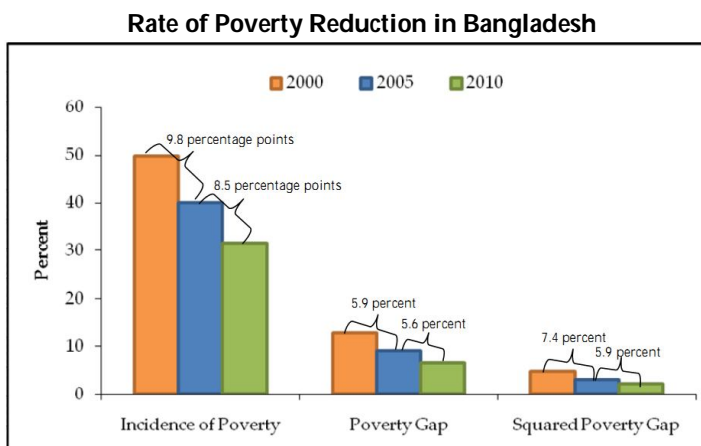
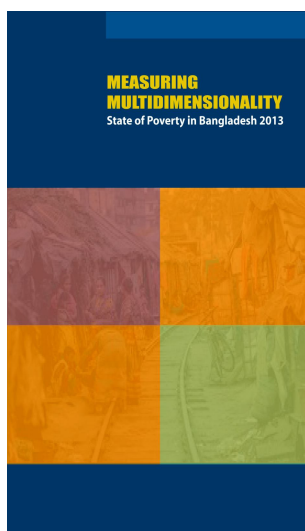


Measuring Multidimensionality: State of Poverty in Bangladesh 2013



Source: Unnayan Onneshan, *Measuring Multidimensionality: State of Poverty in Bangladesh 2013*, Dhaka: Shrabon Prokashani, based upon BBS (2003, 2007, 2011)

The Unnayan Onneshan, an independent multidisciplinary think-tank, states that the rate of decline in poverty in Bangladesh has slowed down in recent years.

The research organisation in its book titled “Measuring Multidimensionality: State of Poverty in Bangladesh 2013” launched in connection with the “International Day for the Eradication of Poverty” says that poverty reduced by 9.8 percentage points during the five years of 2000-2005 while during the successive five years (2005-2010) the total decline was 8.5 percentage points.

The depth of poverty or poverty gap, a measure of the average income gap of the poor in relation to a certain threshold, and severity of poverty or squared poverty gap, a measure sensitive to the income distribution among the poor -- have also witnessed a slower rate of reduction in last few years. The rate of fall in depth of poverty was 5.94 percent between 2000 and 2005 and was 5.56 percent between 2005 and 2010. Likewise, the severity of poverty was 7.39 percent between 2000 and 2005 and was 6.21 percent between 2005 and 2010.

The Unnayan Onneshan for the first time in the country has employed major approaches of measurement of poverty such as monetary, capability, participatory and social exclusion to comprehend the dynamics of poverty in the country. The think-tank has also identified some important problems associated with the different approaches of measuring poverty such as estimation, selection and targeting biases.

Considering capability approach, broadly measured by human development index (HDI), the research finds that the HDI value has increased from 0.453 in 2010 to 0.515 in 2012 with annual rate of 4.56 percent. “On the other hand, the inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI) increased to 0.374 in 2012 from 0.331 in 2010 with a rate of 4.33 percent per annum. This lower rate of increase in IHDI over HDI indicates that inequality has a greater impact on poverty reduction since under the perfect equality condition, the HDI and the IHDI are equal,” observes the study.

The reduction rate of hunger (3.67 percent per annum) is slower than the rate of reduction in extreme poverty (4.87 percent per annum) during the period of 2000 – 2010. The number of hungry people as a percentage of extreme poor has increased over the years, adds the research.

Pointing out that the gender inequality has decreased at decreasing rate of 1.66 percent annually over the period of 2005 to 2012, the Unnayan Onneshan states that the value of Gender Inequality Index in 2012 suggests that Bangladesh is yet far from equality because of deprivation of women in equal access to education, health care and decision-making.

Observing that the participation of people in economic activities has been increasing over the years, the Unnayan Onneshan, however, detects that the rate of reduction of poverty is not matching the similar pace in Bangladesh. “The participation of population in income generating activities increased from 39.0 million in 1999-2000 to 54.1 million in 2010 with an annual rate of increase of 3.87 percent whereas the rate of poverty declined from 49.8 percent to 31.5 percent with the decrease rate of 3.67 percent per year during the same period,” adds the research.

Observing that the country is still experiencing social exclusion on the basis of ethnicity, descent, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, and region, the Unnayan Onneshan finds that the rate of poverty among the widowed, divorced and separated people has decreased at a lowered rate from 59.7 percent in 1995-96 to 33.9 percent in 2010 with an annual rate of 2.88 percent.

The incidence of poverty among zero landowners reduced from 58.2 percent in 1995-96 to 35.4 percent in 2010 with an annual rate of 2.61 percent. The incidence of poverty among uneducated household head has reduced from 67.0 percent in 1995-96 to 42.8 percent in 2010 with an annual rate of 3.2 percent whereas the incidence of poverty at national level has reduced to 25.1 percent in 2010 from 48.0 percent in 1995-96 with an annual rate of 2.4 percent.

Referring to the slower rate of reduction in poverty, the Unnayan Onneshan reasons the challenges like unemployment, inequality, environmental degradation and climate change, decreasing agriculture land etc.

The Unnayan Onneshan has underscored that current anti-poverty strategies have not been able to comprehend poverty as a process interlinks to, and emanates from, the functioning of society. It also points out that the central framework seems to promote dominant neoliberal policies which have questionable effects on people’s lives and the institutions have failed to address the power imbalances that exist between different classes.

The Unnayan Onneshan proposes a set of indicators based on new five fundamental principles of rights, equality, justice, sustainability and partnership for development through historic responsibility for a zero-poverty post 2015 development framework.