 1.0 Introduction

According to Alexis de Tocqueville, "the emergence of the press claims it self as a powerful instrument for democracy" Press freedom, therefore, becomes more necessary in proportion as men become more equal and individual more to be feared. To suppose that they only serve to protect freedom would be to diminish their importance. Democratization process for good governance and freedom of press are hand in hand and reinforce one another. There is hardly any doubt that democracy to be meaningful must ensure freedom of information to the people. The free flow of information is therefore, an essential requirement for successful democratization process. In fact, freedom of press is a powerful change agent in a democratic society. Bangladesh is a democratic country of the 3rd world. The reintroduction of the Parliamentary Democracy from the 1991 has brought a considerable freedom for the press with a democratic order. The successive democratic regime generally respected the freedom

\* The views and opinions expressed in the article don't necessarily represent the views and opinion of UNDP Bangladesh

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of the press, although the tasks of upholding this freedom by the Journalists have not been easy in Bangladesh. Numerous cases have been documented where journalists are harassed, intimidated and killed by political activists, police and often vested groups in the society.

The state and its functionaries are the most obvious source of media censorship, reassessment and repression. However, as many action also have a stake in suppressing, the activities of journalists. Steady criminalization of the political and economic landscape explaining much of the violence and brutality experienced by members of the press. Pervasive corruption at all levels also becomes a fundamental barrier to press freedom. The problem is not so much of oppressive laws-although existing laws are not exactly liberal but more that extralegal measures and illegal forms of intimidation, coercion and violence are routinely used by the state and others to silence the press. The numerous newspapers and periodicals published in Bangladesh testify to that freedom press. Not withstanding, the press in Bangladesh suffers from some serious limitations and barriers. As a result of the fact, press freedom is an essential for the consolidation of fledging democracy to promote good governance in Bangladesh .

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents the conceptual analysis of press freedom, section 3 provides the meaning and content of democracy and good governance, section 4 presents the importance of press freedom in democratic governance as a critical analysis, and section 5 provides an evaluation over the present state of press freedom in Democracy in the context of Bangladesh.

## **2.0 Press Freedom: Conceptual Analysis**

The press has become even more central to democratic discourse worldwide. The existence of freedom of the press still marks a critical point that distinguishes a freely functioning democracy from an authoritarian regime. The quintessentially modern idea of a free press has been evolving for more than two centuries. A truly noteworthy development of the latter half of the twentieth century has become a gradually growing realization around the world that press freedom not only is an indispensable pillar of democracy, but it is important for the long term sustainability of social and economic development. For over a century and a half following 1791, when the first amendment was written into the U.S. Constitution to guarantee freedom of the press, this idea did not gain global acceptance. Only a few industrializing societies in the

west allowed the press to function freely within their borders. Today, how ever the number of countries that respect freedom of the press has risen dramatically, though there remain many others that still do not have anything resembling a free press. In 1950, as the post world war II. Wave of a desalinization swept across the world, India became the first non-western, non-industrialized nation to create a dramatic republic with the right of "freedom of expression" written in to its constitution. Article 19 (1) of the Indian constitution did not use the exact phrase "freedom of the press", it simply stated that all citizen's would have the right to "freedom of speech and expression".

Many newly independent nations declared themselves to be democracies of one kind or another, but their governments excluded press freedom from the definition of democracy. The situation began to change as the new third wave of democratization initiated among the 3rd world countries in the 2nd half of the twentieth century.

The awarding of the 1998 Nobel Prize in economics to Amartya Sen was therefore a milestone for those who recognize the crucial link between freedom and well being, between democracy and growth.

Significantly, that link has been noted by the world's leading development organization, the World Bank. Until recently, the Bank rarely mentioned words like "democracy" or "press freedom" in its official statements. These days, the Bank openly states its support for freedom of the press as a key factor in economics and social advancement. In a recent speech to the world press freedom committee in Washington D.C, World Bank president James D. Wolfensohn stated. "A fresh press is not a luxury; a free press is at the absolute core of equitable development, because if you can not enfranchise poor people, if they do not have a right to expression, if there is no search light on corruption and inequitable practices, you can not build the public consensus needed to bring about change ".

According to the definition of William Blackstone, "Every free man has an undoubted right to lay what sentiment he pleases before the public; to for did this, is to destroy the freedom of the press."

A.V. Dicey commented, "The freedom of press means the right of a person to publish what he pleases in books or newspapers ."

Realizing the importance of freedom of press, Ex U.S president Jefferson Stated, "were it left to me to decide whether we should have government without news paper or newspaper without government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter ".



So, a free press means a press, which is free from the compulsions from whatever source govt., social external or internal. A free press is free for the expression of opinion in all its phases. Freedom of press includes the right to adopt and pursue a policy without governmental restriction.

### **3.0 Democratic Governance: meaning and content**

To commence with, meaning of Democracy should be conversed in brief to apprehend the implication of democratic governance justly. More than a form or system of government, democracy has come to assume the status of a fashionable nomenclature. As fashion is a fast changing concept, so are the meanings and contents of democracy in reality, if not always in theory. Though often assumed to be simple form of government, democracy seems to have assumed most of the complexities of the world; on the other hand, an umpteen number of adjectives have been adopted to divert the attention of the critics of democracy in several states. "Basic", "Guided", "Panchayat", "Party less", "one party", "People's", and "Islamic" are some such adjectives.

Allan Ball has identified the following features of liberal democratic system:

1. There is more than one political party competing for political power.
2. The competition for power is open, not secretive and is based on established and accepted forms of procedure.
3. Entry and recruitment to positions of political power are relatively open.
4. There are periodic elections based on universal franchise.
5. Pressure groups are able to operate to influence government decision. Associations such as trade unions and other voluntary organizations are not subject to close governmental control.
6. Civil liberties, such as freedom of speech, religion, freedom from arbitrary arrest, are recognized and protected within the political system. This assumes that there is substantial amount of independence and freedom from government control of the mass media, i.e., radio, television, newspapers.
7. There is some form of separation of powers, i.e., a representative assembly has some form of control over the executive and the judiciary is independent of both executive and legislature .

Democracy is the single governance framework that is consistent with a comprehensive perspective on human development. Democratic governance means that:

- ♦ People's human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected, allowing them to live with dignity.
- ♦ People have a say in decisions that affect their lives.
- ♦ People can hold decision-makers accountable.
- ♦ Inclusive and fair rules, institutions and practices govern social interactions.
- ♦ Women are equal partners with men in the private and public spheres of life and decision-making.
- ♦ People are free from discrimination based in race, ethnicity, class, gender or any other attribute.
- ♦ The needs of the future generations are reflected in current policies.
- ♦ Economic and social policies are responsive to people's needs and aspirations. and
- ♦ Economic and social policies aim at eradicating poverty and expanding the choices that all people have in their lives.

Democratic governance is associated with the following mechanisms:

#### 1. Human Rights

- ♦ Strengthen formal human rights institutions and mechanisms
- ♦ Support civil society, education and accountability roles
- ♦ Realize human rights of women, children, and marginalized groups

#### 2. Accountable Public Institutions

- ♦ Improve financial and economic management
- ♦ Strengthen audit, statistical capacity, and human resource management
- ♦ Promote policy coordination
- ♦ Enhance transparency and anti-corruption
- ♦ Improve service delivery, e.g. health, energy, basic needs

### 3. Freedom and Democracy

- ♦ Build open and accountable political systems: electoral and legislative assistance, decentralization, federalism, and local government, political parties, and competition
- ♦ Create a democratic environment: independent media and transparency, development of civil society, education for democratic culture, building inclusive societies

### 4. Rule of Law

- ♦ Promote predictable, impartial, accessible, timely, and effective legal systems
- ♦ Support independent and non-discriminatory judicial systems
- ♦ Advance public legal education and engagement, and
- ♦ Support informal legal practices that respect human rights

### 4.0 Press Freedom in Democratic Governance: A critical analysis

The exercise of freedom of opinion, expression and information, recognized as an integral part of human rights and fundamental freedoms, is a vital factor in the strengthening of peace and democracy. In fact, press freedom is a major component that plays a critical role to promote democratic governance.

According to John Stuart Mill, "Greatest happiness for the greatest number of people is democracy and freedom of thought. It holds that the freedom to speak is intimately tied to the freedom of thought, and that a provision on what one can think is an attack on one's identity, freedom of thought as a result of the fact, is indeed a vital force to strengthening democracy as it is necessity for enhanced governing process of the country".

Realizing the importance of press freedom for democracy and responsive governance, David Flint pointed out three major points:

- (1) People need to be informed on all matters of public interest so that they may effectively exercise their roles, as citizens, for example in voting and so also those they may form opinions and engage in debate to the governing process for the sake of responsiveness towards the people's wellbeing.



- (2) The exchange of free and full information is the oxygen of a market economy, good governance.
- (3) Democracy requires both good and erroneous ideas be allowed and indeed, encouraged in the market place of ideas. When ideas complete in the market place for acceptance, full and free discussion exposes the false and they gain few adherents .

Amartya Sen rightly commented that, "Freedom of expression and freedom of the press are surely essential elements in the developing process of democracy and it disseminates information to make the process of governance truly transparent".

United Nations in its universal declaration of human rights (Article 19) rightly mentioned the following:

"Every one has the right to freedom of opinion and freedom of expression, this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers". Declaration on mass communication media and human rights, council of Europe, 1970 prioritized the importance of press freedom that works best as a safeguard to protect human rights, transparent public institutions, and democratic process as well. Press systems of SAARC, Jointly organized by Asian Mass Communication (AMIC) and Nepal press institute in 1991, placed importance over the freedom of press for the exercise of democracy and pro people governance. It also stressed the priority upon the free flow of information through press freedom in South Asian countries for the institutionalization of democratic governance .

Tocqueville pointed out the importance of press freedom in strengthening democracy. He mentioned that "press freedom causes political life to circulate through all the parts of that vast majority. Its eye is constantly open to detect the secret springs of political designs and to summon the leaders of all parties in turn to the bar of the public opinion. It rallies the interest of the community round certain principles and draws up the creed of every party; for it affords a means of inter course between those who hear and address each other without ever coming in to immediate contact".

Importance of press freedom for truly democratic governance can be decorated as:

- (a) In a democratic system, the connection of every group is important for a strong democracy, every group must be able to criticize the functions of govt. which is against the interest of people. Right to information or access to be acquainted with the public delivery system is the basic component of good governance. Freedom of press makes that right of public true.
- (b) In modern governing system public opinion is very significant issue. For the existence of any state, the articulation of public opinion is crying need. Press is the only way to articulate the public opinion and let the govt. give a chance to run over the state through pro-people policies. For organizing people's view, to force down inputs of masses towards decision making process of government there is no alternative to press freedom. Press freedom can provide people the real and factual news and as a result, people can go through right decision and organize themselves for real objects.
- (c) Without people's consciousness about their right and duties, the society will not drive in a proper way. Press is the ultimate product of public consciousness that plays a critical role to bring a sense of eagerness to take part in the state functioning and accelerating governance process.
- (d) Human rights are essential to promote the development of the society. Press plays a critical role to secure the human rights in all respect. When human rights is violated any where by anyone through the country, press comes forward to speak in support of it.
- (e) UN former Secretary General Kofi Annan says, "Good Governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development. In fact, democracies are better guarantor or property rights than no democracies an that enforcing tracts is essential for investment and growth for the development of the society, freedom of press is important as it can ensure the real situation regarding development. As a result, the authority concern goes through right measures on time to boost development process."

- (f) Press is the mirror of a society. It provides the real picture of a society. Specially, in modern world press is very alert and conscious about corruption and bad governance. So any sort of mismanagements, power abuse, and wastages of resources, nepotism, and press when it is free from the interference can uphold the real story, and let the govt. give a chance to combat terrorism, corruption, mismanagement those are great barriers for the promotion of democratic governance.
- (g) In a modern world, press is known as the 'fourth state' for the democratic development of any state.

Press can drive the state and society in a proper way and can pave the way to be solidified nation. Every state has some objective end views for the articulation. Such sorts of national goals are the ultimate product of the unification and consensus of the people. A free press can work to serve the national interest.

### **5.0 Press Freedom in Democratic Governance: an evaluation in the context of Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is a democratic country of the 3rd world. Parliamentary democracy had been practicing in Bangladesh since her birth in 1971. Moreover, after few years of practicing parliamentary democracy since its liberation, Bangladesh went through a serious political instability with the staging of coups and counter coups. Several political ups and downs like introduction of one party system, military roles and irresponsible competition of political parties to capture power have placed the democratic journey of the countries at stake. However, the nation has restarted her journey to democracy in 1990 but the path is not moisturized still now, though as an independent nation, we have passed about thirty five years but our achievements in the spheres of democracy and better governance are not noteworthy. Even, the country today is riddled with numerous problems threatening the very development of democratic governance as democratic governance is broadly divided into four elements: freedom and democracy, human rights, rule of law, and accountable public institutions. Lack effective and strong presence of freedom of press is one of them. Through the constitution of People's Republic of Bangladesh guarantees freedom of speech and expression under article 39, but such freedom is subject to reasonable restrictions. Moreover, a number of acts along with the rigid government control over the information and the misuse of power are responsible for the less



effectiveness of press freedom. Good governance and development are important goals in their right; they also depend on and reinforce each other for the promotion of responsible governance process. But absence of people's participation and restriction of them to have an access to information are jeopardizing democratic governance. Political parties are a keystone of democratic governance. They provide a structure for political participation; serve as a training ground for political leadership; and transform social interests into public policy. The question for development practitioners is how best to work with political parties in addressing the challenges they face. In Bangladesh, political parties could not flourish as transparent and democratic organizations. More over, access to the information about the functions, budgeting's very tricky for media and media could not work for the democratization and development of political parties as harassment of the journalists by the activists of the political parties is often happen.

In 2003, 'The committee to protect journalists' (CPJ) declared Bangladesh to be one of the most violent places in the world for reporters. In deed, investigative journalism has become an increasingly hazardous occupation in Bangladesh. The state and its functionaries are the most obvious source of media censorship harassment and repression. However, as many of the incidents make clear, a variety of non state actors also have a stake in suppressing the activities of journalists, steady criminalization of the political and economic landscape explains much of the violence and brutality experienced by members of the press in 2003. Pervasive corruption at all levels has also become a fundamental barrier to press freedom. The problem is not so much of draconian or oppressive laws-although existing laws are not exactly liberal but more that extralegal measures and illegal forms of intimidation, coercion and violence routinely used by the state and others to silence the press.

In Bangladesh, till today journalists are routinely harassed intimidated on physically assaulted in the course of their work. There are almost daily causes of physical assaults and intimidation, particularly in rural areas. Not surprisingly, those journalists who reports on political violence, official corruption and organized crimes are prime targets for reprisal by the police, political cadres affiliated with the ruling party, and by underworld criminal gangs who themselves often ties to parties in powers. On the contrary, many found that upon publishing stories that incriminate powerful interest groups, false cases are lodged against them in turn. In most cases, journalists become prey when they report on the hooliganism

and corruption of the ruling party members. Libel and defamation cases against journalist are also used as tools of harassment. Although turning to procedures laid out in the law, rather than resorting to extra legal measures such as rouging up and intimidating individuals on ransacking offices, may appear democratic, the uses and interpretation of the law leave much room for manipulation.

Many laws in Bangladesh compel journalists to practice some degree of self censorship, when even a case is filed under section 501 of the penal code, which relates to printing or engraving matter known to be defamatory. The courts response is to issue an arrest warrant rending investigation, it has become a practice in Bangladesh that on the day of the first hearing, the court issues a warrant and in most cases, irrespective of the charges gravity, journalists are ordered to be arrested immediately. It has been a long standing demand of the press that the practice on issuing warrants be changed so that journalists are not inhibited by the fear of arrest even if their report is based on facts.

Even, the official secrets act, 1923 restricts the journalists to have access to official materials. The administration is a vital source of news as it is the arena where corruption, mismanagement are most likely to take place the bureaucracy in Bangladesh till looks at the press with suspicion and fear, and tries to avoid the journalists. This is a stumbling block to the growth and impact of the press for an accountable and efficient democratic system in Bangladesh .

However, the Right to Information Act enacted by the Government of Bangaldesh in April 2009 will bring a revolutionary change as to ensure free flow of information and people's right to information. The freedom of thought, conscience and speech is recognized in the Constitution as a fundamental right and the right to information is an alienable part of it. Since all powers of the Republic belong to the people, it is necessary to ensure right to information for their empowerment. The right to information shall ensure that transparency and accountability in all public, autonomous and statutory organizations and in private organizations run on government or foreign funding shall increase, corruption shall decrease and good governance shall be established as well as press freedom shall be protected.

It is said that no paper or periodical can stand up to financial power in Bangladesh. It needs money to bring out papers. The revenue earned from subscribers can not cover even a fraction of the production cost even if



the circulation is exceptionally high. Advertisements are the lifeblood of the media, and since the government is the biggest blood donors, as a result, the Govt. can influence over the press and that is a barrier to the freedom of press in Bangladesh. On the contrary, In case of irresponsible journalism on press freedom creates a critical problem in a democratic country like Bangladesh. For the cause of freedom, press can provide public news without real documents; this type of wrong and irresponsible information creates an unprecedented suffering at local and national level and its jeopardizing the stability and democratic development of the country. Moreover, political involvement and biasness of the editors, publishers and journalists have become a major impediment to the freedom of press in our country. Despite the fact, Bangladesh today is fortunate to enjoy a considerable freedom that is essential for the promotion of democratic governance.

### **6.0 Concluding remarks**

What becomes very clear from the above discussion is that the press and for that matter free press is inseparable for the promotion of democratic governance. It is at once an essential attribute of and indispensable precondition for democracy and sustainable democratic development can change the total image of the nation like Bangladesh. The people must be allowed the freedom to hold opinion without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas to enable them to exercise their rights as citizen and participate intelligently and effectively in the governance process of the country. The press is by far the best-suited medium for the purpose. It can keep the people informed of all the local, national and international developments and provide widest possible scope for public discussion on issues of the good and responsible governing process and common concern. It is acknowledged on all hands that freedom of the press is not a one sided privilege of the journalists. It is a corollary to the reader's right to know about their political rights, basic rights and the functions of the government, political parties in power and opposition since right to information is major part of democratic governance.

The press in Bangladesh plays a unique role and enjoys a considerable freedom compatible with a democratic order; the successive democratic regimes generally respected the freedom of the press, although the tasks of upholding this freedom by the journalists have not been easy. Numerous cases are documented where journalists are harassed,



intimidated and killed by political activists, police and other vested groups in the society. There are cases when the press in Bangladesh sometimes becomes a willing propaganda machine for corporate on dominant political interests, but the change can be clearly noted as the profession of journalism is moving towards a high standard of accountability and increasing realization that media serves the needs and aspirations of the people. The profession of journalism is noble, enjoyable as well as risky. The practice of journalism is difficult in today's world that is paradoxically witnessing enormous opportunities as well as myriad challenges for peaceful social and political existence. The tasks of journalists, therefore, are adventurous, rewarding and often dangerous, particularly in conflict areas and violence of prone societies. The trend is clear the journalists suffer increasingly for their reporting on crime, corruption, bad governance, and violation of human rights. In Bangladesh, journalists run the risk of arrests and violence as offenders against public order and safety by the state. At the same time, in many new democracies like Bangladesh, the profession of journalism has not also developed to that highest standard where ethics of journalism is fully maintained. The journalist are often tempted and induced to write sensational and motivate news damaging for particular groups, political party or interest. The frontiers of information ethics are therefore, becoming very reluctant for the journalists in the globalizing era. It is imperative that journalists must follow the ethics of their profession, and without which individuals, groups and nation states will suffer in image and reputation. The new generation of journalist should therefore, be equipped with skill, professional integrity and greater realization of the implications of their reports and stories. The official secrets act, 1923 restricts the journalists to have access to public official materials. That is the reason why, a transparent system of administration like Right to information (RTI) Act has to be enforced with a view to ensuring free flow of information from the government so that inefficiencies, misuses and failures of the govt. can be exposed to the wider public. More over, practice of democracy within political parties is required in the process of freed of press in Bangladesh. Separation of Judiciary from the Executive is a milestone achievement of the caretaker government and it will accelerate the process of freedom of press in Bangladesh.

So, time has come to realize the importance of freedom of press to promote democracy for the sake of good governance in Bangladesh. The govt. should be solemn to apply the mechanism to ensure good

governance by protect all sort of basic rights of the citizens particularly human rights in all aspects for the better and professional performance of journalists in their actions as per the constitutional obligation (article 39). Since Caretaker government is committed to establish National Human Rights Commission, hence freedom of press will be more momentous. Beside the editors, publishers and journalists should keep their neutrality to uphold the prestige of the profession. It is impossible for the govt. and the press media to shoulder the responsibilities of improving the state of press freedom. So, the political parties, civil society, public intellectuals and conscious citizens should come forward to uphold the spirit of freedom of press to strengthen democratic governance in Bangladesh. In fact, freedom of press plays an important role as one of the main 'conscience keepers' of the nation and is indeed act as an essential watchdog of democracy and responsible governance.

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## Application of Teaching Method to Improve English Language Skills in Bangladesh

Hossain Al Mamun<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** In Bangladesh, school and college students are taught English through Grammar Translation Method (GTM) or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Method. These students enter the universities passing the SSC, and HSC examinations and in most cases, they are still very weak in English. They cannot speak or write English without mistakes which prove that neither of these methods are perfect for Bangladeshi context. So, to suit Bangladesh context, it is better to redesign these methods and develop an eclectic method that may help our teachers to develop four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) of school and college students. This study will analyse and focus the relevant aspects to create an eclectic approach to improve English Language skills in Bangladesh.

### Introduction:

The history of English Language Teaching (ELT) shows that the emergence of different methods like Grammar Translation (GTM), Direct Method (DM), Audio Lingual Method (ALM), and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Method etc. to teach English as a foreign language was actually the response of the linguists and language teaching specialists to different learners need and their goal in different countries during different periods of time. For example, GTM was applied in European countries to improve reading skill from 1840s to the 1940s. DM was used to improve speaking skill from 1860s to 1920s emerged in USA after World War-II for oral training in target language which declined in 1970s and CLT was the British contribution to ELT which emerged in late 1960s that again is inappropriate in some Asian Countries. Specially, after the decline of DM, people discovered that no specific method can guarantee success in ELT. Therefore, it is better to incorporate suitable aspects from these four methods into one method and develop an eclectic approach to teach English in Bangladesh.

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### Analysis:

First of all, we can take a look at the definitions of method, approach, and technique because these terms are closely related to each other. American Applied linguist Edward Anthony defines them in this way- an approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning.<sup>2</sup> He said, "Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material.....all of which is based upon the reelected approach."<sup>3</sup> And according to him-a technique is implementation that which actually takes place in a classroom.<sup>4</sup> With the implementation of these aspects, it is needed to analyse the theories, design, characteristics of teaching/learning activities, role of teachers, role of the Learners, nature of student-teacher interaction, nature of student-student interaction, role of the instructional material and procedure.

### 1. Theory:

Two things obviously influence the way a teacher implements a method in a classroom, his notion of:

- a) Theory of language, and
- b) Theory of language learning

#### 1.1 Theory of language

Teachers should try to keep in mind that language can be seen from:

- i) Structural point of view (from ALM):

Every language has a structure consisting of phonological units, grammatical units, grammatical operations and lexical items. This view will help a teacher to focus on linguistic competence of the students to develop their writing and reading skill.

- ii) Functional point of view (from CLT):

We use language as an instrument to express our feelings, emotions, needs etc. So, language performs different functions

<sup>2</sup> Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. 2nd Edition. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.19.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

in different situations. From this point of view, listening and speaking are of utmost importance in language learning and teaching as far as the development of communicative competence is concerned.

## 1.2 Theory of language learning

It is better to remember as a teacher:

- a) Krashen's Monitor Model theory: Acquisition is better than learning.
- b) Acquisition takes place when the learner receives comprehensible input that is one step beyond his current level of competence.
- c) ALM suggests that learners can learn more easily if materials are first presented in spoken form rather than in written form.
- d) ALM also advocates the presentation of material in cultural context of the target language rather than in isolated forms.

## 2.0 Design

Design is the level of method analysis in which we incorporate objectives, syllabus model, learning activates, roles of teachers and learners, interaction between them in classroom, role of instructional materials and evaluation system.

### 2.1 Objectives

The objectives of a Bangladeshi college teacher of ELT is to improve the students' four basic skills - listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

### 2.2 Syllabus Model

#### a) Elements taken from CLT

- i) We should focus on goals of the students, that is, learners' need.
- ii) Situations in which students may need to use the target language.<sup>5</sup>
- iii) Functions for which they may use the language.<sup>6</sup>
- iv) Notions which they may communicate.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p.163.



### b) Elements taken from ALM

- i) The language skills should be taught in the order of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- ii) The language may be presented entirely orally at first, then comes the written presentation.
- iii) We can conduct a contrastive analysis of the differences between the native language and the target language, since these differences may cause the major difficulties that the learners may encounter.

## 3.0 Characteristics of teaching/learning activities

### 3.1 Aspects taken from DM:

- i) Grammar should be thought inductively, that is, the examples should be presented first from which the students can induce grammar rules.<sup>7</sup>
- ii) Input should be presented in different situations (shopping mall, bank) with reference to specific topics like money, weather or geography.
- iii) Students should practice new words in complete sentences.

### 3.2 Aspects taken from ALM

Written works and reading should be based on the oral work they did earlier which will improve their listening.

### 3.3 Elements taken from CLT

- i) To develop speaking skill, students should use the target language a great deal through communicative activities, such as role plays, games, problem solving tasks.
- ii) We should use an authentic material that is not produced specifically for language learning, such as newspaper articles, novels etc.

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<sup>7</sup> Diane Larsen Freeman, *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), P.29.

#### 4.0 Role of the Teacher:

##### 4.1 Elements taken from CLT

- i) The teacher should try to facilitate stress free interaction among students to improve their speaking skill.
- ii) He should act like an advisor, answering students' questions.<sup>8</sup>
- iii) Sometimes the teacher should participate in students' activities to boost up their enthusiasm.

##### 4.2 Elements taken from DM

The teacher and the students are more like partners in teaching / learning activities.<sup>9</sup>

#### 5.0 Role of the Learners

##### 5.1 Aspects of CLT:

- i) Students should be active in classroom.
- ii) Students communicate a great deal in target language.
- iii) They should try to co-operate with each other, to understand others and make them understood.<sup>10</sup>

#### 6. Nature of Student-Teacher Interaction:

##### 6.1 Elements of CLT

- i) When the teacher works with linguistic accuracy he presents the material to the students.
- ii) Sometimes the teacher engages in students' activities but he does not interact with the students always.
- iii) The teacher mainly establishes situations that prompt interaction among students.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.128.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 28.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.130.

## 6.2 Elements of DM

The initiation of the interaction should go both ways, from teacher to students and from students to the teacher, the latter may be teacher directed.<sup>11</sup>

## 7.0 Nature of Student-Student Interaction

### 7.1 Elements of CLT

Students should interact a great deal with one another in various configurations, pairs, triads, small groups, whole group etc.<sup>12</sup>

### 7.2 Elements of GTM

The students do as the teacher says. So, they can learn what he/she knows.

## 8.0 Role of the Instructional Material

### 8.1 Aspects of ALM

- i) Instructional material will assist the teacher to develop mastery in the learners.<sup>13</sup>
- ii) A teacher's book should contain the structured sequence of lessons that is to be followed.
- iii) Tape recorders / audiovisual equipments can be used in the classroom. If the teacher is not a native speaker of the target language, the tape recorder provides accurate models for classroom exercise.

### 8.2 Aspects of CLT

- i) Students should practice target language in the classroom from the textbooks which contain a kind of grading and sequencing of language practice.
- ii) Various materials can be used for classroom activities, such as exercise handbooks, activity cards, pair communication practice, practice materials, and student interaction practice booklets.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.29.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.130.

<sup>13</sup> Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 2nd Edition. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.63.



- iii) Authentic or real life materials should be used, such as magazines, advertisements, newspapers, maps, pictures, symbols, graphs, charts etc.

## 9.0 Procedure

Procedure refers to the actual moment to moment techniques, practices, and behaviours that operate in teaching a language according to a particular method.<sup>14</sup>

### 9.1 Listening skill

To develop listening skill of the students, the following techniques can be implemented:

#### 9.1.1 Techniques of DM

- i) Reading aloud:

Students can read different passages aloud from novels or plays so that other students can hear different tones of target language at different situations.

- ii) Dictation:

When the teacher dictates some target language elements at different speeds it obviously improves students listening skill.

#### 9.1.2 Techniques of CLT

- i) Role Play:

When students play roles of different characters in role play activity, other students have a good opportunity to listen to the communicative language in different social contexts and in different social roles.

- ii) Homework:

The teacher may assign students homework to listen to a live radio or television broadcast.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.31.

## 9.2 Speaking skill

### 9.2.1 Techniques Taken from CLT

#### i) Language games:

In this activity, students have to guess and communicate their ideas to other students correctly which improves their speaking skill.

#### ii) Picture strip story:

One student can show a picture of a story to other students of his group who have to guess the next picture and then get the feedback immediately.

### 9.2.2 Techniques Taken from ALM

#### i) Repetition drill:

When students repeat what the teacher says, it improves their pronunciation.

#### ii) Chain drill:

Students greet or ask questions each other in chain drill correctly.

### 9.2.3 Techniques Taken from DM

#### i) Question / Answer exercise:

Students question and answer to each other in target language spontaneously.

#### ii) Conversation practice:

The teacher asks students questions with particular grammar structure and students have to answer that with correct pronunciation.

## 9.3 Reading Skill

### 9.3.1 Techniques of GTM

#### i) Reading Comprehension Questions:

When students write answers to comprehension questions, they have to understand their meanings first which develop their reading skill.

ii) Fill in the blanks:

Students have to understand the sentence structure to fill the missing words in the blanks of the sentences.

9.3.2 Techniques of CLT

i) Authentic materials:

Novels, newspaper articles present various situations to students, which help them developing their reading skill.

ii) Scrambled sentences:

When students unscramble the scrambled sentences of a passage or article they learn about cohesive devices which bind one sentence to another.

9.4 Writing Skill

9.4.1 Techniques of GTM

i) Use words in sentences:

This activity helps students to use words in sentences of a particular context rather than using them isolated from each other.

ii) Composition:

Students can practice to develop their writing skill by composing a paragraph on a particular topic.

9.4.2 Techniques of DM

i) Dictation:

Students have to write correctly what the teacher dictates following the reading / speaking speed of the teacher.

ii) Paragraph Writing:

Writing a paragraph on a particular subject also improves students' writing skill.



### 9.4.3 Techniques of ALM

#### i) Transformation drill:

When students transform affirmative sentences to negatives or change the tense, mood, voice of given sentences, it develops their knowledge of structure of sentences.

#### ii) Complete the dialogue:

Students fill the blanks of missing words of particular dialogues and thus develop their writing skill.

### 9.4.4 Techniques of CLT

Scramble sentence: Students learn cohesive devices by unscrambling the scrambled sentences of a passage or article.

Advantages:

There are some advantages of this eclectic method which make it suitable in Bangladesh context, such as:

- i) Multidimensional activities will increase students' interest and keep them motivated.
- ii) Grammar is taught inductively and no memorization will lessen students' burden.
- iii) There are good textbooks and other accessories which do not demand native like proficiency from teacher. Since we do not have enough proficient teachers and teacher training programs, this method is appropriate for our context.
- iv) Question / Answer exercise, student conversation, and chain drills ensure active student participation in the classroom which makes proper feedback session possible.
- v) Teachers are more like partners which encourages students to speak freely in the classroom which is rare in our country.
- vi) Since they have to practice different activities, they develop all four skills.
- vii) Meanings, situation, function, grammar, vocabulary- all aspects of language are taught to students which improve their linguistic

and communicative competence. So, it is an all embracing eclectic method.

Disadvantages:

- i) Some accessories like television, tape recorder are costly and may not be available in rural areas.
- ii) If the teacher does not take absolute authority in class, that is, if he is a partner, students may think him impotent and become motivated.
- iii) Some students are totally reluctant to participate in class.
- iv) Big classroom may create problems in listening and speaking activities.
- v) There is little freedom for students to choose materials for themselves.
- vi) Most of the times, students feelings are not taken into consideration by the teacher.

10.0 Conclusion

The reason for the emergence of various methods during different periods is some inherent drawbacks of almost all methods which made them inappropriate for new demands of new age and various necessities in different countries. That is why no particular method is enough to teach English as a foreign language successfully. For this reason, it is best to develop an eclectic method by taking relevant and necessary aspects and issues from direct, audio-lingual method and communicative language teaching method that is suitable for our Bangladesh context.

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## Sea Level Rise: Some Debates on Global and Bangladesh Perspective

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**Abstract:** Among the various discussions on climate change and its consequences, the debate on sea level rise has contributed the most. The differences in scientific assumptions have made the issue most disputed. The scientists have divided into their opinion on the history, causes and impacts of sea level rise. The causes of sea level rise in Bangladesh have also got involved in this debate. Despite the fact, that the coastal region of the country is facing disasters due to frequent cyclone and inundation of land, the reason of climatic change has not been established scientifically. Such ambiguity in scientific assumptions may have more impact on the environment of this region than the real impacts of sea level rise.

### 1.0 Introduction

Over the last two centuries, global temperature has increased significantly. Particularly in the last 100 years (1906-2005) global temperature has increased around 0.74°C. Such temperature rise is warming the global atmosphere and increasing the air and ocean temperature as well as is melting ice sheets in polar region. As a result of these, sea level is continuing to rise (IPCC, 2007). It is predicted that global warming might raise the sea level over 2m in the next 100 years (Castro Ortiz, 1994). According to IPCC (2007), sea level rise due to global warming would bring disaster to human life and might destroy the ecosystem of the earth. Low laying developing countries are the most vulnerable under this scenario ((Douglas, 2001) due to huge economic loss and less adaptive ability. But the probability of such vulnerable future is diminished by the uncertainties embedded in the predictions. Also, compare to the other natural calamities like earthquake, cyclone or volcanic eruption; a long term effect of sea level rise appears to be less threatening. Such controversies have given rise of the debate, whether sea level would rise significantly to threat the human civilisation or not. Still,

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scientific analysis and recent trend in climate system shows clear indication of change (IPCC, 2007). This paper will focus on the history, scientific analysis and the effects of sea level rise considering the global scenario as well as on the perspectives of Bangladesh.

## 2.0 Climate Change and Sea Level Rise: Global Scenario

### 2.1 History of sea level rise

IPCC (2001) report reveals that during the last 20,000 years sea level has risen by over 120 m. This rise was mainly due to melting of glacial ice sheets. During the earlier phase of last glacial period (20,000-12000 years ago) the hydrological system of earth was interrupted by cool weather, resulting accumulation of sea water to icesheets. In the milder-glacial period (12,000-6000 years ago), a relative warm climate reversed the cycle and thus started melting ice sheets; significant sea level change occurred during this period. Last 6000 years can be considered as a period of Holocene, where the relationship between land and sea level was more or less stable (Bird, 1993, Morner, 1995). Since 1961, global sea level rose at an average rate of 1.8 mm per year. Rate of sea level rise in the last decade is even higher (3.1 mm) than the average rate. Scientific data also reveals that the rise in sea level is higher in 20th century compare to the rise in 19th century (IPCC, 2007). Figure 1 shows the trend of sea level change with temperature and snow cover.

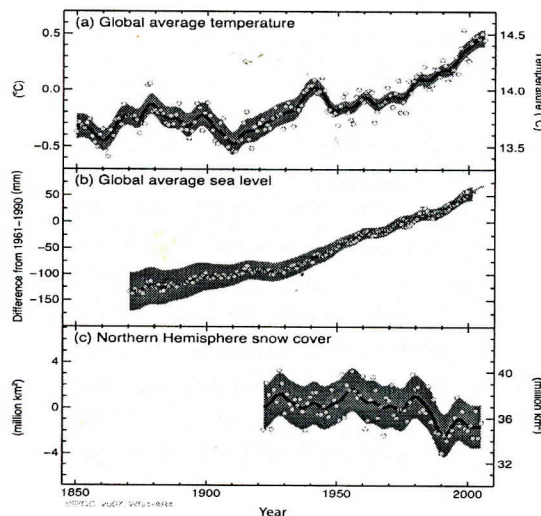


Figure 1: Sea level rise and snow cover decrease with the increase in temperature (Reproduced from IPCC (2007a), WG1 Fourth Assessment report, pp 6)

The graph represents a clear trend of sea level rise over the last 50 years with the increase in temperature. The snow cover is also showing a decreasing trend.

## 2.2 Causes of sea level rise

Sea level changes on different time scales; from seconds to million years. It also varies from region to region. The main reason for sea level change is the short term and long term changes in the climate system such as increase in ocean volume. Sea water rises when the volume of the water increases and falls when the volume reduces (Bird, 1993). Different factors contribute to the increase of sea water volume. Ocean volume can increase due to warming of ocean water and the water mass can increase due to melting of ice. Scientific observations reveal that global rise in temperature has increased the heat absorption rate of the oceans which has affected warming of sea water even to depths of 3000 m (IPCC, 2007). Such warming causes expansion of sea water, resulting to sea level rise. Moreover, salinity also plays a vital role in the expansion of sea water. With the increase in salinity in sea water the volume diminishes, and increases with the decrease in salinity (Bird, 1993, Wigley and Raper, 1993). Saline water does not exhibit maximum density at 4°C (Pugh, 2004). Rather sea water does not have a temperature of maximum density. Thus sea water at the colder region will have more density than sea water at the warmer region. If we consider the universal relationship among mass, volume and density i.e.  $\text{volume} = \text{mass} / \text{density}$ ; it reveals that a less dense water will have higher volume than that of a higher dense water. This is why; sea water at warmer tropics will expand more than the sea water at the cooler regions in a given temperature.

Along with thermal expansion, ice and snow melting in Greenland and Antarctic regions are also contributing to sea level rise (Hoffman, 1984, Warrick et al., 1996). Here, only melting of grounded ice should be considered because floating ice displaces its equivalent volume to the sea water (according to Archimedes principle). So melting of floating ice does not have impact on sea level change (Pugh, 2004). It is also necessary to consider that the mass of the sea water is controlled by the balance in ice forming and ice melting. Table 1 shows different sources and their contribution to global sea level rise



Table 1: Individual contribution to sea level rise

| Sources of Sea Level Rise   | Contribution (mm per year) (1961-2003) |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Thermal Expansion           | 0.42±0.12                              |
| Glaciers and ice caps       | 0.50±0.18                              |
| Greenland ice sheet         | 0.05±0.12                              |
| Antarctic ice sheet         | 0.14±0.41                              |
| <b>Total Sea Level Rise</b> | <b>1.1±0.5</b>                         |

Source: Reproduced from IPCC (2007), WG1 Fourth Assessment report, pp 7

Antarctica contains 91% of all the ice of the world. Greenland contains 8% of the total ice and the remaining 1% is stored in mountain tops as ice caps. The melting rate of ice sheet around Antarctica will largely depend on the availability of warm water in the local sea. The warm water will melt the glaciers around Antarctica which will pave the way for more warm water to reach the ice shelves beneath and eventually accelerate melting (Pearce, 1989). Snow and ice cover in the polar region reflects most of the sunlight. A decrease in snow and icesheet will increase more sunlight to be absorbed in the earth system and thus a warmer atmosphere (Pugh, 2004). Table 2 shows the sea level rise due to total melting of icesheet from different sources.

Table 2: Sea Level Rise Due to Total Melting of Icesheet

| Source                      | Increase in sea level due to total melting |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Glaciers and small ice caps | 0.4 m                                      |
| Greenland ice sheet         | 7 m                                        |
| Antarctic ice sheet         | 61 m                                       |

Source: (Pugh, 2004)

There are other contributors to sea level rise. Sea level also changes due to vertical land movements which includes isostatic adjustment, tectonic effects, sedimentation, human factors (groundwater and oil extraction) (Warrick et al., 1996). Tectonic movements caused sea level change in Algeria, Izmir region of Turkey, Timor and in New Guinea (Bird, 1993). Water removed from the sea and stored in other places like mountain ice cap or stored in underground or as permafrost or even sediment deposition contributes to sea level change. Some human activity like

using more underground water for irrigation and building reservoirs would even have effect in the change in sea level (Sahagian et al., 1994, Gornitz, 2001, Milliman and Mei-e, 1995).

There are also logics against the prediction of past and current sea level change. It is argued that global warming will not necessarily lead to a considerable sea level rise. Pugh (2004) stated different views about sea level rise; such as-

- Melting of mountain glaciers only contribute to 0.50 m sea level rise. Although a significant portion of mountain glaciers will remain on top even in warm conditions.
- Thermal expansion of sea water can only generate few centimetre rise of sea water. Only the surface water may become warm. It takes at least 1000 years to warm the bottom layer of sea water.
- During the warmer conditions of mid Holocene era, when the climate temperature was 1°C higher than the present temperature, sea water level was almost similar as present sea level. Moreover, Antarctica experienced glacial expansion during the mid Holocene warm period.
- There is no evidence that the land base glaciers in Greenland and Antarctica melted completely in the past two million years.
- A warmer atmosphere would evaporate more water to keep the sea level static (Pearce, 1989).

Despite such arguments, and the debate regarding the causes of sea level change, latest observation in the climate system reveals that the world is getting warmer day by day. Different low coastal regions are already facing flood, salinity and inundation of wet lands due to higher sea level (Schuermans, 1995).

### 2.3 Consequences of Sea level rise

The consequences of sea level rise can be divided into two groups; physical consequences and environmental effect. Physical consequences include shoreline retreat, temporary flooding and salt intrusion. The most serious environmental effect would be inundation of wetland and marshlands and the ecological hazards therein (Titus et al., 1984). IPCC (2007) has expressed their concerns about the future disasters to human civilisation due to sea level rise particularly in the major river basins and

mega deltaic regions. Increased flooding with inundation of coastal low lands might force millions of people to migrate.

Sea level rise may cause coastal erosion especially in the sandy or shingle beaches (Wells, 1995, Bird, 1995). Although there are other factors involved in coastal erosion, but there are evidence that such beaches are eroding in recent years (Pugh, 2004). Coral reefs are also vulnerable to sea level rise. As coral polyps grow best at near surface water where there is better availability of sunlight. Their upward growth rate may not keep up with the continuous sea level rise and thus may result in less growth (Douglas, 2001, Pugh, 2004, Edwards, 1995). Coastal wetlands (mangroves) and marshlands acts as a sediment trap which stabilise sedimentary coastline. A study suggests that the rate of sediment accumulation in coastal wet lands is 2-3 mm/year depending on the availability of sediment (Pugh, 2004). A higher rate of sea level rise may bring disaster to this ecosystem by inundating the entire region.

Change in sea level will contribute a little to the tidal system. This change may have a larger impact in shallow water. Different factors along with sea level rise are also responsible for tropical storm; sea water temperature is one of those. It is evident that an increase in sea water temperature would increase the severity of storms which may cause flooding and other damages (Pugh, 2004).

### 3.0 Case Study: Sea Level Rise and Bangladesh

#### 3.1 Sea level rise scenario and Causes

The climate system of Bangladesh is influenced by the existence of Himalayan range in the north and the Bay of Bengal in the south (Ali and Ahmad, 1992). The sea level movements of the coastal zone of Bangladesh are mostly dominated by local and regional factors including regional climate change and sediment accumulation (Islam and Tooley, 1999, Ahmad et al., 1996). Over the last 100 years the coastline of Bangladesh experienced both subsidences due to the pressure of thick layer of accumulated sediments as well as rise of sea level due to increased sedimentation. Both the effects virtually balanced the coastline from any gradual inundation (Kausher et al., 1996). A recent study reveals the fact that the sea level at western coastline of Bangladesh is raising around 7mm/year, which is far above the world average of 1-2 mm/year. There is no specific regional scenario for the mean sea level rise due to global climate change (Karim and Mimura, 2008). But from



different study it has anticipated that the sea level in the Bay of Bengal may rise at a range 30-100 cm by the end of 2100 (DOE, 1993, Agrawala et al., 2003). Thus, for predicting the future sea level change in the Bay of Bengal, it is important to analyse the vertical movement of land in this region as well as the impacts of global sea level change.

Bangladesh is located between two major tectonic faults of the earth. The active tectonic movements contribute to uplifting as well as subsiding of land areas in Bangladesh. Formation of the land area of Bangladesh is mostly dominated by sedimentary process over the last two million years. From a study it has revealed that some 5000 years ago the then Bengal region was a shallow sea or a lagoon (Fergusson, 1863). Due to uplift in the Himalayan region, erosion causes rocks and sediments to flow through different water ways towards the Bengal basin. Sediments accumulate in the sea bed which gives rise of the sea level and forms new land. At the same time new sediments also put pressure on the older sediments and thus cause land subsiding (Warrick et al., 1996).

Although sediment accumulation plays a vital role in determining the future sea level of Bangladesh, global climate change may also contribute to this. A study by National Adaptation Programme for Action (NAPA) on the basis of 3rd IPCC report and predictions of SAARC Meteorological Research Centre (SMRC), has established the likely climate change and sea level rise scenarios for Bangladesh. Table 3 illustrates those scenarios.

Table 3: Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Scenarios for Bangladesh

| Year | Temperature Change mean (°C) |            | Precipitation change (%) mean |            | Sea level rise (cm)                |      |      |
|------|------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------|------|------|
|      | Monsoon season               | Dry season | Monsoon season                | Dry season | 3 <sup>rd</sup> IPCC (upper range) | SMRC | NAPA |
| 2030 | 0.8                          | 1.1        | +6.0                          | -2.0       | 14                                 | 18   | 14   |
| 2050 | 1.1                          | 1.6        | +8.0                          | -5.0       | 32                                 | 30   | 32   |
| 2100 | 1.9                          | 2.7        | +12.0                         | -10.0      | 88                                 | 60   | 88   |

Source: (NAPA, 2005)

Observed sea level is a combination of three factors: tidal level + surge level (weather effect) + mean sea level (MSL) (Pugh, 2004). For Bangladesh the rise in tidal level is very important due to its impact on the coastal socioeconomic activities and ecosystem. A study shows that there is a close relationship between surge duration and sea level rise (As-

Salek and Yasuda, 1995). Also, relationship has been found between southern oscillation index (SOI) and mean tidal level (MTL) of the main estuary (Meghna Estuary) of the country. An increase in rainfall due to El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) will affect the tidal level at the estuaries of the main rivers of Bangladesh (Singh, 2002) resulting a significant sea level rise.

### 3.2 Effects of Sea level rise and possible responses

Bangladesh has an approximate 710 km long coastline. 21% people of the country live in the coastal region (Singh, 2002). This coastline is already facing the negative impacts of sea level rise. In the last few decades the problems regarding salinity intrusion, inundation of coastal low lands, cyclones as well as erosion became more severe than before (Sarwar and Khan, 2007). Due to global sea level rise, Bangladesh may loose one fifth of the land area. Table 4 shows the possible inundation of coastal land due to different range of sea level rise.

Table 4: Possible Inundation of Coastal Land Due to Different Range of Sea Level Rise

| Sea Level Rise (m) | Inundation (Km <sup>2</sup> ) | Inundation of Sunderbans | % of total area |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 10 cm              | 2500                          | 15%                      | 2%              |
| 25 cm              | 6300                          | 40%                      | 4%              |
| 1.00 m             | 25,000                        | 100%                     | 17.5%           |

Source: (World Bank, 2000)

Coastal cyclones and surges are one of the major problems of Bangladesh (Ali and Ahmad, 1992, Ali and Chowdhury, 1999, Singh, 2002). Although the relationship between cyclone and sea level rise is uncertain (Ali, 1996), a study has shown that the severity of cyclone may increase due to temperature and sea level rise. Taking the April 1991 cyclone as base case, a model has been formulated to find the relationship among sea surface temperature, wind speed and sea level rise. Table 5 represents the outcome of the model in a brief.

Table 5: Outcome of the Model in Brief

|                           | Current<br>Temp.<br>(27°C) | 2°C<br>Increase | 4°C<br>Increase |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Wind (kmh <sup>-1</sup> ) | 225                        | 248             | 275             |
| No Sea level Rise         | 7.6 m                      | 9.2m            | 11.3m           |
| Surge Height ( % change)  | (0%)                       | (21%)           | (49%)           |
| Sea level rise 0.3m       | 7.4 m                      | 9.1m            | 11.1m           |
| Surge Height( % change)   | (-3%)                      | (20%)           | (46%)           |
| Sea level rise 1.0m       | 7.1 m                      | 8.6m            | 10.6m           |
| Surge Height( % change)   | (-7%)                      | (13%)           | (40%)           |

Source : Reproduced from: (Ali, 1996)

The table shows that in a given temperature and wind speed; sea level rise decreases the surge height. At the same time temperature rise in sea water also affects the rise in wind speed and surge height. Comparing the effects of sea level rise and temperature rise on wind speed and surge height, it is clear that temperature rise plays a vital role in determining the severity of cyclone power and surge heights (Ali, 1996, Karim and Mimura, 2008). The future sea level rise may also offset the sediment accumulation in the coastal sea beds by "back-water effect". The ability of the rivers to carry sediments may decrease due to rise in water level at the bay (Kausher et al., 1996).

Mitigation as well as adaptation could be the two main categories for the responses of sea level rise (Smit et al., 1999). Preparation for future possible disaster, community involvement, research on salinity adaptive species (fisheries and crops) and corresponding policy implications like preparing Flood Action Plan is important for facing the upcoming challenges (Sarwar and Khan, 2007, Ericksen et al., 1996). Afforestation, carbon reduction scheme and steps to ensure normal flow of water in the rivers may also help to mitigate the effects of sea level rise.



#### 4.0 Conclusion

Climate issues like sea level rise are complex in terms of prediction (Douglas, 2001). A number of factors are involved in this process. Current data and climate trend do not explain the exact contribution of each factor (Pirazzoli, 1993, Schuurmans, 1995). This is why a number of assumptions take place to interpret the trend. Such assumptions give rise of some debates as well. Despite the debates, the changes in ice cover in the polar region and the gradual inundation of low lands around the world alongwith increased cyclone in the sea shows a clear indication of some change. To manage an increase in sea level of 1m, would take \$12 billion for the Netherlands, \$74 billion for Japan and around \$400 billion for USA (Leatherman, 2001). Such a huge amount of investment may not be possible for countries like Bangladesh; but a clear understanding of scientific advancements regarding sea level rise may help to take proper adaptation and mitigation program (Douglas, 2001). The future of the next generation remains in the timely and appropriate action of current generation.

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