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RURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, LAND OWNERSHIP PATTERN AND TENANCY RELATIONSHIPS IN BANGLADESH: AN OVERVIEW.

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INTRODUCTION

The economy of Bangladesh is traditionally and predominantly based on agriculture. About 85 per cent of the rural population is engaged in agriculture. However, this accounts for only about 48 per cent of the GDP (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 1985: 394), although over 90 per cent of foreign exchange earnings are derived from export of agricultural products. The agricultural sector not only produces food but also supplies raw materials for several of the country's main industries (i.e. jute, tobacco, sugarcane). In spite of its predominantly agrarian economy and involvement of its rural people in agriculture, Bangladesh cannot produce sufficient food to feed its own population; it has to import an average of two million tons of food grains each year, thus expending foreign exchange.

In spite of the consensus on the inequitable land tenure system in Bangladesh, an effective tenurial arrangement has yet to be initiated. In the past, several acts and laws were passed concerning land reform policies and tenurial arrangements, and also rural development efforts proposed to increase agricultural production, but none of these were executed nor was it possible in real terms to fulfill their desired objectives. Inability of the Government to enforce the anticipated land reform policies and tenurial arrangements led to increased landlessness and more concentrated land ownership.

CONCEPTION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The volume of talks and discussions, research and efforts towards rural development has been more than on any other topic in Bangladesh. Various quarters have defined rural development in different ways. Some of them have considered rural development as identifiable with increase in agricultural production. According to some the all-inclusive economic upliftment of rural areas is rural development. But the question is : do we expect

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such a type of rural development under which feudal land owners can transfer their rural properties to the cities, rich farmers become feudal farmers, small farmers become landless and landless farmers become mendicants?

Taking into account the context of all these questions many have considered rural development as deeply inter-related with economic progress. But this economics-centredness has been regarded as inadequate by many who have expressed views favouring integrated rural development. Economics is undoubtedly an important aspect of human life. But besides its qualitative aspect, this has quantitative, social and cultural aspects too. Without simultaneous development of all these, economic development alone cannot bring overall welfare. Integrated rural development means both qualitative and quantitative upliftment of the rural people. In other words, it can be said that integrated development is the harmonious interplay of social, economic and cultural forces for building up society. Meanwhile others say that rural development means the improvement of the living standard of the rural people.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Various Government institutions, and domestic and international aid and voluntary organizations, have been working in Bangladesh in the very midst of this conceptual development. Three types of institutions are engaged in activities in rural areas for rural development in Bangladesh. The first that comes on the list is the bureaucracy. Various institutions of different ministries up to upazilla level have been working in the name of development administration. Secondly, local autonomous institutions like upazilla and union councils are utilizing local initiatives of people and bureaucracy for rural development. Thirdly, various aid and voluntary organizations are carrying on development activities and programmes involving a huge amount of money and assistance.

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS

In the name of rural development, planned development activities began in this country a short time after the creation of Pakistan through the adoption of the Village Agricultural and Industrial Development (V-AID) Programme, established in 1953. This programme was formally brought under an institutional framework in 1956 which was ultimately associated with the Bangladesh Rural Development Academy or "BARD". Later the V AID programme was withdrawn and rural development activities were entrusted to the "BARD". Preliminarily, farmers within a 107 sq mile area of Comilla Kotwali Thana were organized on the basis of cooperatives. Later, an institutional infrastructure, called the "Comilla Model", was framed and farmers were organized by means of two phase agricultural cooperative societies called Krishak Co-operative Societies (KSS) and the Upazilla Central Cooperative Association (UCCA) under the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and then the Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) following the cooperative approach.

Besides this, Government activities for rural development include: The Rural Works Programme of 1962 for construction of roads, culverts, bridges, and other works, the Food for Works Programme adopted during the post-independence period for digging and re-digging of canals, repair of roads and so forth, the Self-dependant (Shanirvar) Bangladesh Programme of 1975 with the target of making villages in Bangladesh self-dependant, the post independence "green revolution" for becoming self-sufficient in agricultural produce, village government, the Canal Digging Programme of 1980 with the aim to grow more food, an Irrigation Project, utilization of high yield technology, and supply of fertilizer, seed and similar requirements. In addition to this, the land reform policy adopted by the Government was also aimed at improving the lot of rural people.

Integrated Rural Development Programme: This programme, implemented according to the "Comilla Cooperative Method", and being run through the Bangladesh Rural Development Board, is one of the programmes adopted by the Government for rural development. In the abovementioned programme provisions were made to offer loan facilities to small farmers for purchasing agricultural equipment and other essential goods by means of organizing their small capital through a 2-phase cooperative scheme. According to this scheme, preliminarily, small farmers were organized at the lower level through the Agricultural Cooperatives Society (KSS) and further through the Upazilla Central Cooperatives Association (UCCA) at upazilla level in order to perform their work effectively. This approach is referred to as Integrated Rural Development. Some new agricultural cooperative societies were formed too, but these are chiefly employed in agricultural production.

Rural Works Programme: The basic objective of this programme is creation of direct employment and resources for rural people. Roads, bridges, culverts, and drains were constructed in rural areas within the scope of this programme. This programme's implementation depended chiefly on foreign aid.

Food for Works Programme: This programme was adopted during the post-independence period for construction of roads, re-digging of canals, and similar work in rural areas, using grants of wheat received from abroad and from various aid organizations. This basically typifies a rural works programme, helping to provide employment for rural people.

Upazilla Irrigation Programme: The chief aim of this programme is to help increase agricultural production by providing irrigation facilities to cultivators by sinking tube wells and conserving water. This programme is run by a managing committee of the administrative infrastructure of the rural works programme and upazilla local government unit.

Self-Reliant Bangladesh: The chief objective of this programme is to become self-reliant by mobilization and utilization of local resources. This is a Government effort that began in 1975. Besides, a Self-reliant Women's Programme, too, was introduced in 25 upazillas, with aid from abroad, for making women self-reliant.

Test Relief Programme: the Government introduced this programme, with wheat and rice received as aid, in 1979. Its chief aim is to provide employment for unemployed people of rural areas, constructional work on public welfare institutions such as schools,

colleges and madrassas, tree planting, canal digging and other work.

Feeding Programme for the Destitute: The object of this programme is to meet the demand for nutrition and rehabilitation of destitute mothers and children of rural areas.

NON-GOVERNMENT EFFORTS

In addition to various Government efforts for rural development, various initiatives are being persued to this end by private and international aid-giving organizations, international voluntary organizations depending on foreign aid, and local voluntary organizations. These institutions specialise in a variety of activities throughout the country, from the capital city Dhaka out to distant peripheral regions. They are related to and concerned with rural development in various ways, including agriculture, education, health, social welfare, and family planning. For the purpose of improving the lot of the rural masses, these organizations are adopting various programmes beginning with providing them with loan facilities. Their programmes also include steps for resisting the gradual increase in the number of the poor and the landless.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, LAND OWNERSHIP PATTERN AND TENANCY RELATIONSHIPS IN BANGLADESH

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), implemented through the Bangladesh Rural Development Board, is one of the programmes adopted for rural development based on the "Comilla model" cooperative approach. Although rural development is considered germane to IRDP, it is actually a part of economic development, the reason being that agricultural production and other related projects contribute to overall production. But, again, failure of these projects badly affects overall development activities. And IRDP cooperatives have not up to now been able to prevent increase of the landless although they have been working since the 1960s. (Economic Survey, 1987: 413) Besides, the greatest failure of the Comilla model as applied in the above-mentioned programme is that it has not been able to do anything for the 50 per cent landless farmers of the country. The small employment increase due to high-yield fertilizer and irrigation cooperatives has not been able to counteract gradually increasing landlessness and unemployment. Though this programme has, however, achieved success in rural development in Comilla, in other places there have been more failures than successes. (Assaduzzaman, 1985)

Besides, in criticism of the Self reliant Bangladesh Movement and Thana Irrigation Projects as benefitting only the local rural elites, it is said that, in the Shanirvar Movement in Bangladesh, representatives of the local elite imposed themselves on the leadership of the organization and gradually monopolised the benefits of membership, repeating a pattern observed often in Bangladesh in current irrigation programmes and rural development efforts. (Esman and Uphoff, 1988: 191) This means that only solvent farmers

are being benefitted by the initiatives adopted through various programmes.

The Thana Irrigation Project, however, has not been able to show any positive results as to production of crops or improvement of the lot of most of the masses in rural areas. And the Thana Irrigation Project has been much criticised in Bangladesh, because big landowners established cooperative societies in the names of fake farmers and purchased tube wells at nominal and subsidised prices in the name of irrigation. Consequently, by means of irrigation, big landowners themselves have been benefitted and the poor farmers are gradually becoming landless.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Use of developed high-yield technology began in the 1960s. But in the agricultural sector, this has not been able to resist the gradually increasing trend towards poverty, although it has helped to increase food production to an extent. A survey shows that increase of the landless in rural areas could not be resisted despite use of developed high-yield technology in the agricultural sector. For instance, during 1963-64, 52 per cent of the total population of Bangladesh was living at below extreme poverty level, and the rate rose continuously to 68 per cent during 1977-78 (Hamid, 1988: 4). It has been shown from available information that, although this technology brought change in the types of crops, it could not create intensiveness or increase the crop yield. Although the intensiveness of crop production in Bangladesh was 151 per cent during 1969-70, it fell to 138 per cent during 1971-72 and later rose again to 154.7 per cent during 1982-83. But again it began to fall from 1983-84 and reached 152.2 per cent in the fiscal year 1984-85, as is clear from the following table.

Table -1

Intensiveness of cultivation

YEAR	INTENSIVENESS	YEAR	INTENSIVENESS
1969-70	150.9	1977-78	150.7
1970-71	142.2	1978-79	153.1
1971-72	138.3	1979-80	153.1
1972-73	139.3	1980-81	153.7
1973-74	140.2	1981-82	153.9
1974-75	145.5	1982-83	154.7
1975-76	148.5	1983-84	153.2
1976-77	148.9	1984-85	152.2
Rate of Progress = 0.618 per cent			

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Government of Bangladesh, 1987.

Although use of developed high-yield technology is helpful in increasing production for the country, it has not had any positive effect in increasing the yield capacity of land. From an account of the Bureau of Statistics, it is known that from 1969-1970 to 1984-1985 the rate of increase in the area of land has been more than that of its productivity in the case of crops like Aman, Aus and Boro paddy, though not in the case of wheat. Surveying the rates of increase of productivity of land under food grains and of per hectare harvest from the following table, it can be observed that in each case the rate of increase of harvest was negative. That is, it shows that the increase of production of food grains by means of developed high yield technology was due to increase in area of land under cultivation and not due to increase in the harvest. (Hamid, 1988: 7).

The following table shows that, in the case of paddy, the total increase in production was 10.30 per cent while increase in land area was 12.42 per cent as a result of which the rate of increase of harvest has been negative (-2.12 per cent).

Table - 2

Percentage rate of increase in production of food grains, land area and harvest

Developed high yield crops	Production	Land	Harvest
Aus	18.84	20.43	- 1.59
Aman	15.86	18.22	- 2.36
Boro	7.20	8.67	- 1.47
Total	10.30	12.42	- 2.12

Basic source of information: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics., 1987.
NB: Period of comparison for Aus, Aman and Boro Production: from 1969-70 to 1984-85.

Research by S. Ahmed shows that food aid and import of food has not been able to affect the food production sector of this country positively. Rather, demand for domestic food production would increase in the absence of food aid. In this context he described food aid as an obstacle to the increase of agricultural production. Rehman Sobhan in another article mentioned that the rural works programme run by food aid is promoting corruption among the rural people involved in the programme. This makes it apparent that foreign aid in the agricultural sector is day by day making people more and more dependent on foreign aid instead of making them self-reliant. Consequently, rich farmers, by involving themselves directly or indirectly with the Government and exploiting the benefits of foreign aid in the agricultural sector, are creating the chains by which the poor farmers become more and more dependent on them, by involving them in various rural development programmes.

For the purpose of agricultural production, use of developed technology began in this country during the 1960s. But, in the use of irrigation by the small, marginal and rich farmers discrimination in agricultural production increased a lot. It is observed

that per acre net incomes of medium and rich farmers compared to that of small farmers are 5 per cent and 10 per cent more respectively. This picture of discrimination is just the opposite in the case of wells dug by the traditional method. Income of medium farmers is 5 per cent less than that of small ones. This discrimination is greater in areas outside irrigation. Net incomes of medium and big farmers there per acre are respectively 18 per cent and 35 per cent more than that of small farmers. Besides, when gross income per farm is considered instead of net income, it is observed that the discrimination among different classes of farmers increases further. For instance, it may be said that under modern irrigation, per farm net incomes of medium and big farmers are respectively 100 per cent and 348 per cent more than that of small farmers. From this it can be said that, as a result of modern irrigation technology, although the discrimination in net income per acre between small and big farmers has been reduced, yet, the discrimination between their net agricultural incomes has increased.

This becomes apparent from the following table. The information in this table shows, in the case of traditional methods without irrigation, the discrimination is reduced, while in the case of modern methods discrimination increases. Accordingly, under traditional methods small farmers' crop income amounts to 21 per cent but under modern irrigation this becomes only 12 per cent. Conversely, it is observed that the income of big farmers amounts to respectively 34 per cent and 45 per cent. In the context of the land ownership and distribution system and production relations in Bangladesh, agricultural modernization in rural areas has increased the income of big farmers to a significant degree as compared to the past.

Table - 3

Effect of distribution of developed high-yield technology. (Joint effect of 20% increase in land area and use of irrigation methods by big farmers).
Net crop income in percentage

Social class	Without irrigation	By irrigation methods				Modern method
		Hand tube well	Shallow tube well	Deep tube well	Pump	
Landless	17	16	17	15	15	12
Small Farmers	21	30	9	13	13	12
Medium Farmers	28	40	26	27	27	31
Big Farmers	34	14	49	25	45	45

Source: M P O (MASTER PLAN ORGANISATION) National Water Planning, Volume-1, sector analysis, December 1986 Table-30: 2

The Government has been paying a subsidy to irrigation projects in order to step up agricultural production. These projects include the Ganga Kapadhak Project, the Dhaka - Narayangonj - Demra (DND) Project and the Thakurgaon Deep Tube Well Project, implemented through the Bangladesh Water Development Board. No irrigation taxes were procured from the farmers for the use of irrigation between 1963 and 1976. After 1976, a 3 per cent tax was imposed on the additional income and only Taka 0.6 million was procured till 1986, as tax out of Taka 26.4 million fixed up to 1983 (April) for the Ganga Kapadhak Project, the DND Irrigation Project and the Turang Irrigation Project.

A survey shows that the lion's share of additional income received from irrigation is spent chiefly in two sectors: 32 per cent in consumption and 31 per cent in purchasing land. That means: rich farmers, by virtue of the irrigation system and by misappropriating the Government's irrigation tax, have purchased land from small farmers with that additional income and the small farmers have become indirectly dependent on the rich farmers, because their income has not relatively increased. And this has been possible in the name of rural development by applying developed technology for the purpose of increasing agricultural production. (Tarek, 1988: 28)

Another survey (Ahmed,1988: 34) refers to the economic condition of a village. It takes into account the amount of total expenditures and value of agricultural production for one year of all families. According to data available in the expenditure sector, yearly expenses of 15 families were between 15 and 25 thousand, yearly expenses of 45 families were below this amount and only 3 families spent above Taka 60 thousand per year. On the other hand, the most astounding phenomenon in the agricultural production sector is that out of a total of 78 families, the yearly income of 40 families from the agricultural sector is not above Taka 4,000. The yearly income from land of only six families is above Taka 20,000. The following table shows expenditure and agricultural production side by side.

Table - 4

Per family yearly expenditure and income from agricultural production.

Amount of Taka in thousand	No. of families in accordance with yearly expenditure	No. of families in accordance with yearly income from agricultural production
0-4	0	40
4-8	4	12
8-12	13	13
12-16	16	3
16-20	11	3
20-25	15	3
25-30	6	-

30-35	3	-
35-40	5	-
40-45	-	1
45-50	2	1
50-60	-	-
60 above	3	1

Source: Firowz Ahmed. Rural Development and Islam, Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 1988.

It is apparent from the above table that a majority of people have become dependent on a few affluent families due to extreme discrimination in income.

Land ownership pattern

About 10 per cent of households own over 50 per cent of the country's farmland, while at the other extreme, about one-third of the households do not have any land other than their living space. About two-thirds of the households own less than 10 per cent of the land.

Average farmland has also been shrinking. This is due to sale by small farmers and purchase by medium and big. In one study it was found that small farmers who own less than an acre of land sell half of their remaining land every year (Khan, 1977: 159). The Survey by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies found that for the period 1972 to 1974, farmers with small farms (less than 2.5 acres) sold 46.4 percent, large farms (over 7.5 acres) sold only 11.5 percent of their land (Alamgir,1976: 151). More than two-thirds (68.7 per cent) of the land which was sold was purchased by large and medium farmers. Thus, land, the ultimate source of wealth and power in rural Bangladesh, is becoming concentrated in fewer hands.

The concentration of land in the hands of few large farmers is a major cause of low productivity. Although evidence is available that in Bangladesh, as in most poor countries, the small farmers are more efficient and responsible than the larger ones i.e. they (a) have a higher yield per acre (b) have a higher percentage of their area under profitable cash crops (c) use more labour per acre and per unit output (Abdullah, 1976: 96; Asaduzzama, 1979: 43; Hossain, 1979: 64), in the case of supply and use of modern agricultural inputs there is heavy discrimination against small farmers (Hartman and Boyce, 1982: 30). The case of India also reveals that the problem of small farmers in adopting technological innovations essentially relates to their tenurial handicaps, lack of sufficient access to credit and production inputs (Hunter and Bottral, 1974: 33).

For the purpose of the material progress of rural people, either agricultural land has to be given to them or their employment must be ensured. The following table shows that the plan of one million additional jobs in the food sector, adopted under the Third Five-Year Plan was not in any way workable. Because it is apparent from the table that the number of agricultural labourers increased during 1961-1974 by only 1.3 million.

by zero between 1974-1984 with a registered increase of a total of 0.7 million labourers from 1961 to 1984.

Table - 5

Rate of increase of production of land and labour

Year	Production (million metric tons)	Cultivated land	No. of Agri-cultural labourers (million)	Production per hectare (kg)	Production per labourer
Census 1961	9.704	8.913	14.2	1089	683
Census 1974	12.019	9.880	16.8	2216	715
Census 1981	14.972	10.900	15.4	1374	972
1983-84 Survey of labour force (Rate of increase)	15.718	11.078	16.8	1419	958
1961-74	1.7	0.8	1.3	0.9	0.3
1974-84	2.7	1.1	0	1.6	3.0
1961-84	2.4	1.9	0.7	1.3	1.7

Main source : Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (For number of labourers, see B B S 1986 Year Book, page 191.) 1988.

In another survey it is observed that the number of landless families quickly increased between the 1960s and beginning of the 1980s due to increase in discrimination in land ownership, centralization of power and expansion of developed technology.

And during 1960-1982 the number of rural families increased at the rate of 1.58 per cent and the number of landless families increased at the rate of above 2 per cent. Such families, having no cultivable land, increased at the rate of 2.05 per cent; and families having only half an acre of land increased at the rate of 2.19 per cent. (Hossain, 1985: 2-3)

In this connection another survey result presented in Table-6 makes it more clear that along with changes of circumstance and time the rural poor are losing ownership of land and this land is gradually coming under the control of rich farmers. (Rahman, O. Gents and Clashes, 1986: 116)

From this it is clearly evident that, as the days are passing, a majority of rural people are being made dependent upon a handful of persons, in spite of adopting various programmes aimed at improving the lot of rural people in the name of rural development.

Table - 6

Classification of land ownership

Classification of land ownership		1960	1968	1974	1977	1978
Poor	60% -	25%	24%	19%	11%	9%
Medium	30% -	39%	40%	43%	40%	39%
Rich	10% -	36%	36%	38%	50%	52%

Source : Atiur Rahman, O.Gents and Clashes - Study in Differentiation in Bangladesh, University Press Ltd, October, 1986. p.116.

It is known from other research that in 1960 land ownership by 60 per cent of families in Bangladesh fell from 25 per cent to 9 per cent. On the other hand, the 10 per cent rich class became owners of 52 per cent of the land in 1978, whereas they were owners of 36 per cent of the land in 1960. (Osmany and Rahman, 1986: 22). The same research further shows that the 60 per cent lower class families are gradually losing their land ownership while 10 per cent of families are daily more and more becoming large scale land owners (Rahman, 1985). Consequently, the majority of the people of rural areas have become dependent on a few landowners and rich farmers for their livelihood and income. In this connection, results of two surveys conducted in Bogra and Jamalpur are shown in the following table.

Table 7

Trend of land ownership

Village	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
No.1	24.35	18.81	12.00	34.81	41.25	47.85
	(100)	(77.31)	(49.32)	(100)	(118.5)	(137.46)
No.2	24.53	19.32	10.90	29.69	42.34	53.85
	(100)	(78.76)	(44.43)	(100)	(142.60)	(181.37)

Source: Atiur Rahman, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies Vol-10 No.2 179-75 (Taking the figure for 1951 as 100).

Tenancy relationships

More than one-third of the farm households in Bangladesh operate land as owners-cum-tenants (that is part owners, part tenants) (Jannuzi and Peach, 1982; 22,; Hossain, 1981: 145). The extent of tenancy has remained stable in the past two decades. The 1977 land occupancy survey indicates that about one-tenth of the sharecroppers reporting a share payment also reported a cash payment for the use of land taken on from others (Jannuzi and Peach, 1982: 24). The net farm returns for owner farmers, for example, were 2 to 3 times higher than that of sharecroppers in Barisal and 1.5 to 2 tiffes higher than that of sharecroppers in Mymensingh. However, this is not common. (Hossain, 1979: 67)

The following table indicates that although 25 percent of landowners shared the responsibility for the provision of seed, only 7 percent at most did so for fertilizer, pesticide, and irrigation facilities.

Table - 8

Sources of agricultural input as reported by tenants (including owners-cum-tenants) in 1978

Type of input	Provided by landowners (either partly or fully)		Provided by tenant	
	No. of house-holds (thousands)	Percent of Total	No. of house-holds (thousands)	Percent of total
Seed	835.8	25.45	2448.2	74.55
Fertilizer	191.6	5.84	3092.4	94.16
Pesticides	33.5	1.02	3250.5	98.98
Irrigation facilities	4.5	0.14	3279.5	99.86

Source: 1. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1980. pp. 701-2.
2. Jannuzi and Peach, 1982. p. 112.

A tenant has very little incentive to invest his extra effort on land which he has hired from a landowner because half his returns go to the landowner. So, he saves his extra effort for the little land he owns himself. This is supported by Mandal's study that the use of labour and variable inputs was significantly higher, for the part-owner part-tenant, on the land he owned himself (Mandal, 1979). This clearly indicates that the present tenancy relationships in Bangladesh are one of the main barriers to the adoption of improved agricultural technology in land.

Previously several attempts have been made by various tenancy acts and Government orders to limit the jurisdiction over land to a ceiling. Surplus lands were

aquired and distributed to the landless and other rural poor. But all proved unsuccessful, in view of the increasing trend to landlessness. This was also due to the use of fictitious names by landlords and large landowners. Therefore, it is time to formulate effective ways and means to implement a land ceiling and to carefully identify the actual owners of the land. Rural development cannot be begun without land reforms (Hoque et al, 1975: 96). Japan and Taiwan have succeeded through their land reform in effecting rural development and economic growth as well as a reduction of rural poverty, which has led to agricultural development and increased production. (Khanthahai, 1981: 322-2) Problems concerning land tenancy and the necessity for land reform are inevitable in Bangladesh. Change in the agrarian structure is necessary to improve agricultural production. To ignore it means to ignore the barriers to the diffusion of technological innovation among farmers in the rural areas.

CONCLUSION

For the last quarter century or more, Bangladesh in particular and Third World countries in general have undergone a massive experimentation in rural development. Evolution of models of rural development can be traced from the inception of the Community Development Programme of the 1950s. Later, severe food crises during the 1960s led countries like Bangladesh (then Pakistan) to opt for agricultural development, popularly known as the "Green Revolution". During the mid 1970s under the sponsorship of several international donor agencies there emerged a new approach, called integrated rural development, with a challenging task of making a direct frontal attack on rural poverty.

In spite of comprehensive design and implementation of some of these abovementioned efforts and programmes for rural development, success stories are few and far between. Recent studies reveal that Bangladesh has not yet succeeded in satisfying the aspirations of the rural people and their basic requirements consistent with principles of human dignity, social justice and solidarity. Past development efforts and progress have largely failed to reach and adequately benefit rural areas and have in many cases contributed to urban-rural imbalance in development, neglected the dynamism and diversity of the authentic cultural values of the rural population and led to imbalance within the rural sector.

In Bangladesh's political administrative milieu, the nature of the ruling regime, as against objective choice, usually determines the overall strategies for socio-economic development. Empirical observations show that rural development programmes are mostly short-term and concentrate on a specific short range problem and that these policies and programmes are overly ambitious and meet with a variety of practical limitations. Observations also show that these programmes are mainly initiated as political instruments to achieve political purposes and are being used as instruments for regime maintenance. Some have observed them to be inconsistent with broad national development policies and plans, and therefore, in most cases to have failed to generate adequate political support from the national political leadership. In other cases, it has been observed that the dominant

bureaucratic culture has frustrated the participative and decentralized institutional arrangements for rural development. It is still more unclear whether rural development is a means or an end for development. Frustrating experience, therefore, has led some observers to label the past three decades as a "quarter century of anti-rural development".

In conclusion, it can be said that various rural development programmes have been initiated to increase agricultural production and economic growth as well as to reduce rural poverty, and several attempts have been made to change the existing land ownership pattern in order to tackle the continuous increase in the number of landless in rural Bangladesh. But the failures and defects of such efforts have been apparent in the observations of national and international researchers. Therefore, it is necessary to consider alternative means.

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