

## Social Protection for Inclusive Growth: A Training and Development Perspective

Dr. M Aslam Alam<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*Inclusive economic growth and sustainable development largely depends on social protection of the populations across the globe. Countries, therefore are spending significant amount of money for Social Protection. In this context, this article aims to examine Social Protection from a Training and Development perspective.*

*Social Protection concepts basically have evolved from Social Safety Net (SSN) and Social Security (SS), though there are some conceptual differences among the two. International organizations led by the World Bank. The management functions of social protection needs skilled work force of the implementing agencies. Bangladesh has an adequate policy framework for social protection. All relevant policy and planning documents of the Government of Bangladesh addresses the issue and recently, the Government has launched a six-pillar National Social Security Programme 2015 to cover about 10 percent poor population. The article argues for a social protection training and development strategy in order to address the expanded intervention.*

### Introduction

Importance of the social protection programming for inclusive growth can hardly be over-emphasized. After the Second World War, the industrialized countries of the North realized that economic growth only cannot address the problem of poverty and inequality in a society. This realization contributed to the proliferation of social security measures for the disadvantaged groups. However, the emergence of neo-classical economic approaches during the eighties has resulted in scaling back of social security programs across the globe. By the beginning of the new millennium, development policy professionals became puzzled over the persistence of extreme poverty and inequality in developing countries. Recent political and social upheavals across the globe, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, have once again brought Social Protection on the top of the development policy agenda. There is now a consensus that social protection is a development tool, and essential for inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. Governments across the globe are spending significant amount of money on Social Protection. Bangladesh is also spending about 15 percent of annual budget which is about two percent of GDP. Although deep ideological differences divide Activist and Instrumentalist schools of thought of Social Protection, it is widely accepted that implementation challenges remain the Achilles' Heels. In this context, this article aims to examine Social Protection from a Training and Development perspective. This paper argues that an effective training and development strategy is of paramount importance for successful implementation of Social Protection programmes in a developing country like Bangladesh.

### Conceptualization

Social Protection concepts have evolved from Social Safety Net (SSN) and Social Security (SS). Although academics differentiate between these concepts, in the practical world of

<sup>1</sup>Dr. M Aslam Alam, Secretary of the Government of Bangladesh, who was recently in the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief.

development prac  
a holistic approa  
dominated by tw  
arguments.

'Activist' argum  
as symptoms of  
as an inviolable  
targeted welfaris  
between ad hoc  
where entitlemen  
philanthropy or  
the Nordic stat  
towards social p  
minimum as a m  
of risk 'as an ex  
which is 'emerg  
and Devereux, 2  
States in fulfillin  
law to ensure th  
cultural rights. I  
realization of th  
food and housin  
highest attainabl

'Instrumentalist  
risk and vulnera  
consensus, curr  
development' c  
mechanisms tha  
until such time a  
a more promine  
proponents of t  
argument. This  
risks with an  
poverty reduct  
consumption s  
programming (E  
programs and p  
livelihoods and  
and provides fo

These philosoph

development practice, these terminologies are used interchangeably. In this paper too, following a holistic approach, Social Protection includes SSN and SS. Social Protection discourse is dominated by two opposing schools of thought: Activist arguments and Instrumentalist arguments.

'Activist' arguments view the persistence of extreme poverty, inequality and vulnerability as symptoms of social injustice and structural inequity, and campaign for social protection as an inviolable right of citizenship. For this 'social protection for social justice' camp, targeted welfarist handouts are a necessary but perhaps uncomfortable intermediate step between ad hoc humanitarianism and the ideal of a guaranteed 'universal social minimum', where entitlement extends far beyond cash or food transfers and is based on citizenship, not philanthropy or enlightened self-interest. Researchers at IDS-Sussex and practitioners in the Nordic states have contributed towards development of a rights-based approach towards social protection which is based on the concept of a guaranteed universal social minimum as a matter of right of every citizen of a country. This approach rejects the notion of risk 'as an exogenously given factor to be managed'. Rather it focuses on vulnerability which is 'emerging from and embedded in the socio-political context' (Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, 2008). According to this approach, 'social protection systems can assist States in fulfilling their obligations under national, regional, and international human rights law to ensure the enjoyment of at least minimum essential levels of economic, social and cultural rights. In particular, social protection systems have the potential to assist in the realization of the right to an adequate standard of living, (including the right to adequate food and housing), the right to social security, the right to education, and the right to the highest attainable standard of health' (Sepulveda and Nyst, 2012)

'Instrumentalist' arguments point to the dysfunctionality of extreme poverty, inequality, risk and vulnerability to the achievement of development targets on which there is a broad consensus, currently embodied in the MDGs. For this 'social protection for efficient development' camp, social protection is about putting in place risk management mechanisms that will compensate for incomplete or missing insurance (and other) markets, until such time as poverty reduction and market deepening allow private insurance to play a more prominent role. International organizations led by the World Bank are the major proponents of the argument. Social risk management framework is the basis of this argument. This framework emphasizes on public interventions and management of income risks with an objective of economically sustainable participatory development with poverty reduction, social cohesion and social stability. Reducing vulnerability, consumption smoothing and enhancing equity are the goals of social protection programming (Holzmann and Jorjensen, 1999). It is argued that social protection systems, programs and policies buffer individuals from shocks and equip them to improve their livelihoods and create opportunities to build a better life for themselves and their families, and provides foundation for inclusive growth and social stability (World Bank, 2012).

These philosophical underpinnings of opposing schools have practical implications. These

are reflected in policy options and choice of designs. The battle is fought over the issue of targeting vs universalism; conditional vs unconditional; cash vs kind. Instrumentalists favour targeting a few, but activists favour support to all. Instrumentalists argue for conditional support opposing the idea of unconditional support propagated by the activists. Instrumentalists prefer cash based support programs. Activists argue for whatever is needed including cash, kind and /or behavioral change communication.

Irrespective of choice of instruments and designs, some implementation issues are common to all kinds of social protection programming. For example, many countries around the world have taken up school feeding programme. Bangladesh till now covers about three million primary school-going children to consume 75 gm safe and fortified biscuits per capita per day. The programme puts a lot of emphasis on training of the NGO officials responsible for proper storage and distribution of the biscuits (Quddus M.A. 2010), Nation-building requires skilled human resources. It has been observed that children from poorer families are poor performers at schools due to hunger, and school feeding can significantly improve learning outcomes. Following universal principles, all children in all schools may be brought under school feeding programme. On the other hand, following targeting principles, children from poorer families in all schools or all children of schools of poorer areas may be brought under this programme. Whatever principle is followed, management complexities will remain the same. In case of universal principle, this will through a huge logistical challenge as well as wastage of resources. In case of targeting principle, this may end up with errors of inclusion or exclusion. This may require less resource, but would surely require more efforts. The management functions of planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling will carry equal importance in all cases. Having and maintaining a skilled workforce is vital for implementing agencies. In this context, the role of an effective training and development strategy can hardly be over-emphasized. It is to be noted here that Training is the systematic approach to affecting individuals' knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to improve individual, team, and organizational effectiveness. On the other hand, Development is the systematic efforts affecting individuals' knowledge or skills for purposes of personal growth or future jobs and/or roles (Aguinis and Kraiger, 2009). This paper uses the term Training to include development.

### **Social Protection in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh has an adequate policy framework for social protection. Article 15 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh provides that 'It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State to attain, through planned economic growth, a constant increase of productive forces, and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of living of people, with a view to securing to its' citizens: a) the provision of the basic necessities of life, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care; b) the right to work, that is the right to guaranteed employment at a reasonable wage having regard to the quantity and quality of work; c) the right to reasonable rest, recreation and leisure; and d) the right to social security, that is to say, to public assistance in cases of

undeserved want or orphans or in old Government of Bangladesh Plan 2010-2021, the Year Plan and the needed National Rahman, Choudhury programming in B covered. However, is less than seven distribution. Benefi resourceful program target income pove usually are income are characterised Existence of multi lack of coordination of a large number efficiency and incr local government huge programmes. program design, t evaluationas well a through a training

### **The Case for a S**

In the Bangladesh Thousands of offic officials, thousand process. These h programmes. The protection program inadequate. There a significant mis-

A desktop search offer Masters in D of Dhaka has by Masters degree, certificate courses It is not only the a also yet to include draws about 15 p

undeserved want arising from unemployment, illness or disablement, or suffered by widows or orphans or in old age, or in other cases'. All relevant policy and planning documents of the Government of Bangladesh addresses the issue of social protection, such as, The Perspective Plan 2010-2021, the National Sustainable Development Strategy 2010-2021, the Sixth Five Year Plan and the Seventh Five Year Plan, etc. Recently, Government has launched the much needed National Social Security Strategy 2015.

Rahman, Choudhury and Ali (2011) put forward a comprehensive summary of social protection programming in Bangladesh. In terms of coverage, only about 10 percent of the poor are covered. However, taking into consideration the mis-targeting and leakages, the actual coverage is less than seven percent. Programming is rural biased and there is disparity in spatial distribution. Benefit package is inadequate, generally about 31 percent of estimated needs. Most resourceful programmes provide upto 61 percent. There is no graduation target. Most programs target income poverty. Targeting criteria are not universal across programmes. The criteria used usually are income level, asset, household structures and demographic features. Programmes are characterised by errors of exclusion, errors of inclusion and elite capture of benefits. Existence of multiplicity of planning and executing agencies is a major drawback. There is a lack of coordination, and absence of an effective mechanism to ensure accountability. Presence of a large number of intermediaries involved in the delivery system of the programs reduces efficiency and increases opportunity for leakages. Most programs are implemented through the local government institutions, which have very little administrative capacity to deliver such huge programmes. It appears that challenges in social protection programming centre around program design, targeting mechanism, delivery mechanism, use of ICT, and monitoring and evaluation as well as knowledge management. All of these issues can be significantly addressed through a training and development strategy.

### **The Case for a Social Protection Training and Development Strategy**

In the Bangladesh context, about 30 ministries are implementing about 100 programmes. Thousands of officials are involved in the implementation of these programmes. Besides public officials, thousands of local level people's representatives are involved in the implementation process. These huge numbers of people have little or no training on social protection programmes. They do not have proper understanding of critical issues involving social protection programming. The state of social protection knowledge management is also totally inadequate. There's not much research on needs as well as effectiveness of programs. There is a significant mis-match between academic interest and policy agenda in social protection area.

A desktop search reveals that seven universities, two public and five private, in Bangladesh offer Masters in Development Studies. A few of them offers Bachelor degree as well. University of Dhaka has by far the largest Development Studies programme in the country. They offer Masters degree, an M. Phil degree, a Post graduate Diploma, a Bachelor degree and 17 certificate courses. However, none of these programmes offer any courses on Social Protection. It is not only the academia that failed to update their curriculum, the public training institutions also yet to include social protection in their training curriculum. It is ironic that social protection draws about 15 percent of annual public spending, but fails to draw attention of the training

institutes. This state of affairs reinforces the argument that Bangladesh desperately needs a social protection training and development strategy (SPTDS).

The SPTDS should be built around critical issues relating to social protection programme implementation. Firstly, it should be built around the government performance management framework. Key performance indicators should be identified. Programme performance should be monitored and evaluated against these indicators. Appropriate training instructions should be included. Secondly, the strategy should focus on targeting mechanism. Special attention should be given on: a) what population should be targeted; b) what targeting options are available; c) what method should be applied in what circumstances; d) probable errors in targeting, e) cost of targeting, and f) developing eligibility criteria (Sharif, 2009). Thirdly, the strategy should highlight the issue of coverage, such as, geographic coverage including urban factor, gender, age, ethnicity, sex, specially disadvantaged groups and labour. Fourthly, the strategy should focus on delivery mechanism. Critical issues in delivery include a) targeting, b) compliance, c) logistics, d) leakage, e) costs, f) intermediaries, and g) trade-off between leakage and administrative costs (Ahmed, 2005). Fifthly, coordination and control aspects should be highlighted too. Monitoring and evaluation system should feed into coordination and control mechanism. This is particularly important in Bangladesh context because of the fact that too many programmes being implemented by too many agencies. Sixthly, use of ICT should be an integral part of the strategy with emphasis on how ICT can be used to: a) improve accountability and control processes, b) improve targeting, c) increase coverage, d) reduce leakage, e) reduce intermediaries, f) increase transparency, and g) increase coordination and control (Baldeon and Arribas-Banos, 2008). Lastly, the strategy should highlight both academic programmes offered by the universities and training programmes offered by training institutions. Academic programmes may cater to the development needs of the human resources by highlighting philosophical underpinning, policy options, programme designs as well as global good practices. The training programmes may impart required knowledge, skills and attitude for effective implementation of social protection programmes.

### Conclusion

The last two decades have witnessed the ascendance of social protection to the top of the development policy agenda. Both bilateral and multi-lateral development partners as well as national governments around the world are investing heavily on social protection. Bangladesh is no exception. Social protection budget is experiencing steady growth in absolute amount. This increased investment has not been able to draw increased attention from neither the academia nor the training profession. In this context, this article argues for a social protection training and development strategy in order to address the critical issues in social protection programming in Bangladesh. A brief outline of six pillars of the strategy has been put forward. Appropriate training and development curricula based on these pillars will surely contribute to the effective implementation of social protection programmes, and thus help achieve inclusive economic growth.

1. Sepulveda  
Ministry of
2. Sabates-W  
currency
3. Poorest: C  
Holzmann  
Conceptu  
DC: The V
4. World Ba  
Protection
5. Quddis, I  
Uddog, D
6. Aguinis, I  
individual  
2009: 60:
7. Rahman,  
Vol 1 and
8. Sharif, I.  
Testing, S
9. Ahmed, S  
SP Discu
10. Baldeon  
Social Sa  
Discussion
11. Mkandaw  
and Deve  
Social De
12. Planning  
Dhaka: P
13. Planning  
Dhaka: P
14. Planning  
Vision 20
15. Planning  
Planning
16. Ministry  
People's  
bdlaws.m

## References

1. Sepulveda, M. and C. Nyst. 2012. The Human Rights Approach to Social Protection. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. Finland.
2. Sabates-Wheeler, R and S. Devereux, 2008, 'Transformative social protection: The currency of justice' in Barrientos and Hume (eds), Social Protection for the Poor and the Poorest: Concept, Policies, Politics, Palgrave: MacMillan
3. Holzmann, R and S. Jorgensen, 1999. Social Protection as Social Risk Management: Conceptual Underpinnings for the Social Protection Sector Strategy Paper. Washington DC: The World Bank
4. World Bank, 2012. Resiliency, Equity, Opportunity: The World Bank's Social Protection and Labor Strategy 2012-2022. Washington DC: The World Bank.
5. Quddus, M.A. 2010. Manufacturing Safe and Fortified Biscuits (Bangla), Srijoni Uddog, Dhaka
6. Aguinis, H. and K. Kraiger, 2009. 'Benefits of Training and Development for individuals, teams, organizations, and society' in The Annual Review of Psychology. 2009: 60:451-474. Rice University. (Available at: [www.annualreviews.org](http://www.annualreviews.org))
7. Rahman, H. Z., L. A. Choudhury and K. S. Ali, 2011. Social Safety Net in Bangladesh Vol 1 and 2. Dhaka: PPRC-UNDP Research Initiative.
8. Sharif, I. A, 2009. Building a Targeting System for Bangladesh based on Proxy Means Testing. SP Discussion Paper No. 0914. Washington DC: The World Bank.
9. Ahmed, S. A, 2005. Delivery Mechanisms of Cash Transfer Programs in Bangladesh. SP Discussion Paper No. 0520. Washington DC: The World Bank.
10. Baldeon, C, and M. D. Arribas-Banos, 2008. Management Information Systems in Social Safety Net Programs: A look at Accountability and Control Mechanism. SP Discussion Paper no 0819. Washington DC: The World Bank.
11. Mkandawire, T. 2005. Targeting and Universalism in Poverty Reduction. Social Policy and Development Programme paper No. 23/2005. Geneva: UN Research Institute for Social Development.
12. Planning Commission, 2015. National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) of Bangladesh. Dhaka: Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning.
13. Planning Commission, 2013. National Sustainable Development Strategy (2010-2021). Dhaka: Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning.
14. Planning Commission, 2011. Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2010-2021: Making Vision 2021 a Reality. Dhaka: Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning.
15. Planning Commission, 2016. The Seventh Five Year Plan (2015-16 to 2019-20). Dhaka: Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning.
16. Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, 2016. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Available at: [bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/pdf\\_part.php?id=367](http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/pdf_part.php?id=367)