

SOCIAL EXCLUSION: SOCIAL PROTECTION AND FOOD SECURITY

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1 INTRODUCTION

Growing economic development has not resulted in equitable, sustained reduction of hunger and poverty as per expectations and prediction in South Asia; instead, income inequalities have widened rather than narrowed, as the poverty gap remain large, albeit economic growth exceeded eight percent annually over the past decade (Köhler, Cali and Stirbu , 2009). Accordingly, a particular group of people become more vulnerable , inferior, underprivileged as well as excluded by their rights and needs. Social exclusion deprives individuals and communities of political voice and representation, of equitable access to social services, and of access to assets and predictable livelihoods and decent work. Economically and socially excluded groups live with gaps in health, education, access to essential social services, adequate shelter, and generally see their rights unfulfilled over globally and across the South Asia as well (Köhler, Cali and Stirbu, 2009). Exclusion is addressed as ‘targeting services toward those who they deem as deprived’ (Zohir et al., 2007) by government and non-government agencies in Bangladesh.

All the programs targeted for exclude groups have well defined targets, for example, residents of flood affected areas; rural women without a minimum level of assets; retrenched workers from state-owned enterprises, rape and acid victims, and the very poor identified in terms of some observables. Social protection can be used to address social exclusion, primarily by addressing income and asset poverty which disproportionately affect socially excluded groups, and possibly through particular measures to enable the excluded to claim their rights. Social protection can address structural inequalities by enabling not just formal but also substantive realization of rights, through which opportunities could effectively translate into outcomes for the rights-holders (Köhler,Cali and Stirbu , 2009). Social protection interventions can be used as tools for affirmative action, and provisions need to be factored into universal social protection to focus transfers and services on vulnerable groups and areas.

2 DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION: CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

Currently, social exclusion as an issue comes into existence among the development practioners. It was introduced by Richard Lenoir in the academic discourse in the context of France in 1974. Excluded was espoused as ‘those who had no access to welfare program run by the state’-for example - physically and mentally disabled people (Zohir et al. , 2007). The reference of ‘exclusion’ was found in earlier literature, for example, Adam Smith mentioned of the inability of some people to “appear in public without shame” as a form of deprivation (Sen, 2000; Zohir et al., 2007). To Sen (2000), poverty is capability deprivation, i.e. the lack of capability to live a minimally decent life;

social exclusion is both a constitutive part of capability deprivation and an instrumental cause of capability failures. Nevile (2007) provides a synoptic argument on Sen.'s contribution in the following three areas: (i) Social exclusion is only a subset of poverty and it is only one of a number of reasons why an individual is unable to obtain adequate basic capabilities. This allows for other factors (such as, unfavorable inclusion) to cause poverty as well. (ii) Sen's distinction between forms of exclusion (or, unfavorable inclusion) which are in a deprivation and those which are not necessarily negative but which can lead to deprivation allowing the researcher to elaborate the causal chain. (iii) Sen's analytical distinction between active and passive forms of exclusion (and unfavorable inclusion) is useful in determining an appropriate policy response. Nevile (2007) opines that "the concept of social exclusion does have something to offer those interested in the analysis of chronic poverty in developing societies". Now, we would like to offer three –economic, social, and political - dimensions of social exclusion:

The economic approach to exclusion is concerned with the questions of income and production and access to goods and services from which some people are excluded and others are not. Social dimension of exclusion is figured out by the following aspects: (i) access to social services (for example, health and education, drinking water and sanitation facilities), (ii) access to the labor market (precariousness of employment as distinct from low pay), and (iii) extent of social participation reflected in the extent of weakening of the social fabric, as measured by greater crime, juvenile delinquency and homelessness, and so on).

Social exclusion also considers the political dimensions as it concerns the denial of certain human and political rights to certain groups of the population. The UNDP (1992:29) notes these rights as: personal security, rule of law, freedom of expression, political participation and equality of opportunity.

3 SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND STATE: AN OVERVIEW ON BANGLADESH

Available literatures of social exclusion go on to identify the nature and process of social exclusion in Bangladesh raise some questions analyzing different cases: Who is excluded? What is s/he excluded from? A more central question however is: why is someone excluded?

A child who cannot go to school because she lives too far from the nearest school, a woman who cannot engage in certain kinds of jobs because of social taboo and a minority community with no access to electricity because of political under-representation; these are some familiar cases of exclusion in Bangladesh. Many children in Bangladesh find it difficult to go to school due to the lack of public transportation and inadequate number of schools. Gender inequality and social norms often force women to remain secluded from certain occupations, and accept lower wages. Ethnic groups are inadequately represented in the parliament, which means investment in infrastructure is the lowest in their constituencies. By the social and cultural stigma, for instances,

commercial sex workers and HIV/AIDS affected groups are excluded from the mainstream society. In all these cases, individuals are deprived (or excluded) of/ from access to certain essential services, often perceived as basic rights as citizens of the country.

3.1 Social Exclusion by Education

Having replied of the questions mentioned earlier, we can distinguish the two dimensions. The child in the first case is excluded from access to education. However, this occurs due to his distance from the nearest school. The geographical location of this child answers the question that 'who is excluded?', while access to education answers the question 'what is she excluded from?' The first dimension is a characteristic of the individual that leads to exclusion from the second dimension, i.e. access to education. We call the first dimension the 'attribute' and the second dimension the 'space' of exclusion.

These marginalised groups including indigenous communities, low caste groups, disabled children, and children in especially difficult circumstances always face multiply vulnerable condition with having no family support at all or might live in families that are extremely poor, vulnerable or exploited. These children comprise a 'hard-to reach' class, who, in the short term, are unlikely to assistance from broad 'pro-poor' policies alone unless there is specific consideration of their particular life situations and needs as well.

3.2 Ethnic Minorities and Cultural Exclusion

The constitution of Bangladesh is accompanied by a notable lack of reference to the diversity of the population, notwithstanding it emphasizes on universal human rights. While recognizing Islam as the state religion, other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony (Article 2A). There is no similar recognition of ethnic differences in the population, notably the position of indigenous peoples. A tribal group constitutes the people who are mainly living in Chittagong Hill Tracts. They are counting as marginalised group and they are also economically deprived. Therefore, they have limited access to resources and their social indicators are dismal. Languages and cultural practices create barriers to public services. The Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs deals with one particular group of indigenous peoples notwithstanding not with the others scattered around the country's territory. The attitude of the state towards social exclusion has tended to be welfare in tone, with a focus including 'vulnerable groups'.

Shafie and Kilby (2003) discuss the processes of discrimination and exploitation that have led to the exclusion and marginalisation of indigenous communities that is known as '*Adibashi*' in Northwest of Bangladesh. They have identified that ethnic identities creating barriers to indigenous people's inclusion in wider social networks. The *Adibashi*'s are socially isolated and with little access to mainstream economic and political spheres. The complexity arises from ethnic inequality, enduring discrimination, lack of education, little access to land, water and lack of employment has resulted in increased poverty amongst these indigenous groups. They have identified the connection between social exclusion and the idea of 'poverty as capability deprivation'. It argues that

social exclusion can be better understood when it is placed in the broader context of inequality which considers economic inequality, lack of opportunity and inequality of choice.

3.3 Religious Minority and Social Exclusion

Goswami (2004) analysed the discrimination experienced by the Hindu religious minority in Bangladesh in their everyday interactions with the Muslim religious majority through the institutional aspects of discrimination. The main discriminatory patterns indicated the area of criticism of rituals and practices; verbal harassment; offering poor services; exploitation of labour and money; verbal threats; physical attack; obstructing the celebration of festivals; and land dispossession. The participants from lower socio-economic backgrounds were more lying in facing down to receiving discrimination than those from the upper groups. The most damaging element of discrimination was indicated as land grabbing.

3.4 Class is itself Caste for Dalits

Dalits are playing a significant role in the economic, environmental and social development of the country but these communities are considered as economically marginalised and socially excluded groups in Bangladesh. Dyrhagen and Islam (2006) described how *Dalits* are excluded from public and social spheres. It argues that basic provisions like shelter, food and water are not adequately provided for in areas where *Dalits* live having inadequate access to health care facilities and education as well as facing the lack of housing, employment opportunity and access to political spheres. Like *Dalit*, the traditional *Bede* community is also socially excluded in Bangladesh. In *Bede* community, some are economically solvent but still they are socially excluded:

“With our income our living standard has been improved...I have two children... both go to school .There is no discrimination in school when they sit in class room and play in school ground. However, outside the school, no people wants to mix with them as they are Bede and their life style and gesture is different from any other common people” . [Duluni Begum (30 years) from Bede Palli, Savar, Dhaka]

3.5 Disabilities and Social Exclusion

Social networks are essential community-based systems of support in the situations where formal state services are lacking (Foley and Chowdhury, 2007). Exclusion from these networks, and from the ‘social solidarity’ they provide, deprived people are labeled with disabilities of moral well being. It has indicated the difficulty for them to break out of poverty and ill health in the longer term. It also finds that the circumstances of those labeled with disabilities depend not only on the financial situation of the household, but also on how economically significant the member labeled with a disability is within the household composition. Another study conducted in Bangladesh by that eighty nine percent of children with disabilities are not in education in Bangladesh (Ahsan and

Burnip (2007). Lack of resources is the main barrier in implementing inclusive education for the disabled children.

3.6 Rural -Urban Migration and Social Exclusion

There is mounting evidence that rural –urban migration is creating exclusion for the people who settle in the urban areas either in private slums or in public land. Fifty three percent of poor migrants live in private slums and forty four percent squats on public land (Afsar, 2003). The major problems faced by rural to urban migrants in Bangladesh are including physical insecurity, poor housing, poor access to basic services, and discrimination by government officials. Poor living conditions also give rise to various health problems, particularly giving the combination of mud floors, flimsy walls, heat and humidity, torrential monsoon rains, and poor access to water and sanitation services. Nearly three-quarters of slum dwellers depend largely on outside water taps, which are shared by five to six families (Afsar, 2003). To fetch water for drinking and cooking, a female slum resident must travel an average distance of sixty nine meter daily. Nearly ninety percent of the slum dwellers use hanging and other types of non-sanitary toilets whereas ninety percent of non-slum residents have modern toilets and twenty five percent of households in small and medium towns have septic tanks in Dhaka city. These migrants consequently have poorer health and greater vulnerability compared to the general urban population.

3.7 Unrecognized Sex Industry and Social Exclusion

Human Rights Watch (2003) focused on the violence perpetrated towards the sex workers by the police and powerful thugs termed '*mastans*' in Bangladesh. The important findings were including these groups are regularly abducted, raped, gang-raped, beaten, and subject to extortion by the police and *mastans* as well as detested by their families and communities and denied access to education, employment, housing, and health care. Men who have sex with men, women sex workers, HIV/AIDs and STIs/STDs affected, are stigmatized in many aspects of their lives, excluded from employment suffering measurably.

3.8 Leprosy: Socio Cultural Stigma and Exclusion

Typically, people with leprosy may not be permitted to eat or sleep with their families, and are denied access to festivals, formal and informal gatherings, markets, employment, local water supply, and other public facilities. Their children may be denied schooling and later be forbidden to marry. However, as a whole, exclusion appears to have decreased greatly, particularly within family units. Plageron (2005) discussed how people affected by leprosy in Bangladesh suffer economic and social disadvantages as a result of this disease. Different groups are affected by leprosy in different ways, experiencing different processes of exclusion and outcomes of deprivation: the problems experienced by women with leprosy are more keenly felt than men, particularly in terms of jeopardizing their chances of marriage. For men, unemployment is a frequent trigger of social exclusion on this occasion.

3.9 Citizenship Controversy and Socio-cultural Exclusion

A group of people has been living in the territory of Bangladesh since its independence but they have no identity as Bangladeshi (See Appendix). They are being deprived in terms of national identity by the state and even by the mass people. These sorts of deprivation have made them not only infrastructurally vulnerable or excluded but also culturally excluded from mainstream society. This the excluded groups, who live in Geneva (*Bihari*) camp that can be defined by the three, approach of exclusion i.e. social, cultural and political.

'I have had national identity (ID)card , I wish I would tear my own ID card' ... if government recognize us as a Bangladeshi then why we don't get the same facilities like others outside this camp...For getting passport, I went to the nearest police station. The Sub Inspector of police of this area told that the Ministry of State Department would not order them to accept the address of the camp habitants for passport...Government of Bangladesh never keeps their promise to the Biharis. They don't help the camp dwellers. Most of the reliefs come from the international organizations, NGOs etc which are not sufficient at all. We don't need the help which perpetuates our poor condition; we need the permanent assistance which will develop our situation properly. When we go to have loan from bank, we are refused. We have to go to the various NGOs for micro loan but their interest rate is very highOur condition remain as it is. In this country, we have no existence, no recognition and no identity. I had born in Bangladesh but people treated me Pakistani. We don't know what will be happened to our children in future, what will be their identity, God may know.

[Md. Javed Ali (40 years): Geneva Bihari Camp, Mohammadpur, Dhaka]

4 SOCIAL SECURITY BY SOCIAL PROTECTION: AN ASSESSMENT ON FOOD SECURITY OF EXCLUDED GROUPS IN BANGLADESH

Social protection is, generally, identified as a sort of insurance policy against poverty and a tool for delivering social justice as well as a means of promoting inclusive development. It can be delivered to those who need it through a variety of mechanisms, including unemployment benefits, pensions, child support, housing assistance, national health insurance, job-creation schemes, retraining programs, agricultural insurance.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) views social protection in a broad sense as covering all safeguards or guarantees against reduction or loss of income in cases of illness, old age, unemployment or other hardship including family and ethnic solidarity. This includes protection instruments based on collective or individual savings, private insurance, social insurance, mutual benefit societies, formal sector social security, etc. It generally distinguishes between social security and social assistance. The former are contributory systems through which participants acquire rights to transfers to cover situations of ill-health, accident or disability, unemployment and old age. Social assistance refers to transfers not based on prior contributions but financed from the

general tax system instead to assist low income and vulnerable groups. (Köhler et al. 2009)

The excluded groups are especially vulnerable as they face higher risk of hazards and stresses having fewer buffers. Social protection involves interventions from public, private, voluntary organizations, and social networks to support individuals, households and communities prevent, manage as well as to overcome the hazards, risks, and stresses threatening their present and future well-being. Specific concepts of social inclusion, focusing on the need for social welfare, are recognized in the constitution of Bangladesh. This responsibility includes the right to public assistance in cases of undeserved want arising from unemployment, illness, disablement, or suffered by widows and orphans or in old age (Article 15 of the Constitution). In accordance with Article 15, the Ministry of Social Welfare deals with poverty alleviation, welfare development and empowerment by providing categorical welfare transfers, including old age allowances, disablement allowances, and grants to acid-burn victims. According to the official website of the Ministry, the excluded clients are the “by-passed, disadvantaged segment, unemployed, landless, orphans, distressed, vagrants, and socially, mentally and physically handicapped, poor, helpless patients, juvenile delinquents population of both rural and urban areas of the country.”

Social safety net programmes (SSNPs) are taken by the government of Bangladesh with a view to ensuring the social security for the socially excluded groups. These programmes are administered through numerous agencies, including many arms of government, non-governmental organisations, and international bi-lateral and multi-lateral partners.

However, all these programmes are mainly based on ad-hoc basis to cope up with sudden vulnerability. As a result, the benefits of these programs are short term in nature and from the long run development perspectives those seem to be ineffective (Aslam, 2012). It is observed that reasonable rates of growth have led to declines in percentage of poor but the number of poor has not declined as well as at the same time, expenditures on safety nets have fallen. Though the safety net programs are important components of the social protection of the government strategy, expenditure on the programs are fairly low and declining and lower than what other countries at the similar levels of development spend on these programs. There is always a mismatch between the budgetary allocation and the nature of SSNPS. The government operates SSNPs to provide support to such families in cash or kind for overcoming extreme hunger and creating productive assets for earning livelihoods.

Table 1: Distribution (in per cent) of households receiving benefits from SSNPs

Year	National	Rural	Urban
2010	24.57	30.12	9.42
2005	13.06	15.64	5.45

Source: Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES)-2010, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

In 2010, 24.57 percent households at national level received benefits during the last 12 months from at least one type of program. In contrast, 13.06 percent households received benefit from SSNPs in 2005. In the rural area, 30.12 percent of the households received

benefits from SSNPs as against 15.64 percent of the households in 2005 (BBS, 2010). Similar result was also found for the urban area. Survey findings indicate that the SSNPs have been widened substantially both in coverage and amount distributed during the period of 2005 to 2010.

Table 8.2: Distribution of households receiving SSNP benefits by division, 2010

Division	Percentage of Household Receiving Benefit		
	National	Rural	Urban
National	24.57	30.12	9.42
Barisal	34.43	37.20	20.66
Chittagong	19.99	24.50	7.44
Dhaka	18.87	27.80	5.99
Khulna	37.30	43.27	16.66
Rajshahi	20.66	22.85	10.17
Rangpur	33.65	35.11	23.68
Sylhet	23.51	26.06	10.50

Source: Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES)-2010, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

Division wise distribution of households receiving benefits from SSNPs shows that the highest percentage of households receiving benefits from Khulna division is 37.30, followed by Barisal division (34.43) and Rangpur division (33.65). The proportion of households receiving benefit in Dhaka division is the lowest at 18.87 percent preceded by Chittagong division (19.99 percent). The share in the rural area is much higher than that in the urban area in all divisions.

The Generally food security means ensuring supply and thus keeping the price within the reach of people. Among all, the safety net programs food for work (FFW) and Test Relief (TR) are the most important programs whose prime objective is to construct and maintain rural infrastructure with creating employment opportunities for the poorest in lean period of the year. These programs also aim to reduce the poverty and vulnerability of the people.

4.1 Food for Work (FFW)

Food for Work (sometimes cash for work) is a traditional safety net program in the country. It is one of the best options for self-targeted workfare because the intervention minimises the tradeoff between investment in growth and safety nets through infrastructure building. FFW program is specially targeted for the employment of the poor and day labourers of the country and for rural infrastructure development that including construction of rural roads, digging and re-digging ponds or canals or drains for removing stagnant water and filling the ground of different social organizations, particularly the religious and educational institutions. The main objectives of FFW program are including employment generation for the poor labourers in the rural areas and raising their income in lean periods, mobilization of food grains in every corners of the country to ensure food security for the poor and development as well as maintenance of rural infrastructures. Disaster Management and Relief Division allocated resources in the form of food grains and cash to implement FFW program in Upazilas and constituency level. A total of 1.95 lack MT rice and 1.5 lack MT wheat have been allocated in the current FY 2011-12 out of which 1,75,445 MT rice and 1,46,020 MT

wheat have been issued for implementing different projects under this program in Upazilas and constituency level.

4.2 Test Relief (TR)

TR program is specially targeted for maintenance of rural infrastructure in small projects including repairing and maintenance of religious, social and educational institutions. The main objectives of TR program includes development and maintenance of the religious, social and educational institution and rural infrastructures and stabilizing of food security in every corner of the country as well as ensuring food grains availability in the rural markets. In FY 2011-12, a total of 3,00,000 MT wheat and 1,00,000 MT rice have been allocated in the budget out of which 65,000 MT wheat have been allotted for implementing different projects in Upazilas and Pourashava level as well as 97.750 MT rice have been allocated in constituency level.

4.3 VGD and VGF

The Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) program provides food to low income and other vulnerable groups who cannot able to meet basic needs for survival due to natural disasters or socio-economic circumstances, such as age, illness or disease. On the other hand, the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program enables the poorest rural women and their family members to overcome food insecurity and their low social and economic status. VGD includes sustained longer-term activities such as risk management for natural disasters, HIV/AIDS prevention, maternal and child health and livelihood skills.

5 CONCLUSION

It is taken for granted that the programs adopted by the Bangladesh government to lift the excluded groups into mainstream society are contributing significantly in the national development within various drawbacks including bureaucratic trap, corruption, over politicization of local government. The role of social protection is to provide a level of security regardless of income and food as well as asset protection that enable excluded groups to escape this insecurity trap and lift them out of poverty. Accordingly, it can play a role in building social and productive assets (for example, by increasing school enrolment) enabling access to receive the basics needs of society as well, that enable them to get a place in the mainstream society. Many studies explored that the role of social protection interventions in terms of providing a level of income security and asset protection is to enable people to lift up the socially excluded out of poverty. For that, most of the organisations are becoming involved in social protection initiatives as a part of their work on food security, vulnerable groups, human rights, HIV and AIDS and humanitarian crises. In particular, it is concerned with considering the relationship of social protection to the promotion of: i) livelihoods, ii) social transformation and iii) rural development. These three concerned factors are related to way of life of the excluded groups; changing of these variables ushers the avoiding the curses exclusion of the groups. (Slater and McCord, 2009).

Notwithstanding, the excluded groups are not secured by their life and livelihood as only food security can't ensure social security as a whole. Moreover, food security is also questionable in the case of Bangladesh. It is mentioned that the excluded groups are not only economically vulnerable but also in socio-cultural sectors. For example, a child of *Dalit* can't go to school because school as well as students of the mainstream society does not accept them easily. Moreover, the *Dalit* family is insecure by food and livelihood which is also applicable for the children of sex workers. In this regard, if we want to lift them into mainstream society, we have to take socio-cultural barriers (that are mostly invisible) into account. Otherwise, the excluded groups will remain excluded further and no development attempts for them may face the story of success as well.

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Appendix

Nurunnesa, 70 years old woman from Geneva Bihari Camp, Mohammadpur, Dhaka is an approximately seventy years old woman. She couldn't mention her exact age. However, she said that she was in her early childhood when they shifted from Bihar. After dividing the greater India, she had come to Bangladesh with her parents in 1947. After the liberation war of Bangladesh, they took asylum in Geneva Camp, Mohammadpur. Nurunnesa had married to a *Bihari* when they were living at Old Dhaka. At present, Nurunnesa is a widow. Her husband died fifteen years ago. Nurunnesa is living in a narrow room alone which is her husband's house.

Nurunnesa has three daughters. They are married in the same colony. Nurunnesa works as spangled for earning money. She is now in the age of seventy years losing her normal eyesight. She uses glasses for this work. The rate of wage for this work is very low. She gets fifty taka for wreathing one kg spangle. Her daughters help her in this case who are also poor. Their husbands work in saloon as employee and get a small amount of salary as like five to six thousands per month. She begs food from her neighbours. The extreme poor like her, couldn't receive any food from the donors. The donors are mainly from international agencies and some NGOs. She drinks water from the WASA line. This water is filled with dust. Sometimes, they get completely red water as the sewerage line has been mixed with the WASA line near their camp.

Nurunnesa has suffered from heart disease. She has visited the doctor in National Heart Foundation Hospital, Mirpur. She visited the doctor at free of cost while medicine is not available. Nurunnesa said that she has no ability to buy costly medicine for her heart disease. As a result, she can't take all necessary medicines. Nurunnesa said, *'Now I am waiting for death, otherwise I have no wish to Allah'*.

She is not a national ID card holder. When she was going to be make an ID card, their leaders of the camp had said her *'You will die anytime, so you don't need to make any ID'*. She was also less interested to make a National ID card. As an elderly and widow, she has the rights for receiving allowance from the government but she doesn't.



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