

Report No. 31

**POVERTY ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES:
NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND DONORS' PERSPECTIVES**

Centre for Policy Dialogue

House No 40/C, Road No 11, Dhanmondi R/A, GPO Box 2129, Dhaka-1205, Bangladesh

Tel: 8124770; Fax: 8130951; E-mail: cpd@bdonline.com

Website: www.cpd-bangladesh.org

September, 2000

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), established in 1993, is an innovative initiative to promote an ongoing process of dialogue between the principal partners in the decision making and implementing process. The dialogues are designed to address important policy issues and to seek constructive solutions to these problems. The Centre has already organised a series of such major dialogues at local, regional and national levels. These dialogues have brought together ministers, opposition front benchers, MPs, business leaders, NGOs, donors, professionals and other functional groups in civil society within a non-confrontational environment to promote focused discussions. The expectation of the CPD is to create a national policy consciousness where members of civil society will be made aware of critical policy issues affecting their lives and will come together in support of particular policy agendas which they feel are conducive to the well being of the country. The CPD has also organised a number of South Asian bilateral and regional dialogues as well as some international dialogues.

*In support of the dialogue process the Centre is engaged in research programmes which are both serviced by and are intended to serve as inputs for particular dialogues organised by the Centre throughout the year. Some of the major research programmes of CPD include **The Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD), Governance and Development, Population and Sustainable Development, Trade Policy Analysis and Multilateral Trading System and Leadership Programme for the Youth**. The CPD also carries out periodic public perception surveys on policy issues and developmental concerns.*

*As part of CPD's publication activities, a CPD Dialogue Report series is brought out in order to widely disseminate the summary of the discussions organised by the Centre. The present report contains the highlights of the dialogue organised by CPD, which was held at the CIRDAP Auditorium, Dhaka on April 1, 2000 on the theme of **Poverty Alleviation Strategies: National Priorities and Donor's Perspectives**.*

Report prepared by: *Mr Rashed M Titumir, Fellow, CPD*

Mr Faisal Kamal and Mr Kazi Sabbir Ahmed, Interns, CPD

Assistant Editor: *Ms Ayesha Banu, Coordinator (Dialogue & Communication), CPD*

Editorial Advisor: *Mr Syed Badrul Ahsan*

Series Editor: *Professor Rehman Sobhan, Chairman, CPD*

POVERTY ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES: NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND DONORS' PERSPECTIVES

i) The Dialogue

As part of its on-going dialogue programme, the Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organised a dialogue on “Poverty Alleviation Strategies: National Priorities and Donors’ Perspectives” on April 1, 2000. The dialogue was held at CIRDAP auditorium. A Review Paper entitled “*Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh: Absence of a National Framework, an Abundance of Donors’ Strategies*”¹ was circulated amongst the dialogue participants. The paper was prepared by reviewing poverty – related guidelines issued by different development partners (see annex-A for the list of documents reviewed) as well as the Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) of the government of Bangladesh (GOB) and a recent statement of the Member of Finance (GOB). Professor Rehman Sobhan, Chairman, CPD chaired the dialogue session. Dr. Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir, State Minister for Planning who attended the dialogue as the chief guest. The dialogue was participated by a cross-section of policymakers, experts, academics and leaders of various civil society groups and members of the donor agencies (list of participants is annexed). The present report on proceeding of the dialogue begins with a summary of the Resource Paper and highlights major issues raised in subsequent discussion.

ii) Initial Remarks by the Chairperson

Professor Rehman Sobhan initiated the dialogue by welcoming the participants including the State Minister for Planning Dr. Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir, the Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government and the Rural Development, Mr. Badiur Rahman, and other professionals and academics present.

Making an observation to the effect that there is no shortage of discussion on poverty in Bangladesh, Professor Sobhan noted that successive governments have made explicit public commitments to the poverty eradication agenda and often initiated particular programmes relating to poverty alleviation. In their own turn, the donors have

¹ The Resource Paper “*Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh: Absence of a National Framework, An Abundance of Donors’ Strategies*” is available as CPD Occasional Paper No. 4

also become increasingly preoccupied with this particular issue and a number of them now profess poverty alleviation as the principal agenda underwriting their total aid

programmes. At a quick count one could identify the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Department For International Development (DFID), the Nordic governments, Netherlands, the European Union and the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which have all basically proclaimed poverty alleviation as part of the central agenda driving their activities, Professor Sobhan maintained. “So, in the prevailing circumstances, in terms of publicised commitment to the issue of poverty eradication, we in fact find both an emerging change in donor priorities and also a change in thrust of the international discourse on the issue,” Professor Sobhan observed.

Having taken note of the shifts in international discourse, Professor Sobhan turned to the national landscape and observed that for Bangladesh poverty remained strictly the core focus of the national agenda. He thought that time it was to think whether through a synergetic effort a collective perspective could be put together with a view to generating a national agenda for poverty alleviation. Such an effort would radically differ from one which was pursued at a strictly academic level in an episodic fashion with piecemeal interventions being carried out in addressing this multidimensional issue. “As a matter of fact we would go a step further and identify the agenda for the total eradication of poverty,” he said in his comments on the scope of poverty agenda.

The CPD chairman hoped to see formation of a *Citizen’s Task Force (CTF)* with the design of an action-oriented agenda in mind and with the participation of all stakeholders around the table. Terming such a Task Force as a movement, Prof. Sobhan said that such a body would both identify the agenda for eradication of poverty in Bangladesh and would subsequently assume an operational and custodial functions to bring such agendas to the notice of the political parties of Bangladesh in order to make them design follow-up actions. “We can in fact have in place a shared commitment for action - the mainstream political parties and civil society - collectively applying their mind to this problem,” he added. In an ideal world this national effort would have originated from the government acting in cooperation with its colleagues from all spectrum of the political system. Until that happens, he asked why the citizens should remain inactive. He put forward a concrete proposal for moving towards constitution of a

Citizen's Task Force on eradication of poverty in Bangladesh. Framing the timeline for the CTF, the CPD Chairman said that the CTF would put on the table a national agenda

for the elimination of poverty, within this calendar year, prior to commencement of the campaigns for the next election. He pointed out that without the emergence of such a national agenda rooted in democratic ownership and originating within the national body, politics of the country would continue to deal with this critically important issue in a rather piecemeal way and remain dependent on donor dominated approach articulated through their various aid programmes. He noted that the efficacy and sustainability of the programme were being compromised due to the absence of ownership over the poverty agenda and lack of coherence.

Following the initial remarks, Professor Sobhan put forward the structure of the dialogue. He mentioned that the dialogue participants would be presented with some of the implications of the lack of a national strategy through a review of the five year plans including annual statements and the declaration of the governments on this agenda. The objective is to see how far these added up to a national agenda. The dialogue would then be provided with a resume of the multiplicity of thinking within the international community as regards this issue. He maintained that the dialogue would take cognisance of the state of the global debate, point out the changing priorities and commonalities, as well as the points of departure. Given this context, he hoped that the discussion would centre on the essential elements which needed to be addressed in a national agenda which of necessity had to be both durable in its time horizon and politically sustainable within the country.

The dialogue aimed at generating significant external economies from the variety of programmatic initiatives at the official level, the academic initiatives emerging from individuals as well as research institutions, the various dialogues held on poverty eradication and the prevailing political environment within which this programme would in fact be materialised. “We want to put all these together in place and see what might be an appropriate approach to this particular agenda,” Professor Sobhan added.

The Chairman of the CPD asked the participants not to see the present dialogue as one of episodic exercise, but as a part of a process of an ongoing discourse out of which certain very concrete agendas might emerge. “Your involvement will not merely cease at that point when we make some grand presentation to the world but beyond that we will

be able to involve ourselves in a custodial responsibility of seeing what elements of this agenda can be effectively translated into action and play both advocacy as well as an

intellectual and operational role in the realization of this objectives,” he elaborated. He stressed the exercise as a synergetic effort of all stakeholders involving the civil society.

With that introductory remark, Professor Sobhan invited Dr. Debapriya Bhattachariya, the executive director of CPD to make a brief presentation on the issues.

iii) Resume of the Resource Paper

The Resource Paper for the dialogue prepared at the CPD to invoke an informed discussion, was presented by Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, Executive Director, CPD. Dr. Bhattacharya began his presentation by reiterating the general consensus prevailing among the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and the donors that ‘poverty alleviation’ should be the overarching goal of both national policy as well as the focal point of all aid policy. He informed about the Constitutional guidelines for formulating the development goal, objectives and strategies of the country in this context. He pointed to the Fifth Five Year Plan (FFYP) which stated GOB’s commitment to alleviation of poverty through accelerated economic growth to bring about visible improvement in the living standard of people by raising their income and meeting their basic needs.

The concern with poverty is not new, but Bangladesh never had a homegrown holistic, dynamic, strategic framework to combat poverty. Rather, the agenda for poverty alleviation had remained largely donor-driven and, thus, potentially unsustainable. “What has served as a strategy for poverty alleviation in Bangladesh has been like more than aggregation of a large number of donor-funded micro projects supplemented by some discrete domestically financed projects,” Dr. Bahhatacharya maintained.

Recognising that poverty has been caused and reinforced by a number of factors: economic, political, historical, institutional, social, cultural, internal and external, the paper highlighted the need for developing a holistic national policy framework for poverty eradication. Designing of such a framework demands a *multi-pronged intervention*, a pro-active role of the state and public policy, and a realignment of the country programmes of donors’ which would ensure the Development Partners DPs assistance actually did contribute to the country’s overall development.

The paper noted that in absence of a comprehensive development agenda, Bangladesh had been exposed to a plethora of advice and assistance from its DPs in the area of alleviating poverty. Donors working in Bangladesh have tended to follow diverse

models in conceptualising the poverty issues as they relate to the particular context of the country. This has also influenced the subsequent choice of programmatic areas for official development assistance. “This may, in effect, result in duplication as well as waste which may not only deviate from national priorities but also lead to an element of incoherence amongst the various aid agencies,” Dr. Bhattacharya observed.

The paper noted a convergence as regards definition of poverty and its multidimensionality. Barring some terminological differences, all donor documents recognise that, poverty results from lack of or constrained access to human, physical and financial capabilities to sustain livelihood and satisfy the basic needs. The paper, however, showed divergent emphases amongst donors. Whilst the OECD included six elements to be covered in a multidimensional definition of poverty such as private consumption, social consumption, empowerment etc, the World Bank accounted for low level of health and lack of education, gender gaps, powerlessness. On the other hand, the DFID incorporated illiteracy, lack of access to resources, social deprivation etc., and the UNDP considered human poverty as denial of most basic opportunities and choices.

Though the position of both the GOB and donors converged on the definition of poverty and several critical factors which give rise to poverty such as inequitable distribution of income and productive assets and limited access to public services remained unaddressed in the donors’ programmatic interventions. The paper also noted that modest reduction in poverty recorded by income-measure of poverty had not been matched by improvement in several critical dimensions of poverty such as crisis-coping capacity, improved access to quality health care and better education.

As regards the guiding principles adopted by different donor agencies for reduction of poverty, the paper observed that most of the CAS emphasised upon ‘investing in people’, ‘building human capital’, ‘promotion of security’ and ‘growth with equity’ etc. Despite a broader consensus on ‘economic growth’ as a necessary condition for poverty reduction, the donors are, to a certain degree, divided on the operationalisation of their strategies. At present, the point of departure of donor discourse on poverty, however, in the elevation of poverty eradication to the primary concern of

donors and not the derived outcome of pro-growth strategies. In reducing poverty, while World Bank opted for rapid, job-creating economic growth and intervention projects that directly assist the poor, DFID focused fast economic growth primarily driven by private

sector activities and through equity by means of increased investment in health and education and CIDA stressed on peoples capabilities to avoid or limit their deprivation. On the other hand, the Nordic countries approached the issue by recognising that growth would not automatically lead to a reduced level of poverty and poverty reduction was conditional upon a more equitable distribution of income and employment opportunities.

Though the donors' strategic priorities in poverty reduction confirmed some of the provisions of Bangladesh's development goals like fulfillment of basic necessities of life, rural development, promotion of local government, ensuring good governance etc, Dr. Bhattacharya thought that some areas of concern in the country's development goals like the right of work, the right to social security, ensuring equality of opportunity, removal of social and economic inequality etc. had not been adequately addressed. In this connection, he also mentioned that donors' approaches had not sufficiently taken into considerations some of the poverty reduction objectives as outlined in the Fifth Five Year Plan of Bangladesh. These include: generation of substantial employment opportunities and acceleration of productivity through an optimal choice of the traditional labour intensive and new capital intensive technologies, development of industries essentially based on comparative advantage of the country, transformation of the rural socio-economic structure into a more equitable, just and productive one, attainment of food production beyond the self-sufficiency level, strengthening of the country's scientific and technological base with emphasis on research and development of new generation technologies etc.

As regards instruments and levers deployed by different donors, Dr. Bhattacharya pointed out some divergences of views. While mentioning that using policy leverage through disbursement conditionalities and associated pressure was not seen as a good practice, he added that sector-wide programmes ended up focusing exclusively on the sector in question and consequent to this might result in missed synergies. He also noted that studies on oft-superior performance of NGOs in reality alluded to a more complex picture than what was usually assumed.

According to Dr. Bhattacharya, the challenge of a country assistance programme focussing primarily on poverty-reduction goals is how to proceed within a very diverse country policy and governance situation. He then stressed on the process issues that governed designing, which, according to him, should be based on a good understanding

of the country's overall national strategy for poverty reduction. The CAS process should itself be participatory and involve systematic consultations involving policy makers of the country, private sectors and civil-society representatives. It should be genuinely strategic and be informed by the best available knowledge of the poverty situation in the country. There is a need to strengthen the poverty analysis, awareness and policy making at the country level and ensure accountability to domestic stakeholders which would guard against gross misuse of public funds. However, accountability needs to be mutual, and should not fall disproportionately on the country's government, the paper noted.

A consolidated effort by donors and the Government and other development partners is required to ensure that the intended results for the Bangladesh programme is achieved. Studies, however, consistently reveal that ability of the donor agencies to learn lessons from experience is disappointing, and this applies even more with respect to poverty reduction. "It is very helpful to look beyond one's own yard' to learn from others' experiences," he observed. He thought that poverty reduction objectives and linkages should be made clear and explicit, and potential beneficiaries should be carefully identified at the outset in order that effective monitoring of results and learning could indeed take place. In addition, institutional change is required within agencies for an effective monitoring and evaluation process.

Key Questions

Dr. Bhattacharya presented the following key questions to be subsequently addressed by the dialogue participants:

- ⇒ Can the Fifth Five Year Plan (FFYP) agenda on poverty alleviation be termed as national agenda for poverty alleviation which is backed by the political authority of the GOB?
- ⇒ What are the operational links between the FFYP strategy and operational programmes for poverty alleviation incorporated in the ADP and articulated by the Finance Minister?

- ⇒ Is there a convergence on concepts and strategies followed by the GOB and different co-operation agencies on the issue of poverty? Do the donors have any clear agreement on strategies and do they have any mechanism for coordinating their anti-poverty strategies?

- ⇒ Are there coherent guiding principles common to the different co-operation agencies for reduction of poverty? How far do they capture that of the country?
- ⇒ What are the commonalities and divergences as regards the instruments/levers deployed by different co-operation agencies in the area of reduction of poverty?
- ⇒ What should be the point of departure in designing country assistance strategies by the co-operation agencies for poverty reduction? Is there a scope for donors coming together and designing a common CAS for poverty alleviation?
- ⇒ How should assessment and evaluation be designed by different co-operation agencies?
- ⇒ If the GOB can be persuaded to design a holistic poverty alleviation strategy, will donors be agreeable to subordinate their CAS to that strategy and to have their programmes coordinated by the GOB?
- ⇒ What should be the role of civil society in Bangladesh in the design and implementation of such a strategy? How can a political consensus be built around an agreed national strategy for poverty reduction?

iv) Discussion

Concept of Poverty and its Evolution

The dialogue participants agreed that poverty was a multidimensional issue. Taking part in the discussion, Professor Abul Barkat of Economics Department of Dhaka University argued that poverty could be seen as process, as stock, as flow, as static, and also as dynamic. A recent book by Professor A. K. Sen saw development as freedom; consequently, poverty could be lack of freedom too.

Dr. Binayak Sen, Senior Research Fellow of BIDS highlighted the evolution of the concept of poverty. He stated that the thinking on poverty in Bangladesh started from the idea of famine prevention subsequent to 1974 when the emphasis was placed on

creating safety net programme. Certain emphasis was also put on macroeconomic stabilisation during this period as price stability was considered to be important in terms of preventing short fall in food entitlements of the labouring class. In the eighties, he continued, poverty alleviation policies basically focused on the directionality of change without, however, making any necessary commitments to poverty eradication not to

mention about poverty eradication in the shortest possible time. In the second phase of poverty alleviation donors played a very important role especially since the publication of 1990 World Bank's World Development Report on poverty which contributed a three pronged strategy - growth, social development and safety net. Dr. Sen also observed a sign of change in the discourse of donors. "Now relatively more attention is being paid to risk factors and on how to minimise the risk of poverty reversal," he added. According to him, attention is paid to *voice mechanism*, to make the voices of the poor heard and also on how to minimise shocks to various crises.

Bias Against Poor in the Macroeconomic Policies and in the Market

Dr. Sheikh Maqsood Ali, a former member of the Planning Commission and a member of the *SAARC Independent Commission on Poverty*, said that the national strategies which had been pursued for eradicating poverty were inherently anti-poor. He made his point by focusing on the issue of net transfer of resources. He said that a very sizable portion of the non-poor were inefficient and the bulk of the resources both domestic and donor had been dished out to this inefficient non-poor.

Noting that the whole gamut of monetary and fiscal policies were acting against the poor, he mentioned that poor were not getting the right price despite their increased level of production because of the bias in the policies. Dr. Ali said that national financial institutions including scheduled banks were not in a position to penetrate the informal sector due to donor driven reforms. Moreover, the branches of nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) were withdrawing money in order to pump resources to the inefficient non-poor who had a record of a less than 60 per cent repayment rate, even though they were receiving loans at a comparatively lower rate of interest of 15 per cent. In contrast the efficient poor were paying 25%+ rate of interest maintaining a 98% repayment record, Dr. Ali noted. He also mentioned that high tax incidence was trickling down to the very poor since the fiscal measures were still dependent on indirect taxes.

Dr. Ali observed that donors insisted on non-interference in the market on the ground that markets were sufficiently efficient to alleviate poverty. However, the poor were not being rewarded for their efficiency by the market. Noting that the market was acting against the interest of the efficient poor, he advocated that given the context national government should of necessity intervene. “It must not be a business to be left only to the NGOs financed by the donors,” he stressed.

Poor are Treated as Objects

Mr. Badiur Rahman, Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development was of the opinion that the whole inadequacy of the development strategy pursued for the last three decades constituted a practice whereby the community, particularly the people at the grassroots were treated more as objects rather than as subjects. Drawing upon his experience from the Kishoreganj project, he said that the people didn’t respond possibly due to the imposition of the pre-conceived agendas, approaches which were thrust upon them.

According to Dr. Maqsd Ali, in the conventional typology the poor were held responsible for their poverty. He said that poverty was man made through a process of pauperisation and dehumanisation which was nourished by the national governments and donors.

Right to Resources by the Poor

Participants at the dialogue emphasised that if the poor people’s access to resources were enlarged all other rights would become questionable. “Good governance without money is of no use”, argued Dr. Maqsd Ali. He thought that if the poor were given the money, they would fight for their rights and would receive the administrative and judicial justice. So the right of the poor to resources and information was of critical importance.

He observed that the country had been meeting the donors at Paris Consortium Meet in order to borrow money in the name of the poor and apparently for improving their conditions. “What is the percentage of money that actually has gone to the poor?” he asked. He thought that if the poor had the resources at their disposal they would be able to demonstrate greater efficiency which would contribute towards an improvement of their living standards and would lead to poverty eradication.

Professor Rehman Sobhan suggested that resources needed to be transferred to the efficient poor from the inefficient non-poor, the latter group being quite well represented in the political hierarchies.

Professor Mahbubullah, Professor, Economics Department of Chittagong University thought that poverty could not be eradicated, if a system was not created for equitable distribution through a bridge between revenue income and expenditure in which

wealthy were taxed in order to distribute the income amongst the poor by using the fiscal instruments. “What strategies have we taken for maintaining growth oriented distribution system and is it a question of transfer of income or redistribution of income?” he enquired.

Not at the Neglect of the Urban Sector

Professor Nazrul Islam, Director, Centre for Urban Studies accused that the fifth plan and the previous plans did not have much to say on the urban sector. It even did not have a separate section on the sector. Noting this to be ‘unfortunate’ he suggested that a change was required for incorporating the spatial division by rural and urban.

Harnessing People’s Potentials

Dialogue participants observed that Bangladesh was one of the pioneering countries in the world which established the concept of poor as entrepreneur where poor people converted their labour into social capital. Some of the participants thought that the non-poor should take lessons from poor. “If we take lessons from the grassroots then the apparent divergence between donor and ourselves about what has been happening and what is good for them and what needs to be done could become very obvious,” said Dr. Maqsood Ali.

From his experience in Kishoreganj Mr. Badiur Rahman observed that under the programme as many as 50000 men and women organised themselves through over 1000 village organisations, self managed village organisations of their own. They had saved a net amount of 60 million taka. Five thousand villagers are running these self managed village organisations by taking a holistic approach for improving the quality of their lives. Through linkage with Bangladesh Agricultural Bank, and with some seed capital from UNDP project, these 1000 village organisations through self managed credit programmes of their own has so far invested an amount of 30 crores of taka over the last couple of years. “After working there I no longer call the villagers poor. They are people, they have

community, they have their potential.” He thought that what Bangladesh needed was a proper strategy to harness their potential as human beings.

As regards harnessing the potential of the poor, Mr. S M Al Hussainy, President, Swanirvor mentioned that there was lack of participation of the poor in the design of five-year plans. This resulted in a failure on the part of the policies to reflect poor’s thinking on poverty and their expectations. “If Bangladesh had at least one good strategy which were closer to the people something good would start happening,” he commented. He

wanted to know whether the government would be thinking about participatory development during the sixth five year plan period.

Dr Salahuddin Ahmed, Deputy Executive Director of BRAC said that the poor people should be consulted properly in the process of designing the strategies. He said that development of the NGOs from 1970s to 1990s showed that policies based on lessons learned from the people worked better than those which were not. “Listening to people could help develop process and you have to listen, strategise and implement.” He said that because of this listening BRAC’s programmes covering diverse areas over the last 15 years proved to be successful. For example, at present BRAC has 1.1 million children going to the school; 66% of these children are girls and 60% of these children are poor,” he added.

Community Empowerment or Targeted Approach for Poverty Alleviation?

Professor Nasreen Khundker, Economics Department of University of Dhaka, opined that community empowerment approach as practised in Kishoregonj was ‘basically’ a non-targeted approach. She asked the rationale of bringing back non-targeted interventions and observed that its predecessor Comilla experiment was not recognised as good successes later. According to her, the Kshoreganj project brought together all the rich and the poor in one fold and it was sustained by a belief in the altruism of the rich to serve the interests of the poor. He questioned how realistic that could be and whether it had succeeded in reducing poverty in Kishoregonj.

Mr. Badiur Rahman, who headed the Kishoreganj project said that Comilla’s success was in developing a small scale farmer into an efficient one. Turning to Kishoregonj experiment, he said that the villagers thought themselves as a member of the community effort rather than being targeted poor and non-poor men and women.

Commenting on the community and target group approach, Dr. Binayak Sen said that at present there were two extreme views on this subject, which to his mind was not entirely correct. He said that one assumed the village as a homogeneous community and another assumed the village as a fragmented entity. He was for target group approach if the village was fragmented, and suggested a community empowerment approach if the village was a homogeneous entity. According to Dr. Sen, whether Kishoreganj project succeeded or not is an empirical issue. Kishoreganj project's original idea was to connect the local people with the government services for making availability of different types of local public goods. "This does not at all negate the importance and the relevance of the target programmes designed to cater to the needs of specific groups of poor, or for that matter non poor," he added.

Setting Quantitative Targets

Noting that the fifth five year plan focused too much on growth, Professor Nasreen Khundker asked whether there was any in-built mechanism and timeframe for the distribution of the benefits of growth to the poor. "What can be expected to be achieved as a result of a growth strategy, and what has been achieved so far?" she questioned.

Dr. Rushidan Islam Rahman of BIDS wanted to know if there was any quantitative target for poverty reduction in terms of the percentage of people to be shifted above the poverty line each year on a sustainable basis. She enquired whether there was a mechanism to ensure that the poor would not once again fall under the poverty threshold.

Responding to the above questions the Minister replied that the people living below poverty would be reduced to 32 per cent in the terminal year of the Fifth Five Year Plan i.e. 2002 from the 51 per cent which was the case in 1997. According to the 1999 survey, share of people living below the poverty line decreased to 44.68 per cent. The minister, however, pointed out that the faster rate of poverty reduction that the government expected did not unfortunately materialise. Nevertheless, he asserted that the poverty situation had improved. The Minister was confident that the comprehensive policy measures which the present government had been pursuing would in future result in the reduction to 32 per cent.

The Sen Formula for Working Out an Actionable National Strategy

Mr. M. Syeduzzaman, a former finance minister informed that Professor Amartya Sen when he was visiting Bangladesh in December 1998 had put forward a five-point prescription about eradication of poverty. The Nobel laureate mentioned about five opportunities - social opportunity meaning education and health, political opportunity meaning freedom of choice, market opportunity meaning access to resources, institutional opportunity meaning good governance and security opportunity meaning safety nets. Mr. Syeduzzaman suggested picking up the thread from the Sen's prescription to work out the national strategy. He substantiated his argument by saying that there was consistency

between the five point prescriptions with the vision set forth in the national constitution. He urged to bring these two together and to work out an actionable program for national strategy.

In response to Mr. Syeduzzaman's proposal, the State Minister for Planning said that the government was ready to consider these five points as guidelines and added that at the time of the mid term review government would take cognisance of these five elements as the basis for future policy design and in financing the various interventions.

Mobilising the Decision Making Process Behind Poverty Reduction

Participants were of the opinion that poverty reduction failed to witness a marked shift despite successive government's claim that poverty was their overarching goal. This happened because they failed to mobilise the decision making process behind the issue of reduction of poverty. Acknowledging this the state minister for planning observed that that poverty reduction to be taken as a single objective could only be pursued, if the total decision making process of the state rally behind such objective. He conceded that that had not happened in Bangladesh. He, however, claimed that the country was now heading in that desired direction. He mentioned that the present government had chosen democracy as the basis to advance in this desired direction. He said that democracy meant that the government would take the course which majority of the people wanted them to take. He also mentioned that if the government resorted to any different path, this would become unsustainable in the face of democracy. He claimed that his government was proceeding in the right direction but conceded that results might not be achieved overnight. He added that the process of democracy might be time consuming, but there was no better alternative.

Government Must Spearhead the Process

According to Mr Badiur Rahman, development is not a project/programme or agency, rather it involves a process of restructuring of relationship of government with the population. Drawing upon his own experience, he said that micro credit or distribution of inputs were not going to take the country out of poverty. Given the enormity of the tasks, he noted that it was government which must spearhead the process in the context of whole gigantic problem. In this connection he referred to the *Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation* and observed that the

Commission was very clear-cut in their recommendation. The Commission had noted that it was the government must steer this process.

Pointing out that poverty alleviation is not just a function of distribution of inputs or providing microcredit, Mr Badiur Rahman argued that reduction of poverty involved many instruments including regeneration of income, intensive agricultural development, rural development, human development and net transfer of resources for implementation.

Stressing the active role of the local government and its officials, the Local Government Secretary suggested that if adequate training could be provided to the local government personnel in the areas of local level planning, resource mobilisation, mobilisation of the people, these people would be more equipped to perform their duties. He mentioned that the Ministry was considering the prospect of social mobilisation by way of organising the people raising their awareness, improving their capacity for self management, developing a positive attitude towards themselves and by initiating a socio-economic process which would stimulate their capacity to deal with government departments, financial and other institutions.

Missing Institutions for Social Mobilisation

About the replication of Kishoreganj programme, Mr Badiur Rahman said that there was no existing organisation in the government or in the non-governmental sector which could provide the necessary support and guidance which he had provided in Kishoreganj. For social mobilisation and community approach, it required a very sensitive support structure which was in general missing. Keeping the experience of *Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)* in mind, he advocated for some sort of independent support structure for providing the kind of support and guidance which was extended to Kishoreganj. “But it requires an enabling condition and supportive environment where government through its policies and programmes can play a very effective role through local government bodies as well as local administration. That is the challenge ahead of us,” he concluded.

As regards missing institutions, Dr. Debapriya Bhattachariya criticised the systematic erosion in the capacity within the civil administration to deal with complex issues and considered this erosion as a corollary development of the adjustment programme. He said that the state was in neglect. Effort to raise the capacity has been

very minimum both from the side of the government as well as the donors and as a result, at the moment the government lacked the capacity to deal with donors. He raised the issue of building up partnership with other actors within the society and suggested reaching out to the broad spectrum of civil society through dialogues and partnership. He considered partnership not only between the donors and the government to be important but partnership within the society between the government and the rest of the society.

Strategic Coordination for Formulating National Strategy

Mr. M Syeduzzaman, a former finance minister of the country, thought that there was divergence between the strategies of the government and donors. Drawing upon his own experience he said that the reason behind this probably was that the strategy of the government was neither very clear nor consistent. The IDA, the main actor in the donor community, operates under certain guidelines, under certain conditionalities which was enforced by the IDA donors who belonged to OECD and these donors are also the bilateral donors. “So any implicit divergence or contradiction or conflict between the IDA prescription and those of bilateral donors is something that has to be addressed,” he suggested. Emphasising on effective coordination, he opined that the government had a major role to play in bringing the donors together, and also in pointing out any divergence between donors’ view and the government’s view. “We need to have an effective coordination in designing programmes, reflecting our own national strategy” he added.

Drawing upon his own experience Mr. Werner Kiene, UN Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative of the World Food Programme in Dhaka commented that many in the donor communities, not limited to the UN only, were willing to coordinate but very few amongst these were willing to be coordinated. The same also held in case of government. He also observed that many of his friends here also complained about lack of coordination in Bangladesh. “The theory is there. In practice something was not quite jelling and there needs to be perhaps a stronger, more consistent, more coordinated document and every one is talking about this,” he observed.

The State Minister for Planning observed that the donors had differences in views regarding poverty alleviation. He suggested that both the donor community and the government should try to find out a common strategy – which was acceptable to all.

Changes in Aid Conditionalities

Some participants pointed out that the practice of enjoying policy leverage through disbursement conditionalities did not prove to be an effective instrument and advocated for changes in the application of such conditionalities. Dr. Binayak Sen stressed the need for changes in the deployment of such stringent conditionalities in the context of the renewed emphasis on poverty. In this connection, he mentioned that the draft of the World Bank's World Development Report 2000 made a very clear point that aid conditionalities did not work and in most cases aid effectiveness was very low. "It makes a very clear point that one of the harmful and damaging effects of aid conditionality was that it undermined local capacities. It did not allow the local capacities to grow to develop domestic agendas," Dr. Sen stressed. His view was that reflection on own development agenda should be an integral part of the renewed emphasis on poverty reduction.

Realignment of Aid Structure

Some participants observed that one of the interesting new shifts which had been taking place in the area of rethinking aid assistance related to whether aid should be given directly to antipoverty programmes or there should be some kind of restructuring of the aid itself.

Arjan de Haan, a headquarter-based official of British aid agency said that new direction of aid was increasingly moving away from specific projects. Recognising that there had been many sick projects, he termed them unsustainable because they were formulated outside the national or local contexts.

Mr. Werner Kiene, resident representative of the World Food Programme informed that there has been an urge in the industrial world to do some realignment. Expressing his gratitude to the World Bank for its financing of a part of the national nutrition programme, he asked why the WB was not pushed to finance a road. He thought that each donor had a comparative advantage in some particular area and it was up to government 'to just choose and pick.'

Ignorance of the Donors About Objective Conditions of the Country

Professor Nasreen Khundker suggested that the pace of reforms was made conditional without reflecting the objective conditions prevailing in the contracting country. She said that one could very well question if donors' reform measures reflected

the objective conditions. She enquired if there had been any evaluation as to when a country embarked upon these reforms; anything worthwhile was going to happen in terms of employment creation, in terms of poverty reduction etc. She, like many other researchers, had seen reforms in various areas like privatisation, the management of public enterprises etc. simply focussed on retrenchment of workers and reducing employment growth rather than creation of employment and revitalisation of these sectors. Again, the focus of export-led growth took attention away from all other sectors - import competing sectors, including small and medium industries. She felt that donor perceptions were too much focused on prices, getting the prices right, leaving out most of supply side interventions, non price interventions, the issue of building up technological capability etc. which could improve the performance of these sectors and hence would feed growth dynamics and lead to poverty reduction. It was in this sense that she thought that the donor perspectives were not consistent with the objective conditions and realities of the country.

Mired in a Bandwagon of Reforms: Need for Prioritisation

Mr. M Syeduzzaman, a former finance minister observed that Bangladesh was now beset with a much larger number of conditionalities than was used to be the case when the current account gap was as high as 10 per cent of the GDP. Elaborating he said that in addition to the recent emphasis on good governance, Bangladesh had a large number of reform programmes which had been geared towards good governance or meant to fortify the concept of good governance like legal reform, judicial reform, financial sector reform, public administration reform, energy sector reform, telecommunication sector reform, health sector reform, education sector reform and etc. At present current account deficit constituted only three percent of the GDP and the quantum of foreign aid in terms of GDP is even smaller. “Do we need to prioritise these reform programmes, isn’t there an overload of reform programmes on the entire machinery of the government?” he questioned. Noting this a serious matter, the former finance minister called for prioritisation of these reforms, based on a closer look in them. He advocated for taking an approach which was mid-way between *big bang* and gradualism, and in keeping consistency with the political realities.

Addressing the issue of reforms Dr. Debapriya Bhattachariya thought one should not confuse what was actually meant by reforms. “There is hardly any people in Bangladesh who does not want good governance and good reforms. The issue is what reforms the policy makers are talking about and how have they really put them in place and how they have prioritised them,” he noted. He thought that hardly anybody would disagree on the necessity of reforms in those sectors. Dr. Bhattacharya noted that the moot point of the whole issue was how one would sequence them, how one paced them, how one prioritised them, and finally how one put those into implementation.

Tied Aid

The Minister was of the opinion that there would remain differences between the donors and the national government in their approaches to poverty alleviation and that this could not be removed immediately. “The bilateral donors talk a lot about poverty alleviation; however, they assign conditionalities in order to increase market share of their countries’ products.” He added that the multilateral donor agencies, which were dependent on these bilateral donors, also in a way created markets for the products of the industrialised countries.

What Type of Structural Adjustment Reform

The dialogue participants observed that the donors had pushed the structural adjustment reform policies as both-necessary and sufficient conditions for eradication of poverty. They noted that donors had just simply added instruments like microcredit to the reform process to give it a human face.

Dr. Sheikh Maqsood Ali, a former member of the Planning Commission opined that the country required structural adjustment reforms but not the type of policies which donors had prescribed. According to him, he was not condemning structural adjustment reform policies. Reform policies are, to some extent, necessary. However, policies should be designed in a manner which would reward efficiency. He said the poor had no fear about ‘real’ structural adjustment reform policies if it was actually based on comparative efficiency, because they would survive the reforms since they were efficient. “It is the non-efficient non-poor who will be in problem if the structural adjustment reform policies is pushed ahead,” he noted.

Gap Between the Donors' Broad Strategy and Field Level Operation

Dr Binayak Sen opined that the Bank's World Development Report or UNDP's Human Development Reports were meaningful guides in understanding the real policies and strategies. He then went on to raise a 'loud' question: "how far changing emphasis as reflected in these documents are being implemented on behalf of those agencies?" He added that it was not clear to him. He cited an example; in 1990 World Bank President James Wolfensohn enunciated a comprehensive development framework, the CDF, which included everything from empowerment to broad-based growth. He observed that it was not clear how CDF was being translated into country specific operation strategies of the Bank. "Now that is something we have to analyse, we have to ask and we have to bring the donors attention to what is being done," he pointed out. He suggested that the government should have to pin point the differences between what had been said in the broad strategy document and what was being translated. He also suggested for having an effective monitoring mechanism.

Implementation or Design Failure

Mr. Werner Kiene, resident representative of the WFP was surprised that out of the nine points, only three dealt with the core of the workshop namely, getting a consistent, and probably shared by all, national framework. This appeared to him to be the key issue that needed to be addressed. He did not believe that donors prevented the government from having such a consistent policy. "If they prevented then it was little bit like the child not getting out of the mother's reach because mother is so comfortably doing everything," he observed.

Dr. Debapriya Bhattachariya cautioned that one should not necessarily blame the government if the reforms did not work. "One needs to distinguish between the design failure and the implementation failure. Referring to the letter of Mr. Fred Temple, Dhaka Chief of World Bank, which came out in the press that day, Dr. Bhattachariya said that it assumed the full load of blame on the government for the implementation failure. He contested this position by saying that there had been many reform programmes which suffered from basic design flaws emanating from strong assumptions about governance and institution in this country, and their pacing of implementation. He cited the fatal example of biggest reform project, 250 million dollars jute sector adjustment credit which had 'almost everything under the sun' in the package including a safety net programme.

“What really happened afterwards was that at the end of the day it was funny on the part of the private sector to complain about the WB in a rather funny way,” he quipped.

Dr. Bhattacharya enquired about which reform participation were talking about. Focusing on the process issues he enquired, if the reforms were designed in a participatory manner, or they came as an outcome, or as a corollary of a pre-determined macro framework. Turning onto the paradigmatic issue, he enquired whether there was a consensus on reforms. He thought that at the moment there was an add-on framework i.e. if tomorrow the participatory issue came in, it was added onto the neo-liberal macro framework of the stabilisation and adjustment. He noted this had been the case with gender, environment and empowerment.

Dr Bhattacharya criticised absence of an attempt to try to find the causal linkages among the measures. “What is happening in the trade policy, in monetary policy and are there linkages with all other issues?” asked Dr. Bhattacharya. Stressing the need to be modest, he suggested for accepting the fact that at this moment there was not enough theoretical underpinning to subsume all these things.

Missing Feedback Mechanism

Pointing to the absence of an effective feedback mechanism, Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya expressed his skepticism about how the feed back process worked within an aid agency. Elaborating Dr. Bhattacharya noted that it would be very difficult to know what changes had happened within the donor community subsequent to the holding a dialogue. Explaining the point, Dr Bhattacharya said that when dialogues held by donors were over, recipients did not know exactly what policies donors accepted and which were discarded. As a matter of fact, donors did not come to interact with the civil society for validation. “If the donors talk about participation, obviously they have to come back for validation,” he stressed. He mentioned that he had never seen a consultation process in which donor community came back for validation.

The Planning Minister agreed with the points Dr. Maqsood Ali made on distribution and allocation of resources for the poor. He wanted to add a footnote to it by saying that this is likely to happen on the basis of consensus in a democratic country. So if the society becomes aware of the need for poverty alleviation and about the inherent dangers in not achieving it, it would force them to work towards poverty alleviation. This is why having this dialogue on poverty alleviation was so important. Such dialogues

will help Bangladesh in her attempts trying to expand projects in areas which catered to the national demand for alleviating poverty.

Beyond the National Boundary

Prof. Mahbubullah asked whether a poor country like Bangladesh had the ability to devise a national strategy in this era of globalisation. During the last two decades, inequity between rich and poor had increased considerably, consequently in the Third World poverty also increased as a result of the rise in inequity. Referring to the hosting of the next summit of the non-align movement in Dhaka, he asked the Minister whether the government was thinking of any declaration on the economic hegemony against the Third World.

Emphasising the need for regional cooperation, Dr. Binayak Sen said that there were certain problems in development such as urban problems and regional disparities which could not be resolved within a boundary of one country. This had important implications for coordination amongst donors at the regional level. He cited two examples in this regard. As regards malaria eradication, he opined that it could not be done within the context of national boundary. There was a growing interdependence in the region amongst countries across the borders, for example in the areas of job seeking, silent migration, and environmental refugisation, and there was an increasing need to move beyond national frontiers.

Homegrown Strategy Based on Dialogue Between Government, Civil Society and Donors

Dr. Arjan de Haan of DFID asserted that increasingly donors were moving towards policy dialogues with partner governments. Such policy dialogues envisaged that government themselves would formulate strategies wherein poverty reduction would be the overarching goal. “The emphasis is on national strategies, strategies that take into account local knowledge, that follow processes, processes within the countries, which the donors can then buy into,” the British aid official said. He suggested that the donor agencies required starting with national poverty strategies. “So it is a call to our partners and also a promise that we will help facilitate the process if partner governments in consultation with civil society formulate these national strategies,” he declared. Dr. de Haan advised that the national strategy should provide a basis for a dialogue and within

that the recipients could formulate the kind of conditions that they would like to pose to the donors.

Professor Abul Barkat in this connection noted that the country had no home grown national strategy for eradication of poverty.

Noting that at present the dialogue issue has become a common fad with the donors, Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya was curious to know with whom such dialogue process would take place. “Quite often it has been found that the dialogues are very ritualistic, very routine work, fly in, fly out and may be going out in the village has also become a very interesting show piece in that way. I do n’t want to be too much harsh on the World Bank who have this VIP programme (not very important person programme), village immersion programme, that’s how one may feel energised; but the issue is whether these are the ways one really do the dialogue” he maintained. He argued that one should have to find out whether the process had really reached out to the civil society beyond the corridors of bureaucracy and dealt with not only the people whom the particular agency liked most but also listened to the critical comments.

Need for a Citizen’s Taskforce

Noting that the country still lacked a homegrown strategic poverty eradication framework, the dialogue participants stressed the need for constituting a citizen’s task force with mandate to address this nationally felt need. The participants agreed that there was a lack of clearly articulated poverty alleviation agenda with specific targets with concrete set of policies and programmes reflecting the concerns for the poor.

Professor Rehman Sobhan enquired whether the country had clearly articulated programmes which would address the objectives of reducing the level of poverty to 15%, say in 10 years time, ensuring education for all at least up to class 5, universal access to health care, universal immunisation, universal access to micro credit, generation of significant and identifiable range of employment opportunities, redesigning of monetary and fiscal structures, classifying the budget by income category in a manner that ensured that more than 50% of its resources would be delivered to the poor. “Do you need this and is there scope for some initiative to take it forward in that way?” he asked.

Dr. Binayak Sen thought a sensible citizen's task force or national strategy could be adopted by delineating the essential ingredients of the phases from famine prevention to the now post Washington Consensus strategy. He added that there could be a very

clear analytical distinction in this and initiatives should be made in that particular direction.

Concluding Statement by the Chief Guest

The minister argued that poverty would not be eradicated in the short and medium term if a net transfer of resources was not made favouring the poor. He put emphasis on higher investment in health and education sectors. To achieve poverty alleviation emphasis had to be put on growth. In this context, he pointed out that all these steps were being taken in the Annual Development Programmes (ADP). According to him, Fifth Five Year Plan (FFYP) was formulated by keeping poverty alleviation as the main objective and by keeping the needs of life cycle of a human being in mind. Projects are being taken under the ADP to realise this objective and some of these projects are contributing directly and some indirectly to this cause. He stressed the need for concerted steps by all to achieve poverty alleviation.

As regards whether it was possible for the country to devise a homegrown strategy in this era of globalization, the Minister acknowledged there were formidable obstacles in this regard, and stated that ‘our challenge is to convert these into opportunities through innovative approaches.’

The Minister emphasised the need for a participatory development. In this regard he also observed that democracy might be time consuming but there was no better alternative.

Regarding differences between the donors and the national government on policy issues, the Minister was of the view that the conditionalities assigned by the donors were actually tools by which they attempted to increase the market share for their country’s products. He, however, stressed that the responsibility for changing fundamental strategies was a national one and “if we fail to do this, we will not be able to eradicate poverty”

The Minister blamed lack of desired level of investment in the industrial sector as the main reason for the inability to achieve gainful employment. He was of the opinion that such inadequate investment was due to lack of necessary infrastructures like power generation. In this connection he observed that current deposit structure of the commercial banks was not enough to provide industrial credit. The Minister mentioned about initiatives that the government took to overcome these problems. He listed projects

which were initiated to increase power generation, and for providing industrial credit. In this connection, the Minister noted that the WB had been opposing state interventions of all kinds. He mentioned that the present government had taken some steps which were contrary to the prescription of the WB and this had proved successful.

Emphasising on good governance, the Minister mentioned that this had a positive relationship with poverty alleviation. If people's representatives remained accountable to the people, the country would definitely be able to alleviate poverty, he said.

The Minister in his concluding remarks pointed out that Bangladesh had to develop a flexible strategy which was acceptable to all including the donors and which would address both static and relative nature of poverty. "For poverty reduction in the former case we have to provide universal health care, universal primary education and universal immunization, etc., and we need to increase overall national income," he said.

Regarding corruption the Minister said that for the first time in the FFYP document the government presented facts about corruption. He thought that if corruption was not prevented, poverty alleviation would be hindered.

Turning to the issue of urbanisation, the Minister said that the rate of urbanisation was the highest in Bangladesh and it worsened the poverty situation in the cities. The issue required immediate attention, he opined. About permanent housing for the slum dwellers, the Minister said that the fundamentals for lawful settlement of the slums was still absent in the country.

The Minister insisted that in a democracy the interest of the majority ought to be served and hence that the conflict between interests of the poor and the majority would be eliminated. He believed that investible resources should be increased and the end benefits of this investment should be distributed amongst the poor to ensure alleviation of poverty. Recognising that poverty was a curse and enemy of the environment, Bangladesh should adopt a unified approach to combat poverty.

The donor community was especially very vocal against corruption. They are making comments about good governance and corruption in our country. In this context he wanted to say that the government, for the first time in the fifth five year plan, presented facts regarding corruption. Those who are speaking of corruption today had supported the dynasty of Suharto and Marcos yesterday. He was of the opinion that the biggest corruption was corruption which was associated with governance and those who were involved in state corruption were those who were intentionally involved in

wrongdoing. He did not believe that people of a specific country could be blamed for involvement in corruption. Based on his experience, he personally felt that if the global community of countries failed to prevent corruption unitedly then just blaming one particular country for this and then putting sanction on poverty alleviation programmes would not be the right thing to do. If this was the case it would be the biggest corruption of all, he concluded.

List of Consulted CAS', Policy Papers and Focus Studies

Sl. No.	Agency and Country	Type	Prepared by	Time of Preparation	Implementation Period
COUNTRY ASSISTANCE STRATEGY					
1.	Department for International Development (DFID), UK	CSP	DFID Staff based on inputs from consultants and consultations	Nov. 1998	1999-2002
2.	Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), Sweden	CP	SDC staff plus workshops and local talks	May, 1993 – May, 1994	1995-2002
3.	World Bank (WB)	CAS	WB Staff	Mar 6, 1998	1998-2001
4.	United Nations Development Group (UNDG)	CCA	UN Staff College, UNICEF, WFP, FAO, UNFPA and UNDP	Nov. 1998 – Sep. 1999	
5.	European Commission (EC)	CS	EC/Bangladesh		1999-2001
6.	UNICEF	CN	UNICEF Board	Nov. 12, 1999	2000-2005
7.	World Food Programme (WFP)	CSO	WFP	Mar. 5, 2000	2001 – 2005
GLOBAL POVERTY STRATEGY					
Sl. No.	Agency	Title	Prepared by	Time of Preparation	Implementation Period
1.	OECD	DAC Guidelines on Poverty	DAC Informal Network on Poverty Reduction	March 2000	
2.	SIDA	Sida's Poverty Programme	Dept. for Policy and Legal Services	Dec. 1996	
3.	UNFPA	Guidelines on Poverty and other Related Issues	UNFPA		
4.	JICA	JICA's Development Assistance on Poverty Eradication	Ministry of Foreign Affairs		
5.	UNDP	UNDP Poverty Report 2000			
6.	WFP	Enabling Development	May 1999		
7.	SDC	Policy for Social development	Nov. 1999		
8.	SDC	Guiding Principles	1999		
BANGLADESH – SPECIFIC POLICY ON POVERTY REDUCTION					
Sl. No.	Agency	Title	Prepared by	Time of Preparation	Implementation Period
1.	CIDA	Policy on Poverty Reduction	CIDA	Jan. 1996	
2.	SDC	SDC and Bangladesh	SDC	Dec 1997	
3.	SDC	SDC-Policy for Social Development			
POVERTY-FOCUSED PAPERS/STUDIES					
Sl. No.	Agency	Title	Type	Prepared by	Time of Preparation
1	WB	Bangladesh: From Counting the Poor to Making the Poor	Focus study	WB staff	1999
2.	NORAD	Policies and Strategies for Poverty Reduction in Norwegian Development Aid	Evaluation	Chr. Michelson Institute	1999
3.	DFID	Economic Well-being	TSP	DFID	Dec. 1999
4.	DFID	Poverty Issues in Bangladesh	Review	consultants	May 1998

Note: CSP = Country Strategy Paper CP = Country Programme CCA = Country Common Assessment
CS = Co-operation Strategy CN = Country Note CSO = Country Strategy Outlines TSP = Target Strategy Paper

List of Participants
(in alphabetical order)

<i>Dr Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir</i>	Hon'ble State Minister Ministry of Planning Government of Bangladesh
<i>Mr Kazi Sabbir Ahmed</i>	Intern, CPD
<i>Mr Saleh Ahmed</i>	Senior Information Officer Ministry of Planning Government of Bangladesh
<i>Mr Salehuddin Ahmed</i>	Deputy Executive Director BRAC
<i>Dr Sheikh Maqsood Ali</i>	Former Member, Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh Member, South Asian Independent Commission on Poverty Alleviation
<i>Mr Prakash Baidya</i>	Student, University of Dhaka
<i>Ms Ayesha Banu</i>	Coordinator (Dialogue & Communication) CPD
<i>Mr Shamsul Bari</i>	Project Director Programme for Research on Poverty Alleviation Grameen Trust
<i>Professor Abul Barkat</i>	Department of Economics University of Dhaka
<i>Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya</i>	Executive Director, CPD
<i>Mr Abdus Salam Bhuiyan</i>	Director, Research Cell, Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries

<i>Mr Anwarul Bar Chowdhury</i>	Vice-Chairman, Export Promotion Bureau Ministry of Commerce Government of Bangladesh
<i>Mr Zahiduzzaman Faruque</i>	Editor The Daily Arthaneeti
<i>Mr Arjan de Haan</i>	Social Development Adviser, DFID, UK
<i>Mr Nurul Haq</i>	Former Member, Planning Commission, GOB and Former Director, CPD
<i>Mr Md Azmul Haque</i>	Research Cell, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries
<i>Mr Jakir Hossain</i>	Research Associate CPD
<i>Ms Mafruha Hossain</i>	Intern, CPD
<i>Mr Najmul Hossain</i>	Research Assistant, Bangladesh Institute of International Strategic Studies, Dhaka
<i>Mr S M Al Husainy</i>	Former Chairman, Public Service Commission, Government of Bangladesh and Chairman, Swanirvar
<i>Dr Zahid Hussain</i>	Economist, The World Bank
<i>Dr Muhammad Ibrahim</i>	Professor, Department of Physics, University of Dhaka
<i>Mr Keniji Ishido</i>	Second Secretary, Embassy of Japan
<i>Dr Nazrul Islam</i>	Professor, Department of Geography and Environment, University of Dhaka and Director, Centre for Urban Studies
<i>Mr S H Kabir</i>	Former President, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industries and Chairman, Renata Ltd

<i>Mr Faisal Kamal</i>	Intern, CPD
<i>Mr Syed Kamaluddin</i>	Editor <i>Far Eastern Economic Review</i>
<i>Professor Nasreen Khundker</i>	Department of Economics University of Dhaka
<i>Dr Werner Kiene</i>	Resident Representative United Nations-World Food Programme (WFP)
<i>Dr Richard Montgomery</i>	Senior Social Development Advisor, DFID British High Commission Dhaka
<i>Mr Shams Mustafa</i>	Economist UNDP, Dhaka
<i>Dr Narayan Chandra Nath</i>	Research Fellow Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)
<i>Mr Badiur Rahman</i>	Secretary, Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Government of Bangladesh
<i>Dr Rushidan Islam Rahman</i>	Senior Research Fellow Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)
<i>Professor P K Matiur Rahman</i>	Professor ISRT, University of Dhaka
<i>Ms Moushumi Rahman</i>	Research Associate CPD
<i>Mr Md Saifur Rahman</i>	Research Associate CPD
<i>Mr Waliur Rahman</i>	Former Ambassador and Director, BILIA
<i>Mr Kartik Chandra Saha</i>	Student, University of Dhaka
<i>Mr Abdus Salam</i>	Attayapratikiti

<i>Dr Binayak Sen</i>	Senior Research Fellow, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)
<i>Mr M Shahabuddin</i>	Director, Proshika Manabik Unnayan Kendro, Dhaka
<i>Mr Shah Alam</i>	APS to Hon'ble State Minister Ministry of Planning Government of Bangladesh
<i>Mr Omar Sharif</i>	Intern, CPD
<i>Mr Sameeo Sheesh</i>	Student, University of Dhaka
<i>Mr Bob Snider</i>	First Secretary, CIDA Canadian High Commission, Dhaka
<i>Professor Rehman Sobhan</i>	Chairman, CPD
<i>Ms Salma Sobhan</i>	Executive Director, Ain O Salish Kendro
<i>Mr M Syeduzzaman</i>	Former Finance Minister and Chairman, Bangladesh Oxygen Ltd.
<i>Mr Rashed A M Titumir</i>	Assistant Professor, Bangladesh Open University
<i>Professor Mahabub Ullah</i>	Department of Economics University of Chittagong Chittagong
<i>Mr Abu Yousuf</i>	Attayapratikriti
<i>Mr A Zaman</i>	Student, University of Dhaka
Journalist (in alphabetical order)	
<i>Mr Faruq Ahmed</i>	The Independent
<i>Mr Zulfiqar Ali</i>	The Muktakantha
<i>Mr Amlan Dewan</i>	The Bhorer Kagoj
<i>Mr Siddique Islam</i>	The Banglar Bani

Mr Sajjad Alam Khan

The Banglabazar Patrika

Mr Golam Kibria

The Prothom Alo

Mr Talat Mamun

The Daily Arthaneeti

Mr Sohel Manzur

The Financial Express

Mr Shawkat Hossain Masum

The Daily Ittefaq

Mr Tariq Rahman

The Independent

Mr Rana

The Dipto Bangla

Mr Asif Shawkat

The Daily Arthaneeti

Ms Sharifa Sultana

News Network

Mr Asad-uz Zaman

The Daily Star