

# Attitudes of the Elite Groups towards the Ultra-Poor Secondary stakeholders in the CFPR-TUP

**Manosh Chowdhury  
Lily Lapenna  
Abu Ahasan Mishu**

Advocacy and Human Rights Division & Research and Evaluation Division  
BRAC, Mohakhali

## Contents

Chapter 1	
Theme of study.....	4
Chapter 2	
Research Methods and Study Design.....	8
Chapter 3	
Constructing the 'Rural': The GSCs and the Elites.....	12
Chapter 4	
Who they Are?: Mapping the Elite People.....	15
Chapter 5	
Where is the Symbiosis?: Networking Among and Within the Elites.....	23
Chapter 6	
How they Think?: Perceptions and Attitudes Towards the Ultra-Poor.....	27
Chapter 7	
Preference and Reluctance: Sectors they are Interested in Assisting.....	32
Chapter 8	
Conclusion: Some Recommendations.....	34

## Abstract

"Attitudes of the Elite Groups towards the Ultra-Poor Secondary stakeholders in the CFPR-TUP" was initiated as a combined effort between Advocacy and RED. Secondary stakeholders are those that beyond the primary stakeholders have the potentials to contribute to the success of implementing and running the CFPR/TUP program, by having a crucial impetus in the design of the participatory process. The purpose of the research is to analyze and suggest which stockholders can effectively contribute and how. Secondary stakeholders range from administration officials, civil servants to NGO workers. Program recognizes that it cannot help reduce the vulnerabilities and expand the opportunities of the poor, especially women, without redressing unbalanced power relationships and oppressive social practices. For this reason, program seeks to promote what it calls the socio-political assets - not just social assets - of the poor. The elite people are not, in general, willing to have a regular social bondage with the ultra-poor people. Either they are ignorant of, or reluctant to the situations of the ultra-poor. Socially they do maintain a huge distance. Only exception is the rural landowners and the persons in the GSCs. The development programs generally are accepted among the elite people. Major areas of elite people's interest are education and housing, the areas favored already by the NGOs. But small-scale income generating programs are also a asserted priority of the elite people.

**Background: Where we have come from**

Since January 2002, BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) has started a new program targeted at the extreme poor, called '*challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction: Targeting the Ultra Poor*' (CFPR/TUP). The program seeks to 'push down' the reach of development programs through specific targeting of the ultra-poor who have suffered relative neglect from the conventional service delivery based development programs.

During the history of 'development' in Bangladesh, micro-credit has not been proved as an effective technique for the ultra poor populace. These disputed segments of rural poverty lack the fundamental base from where they could be able in credit utilization. Therefore Instead of credit provision the CFPR/TUP program prioritized assetization. Through capacity building training, technical support, intensive follow-up and assisting in market access the program seeks to ensure the creation of a sound primary foundation on which to fulfil successful credit utilization.

Furthermore it is understood that conventionally, programmatic interventions have hardly address the weak socio-political assets of the poor. The focus of most programs has been on the individuals not on the constraints individuals collectively face through adverse processes.

Program recognizes that it cannot help reduce the vulnerabilities and expand the opportunities of the poor, especially women, without redressing unbalanced power relationships and oppressive social practices. The programs' understanding and principles suggest that the poor need several types of social assets. They require supportive ties with other members of their communities, mutual support within their own local organization, solidarity with other local organizations of the poor, and collective bargaining power to resist exploitation by vested economic and political groups and to demand access to public institutions and recourses. For this reason, program seeks to promote what it calls the socio-political assets - not just social assets - of the poor<sup>1</sup>.

Community/social mobilization has been emphasized as an important component in the promotion of socio-political assets for the extreme poor whilst at the same time decreasing their constraints on access to resources. Having

---

<sup>1</sup> CFPR-TUP Proposal, BRAC Research and Evaluation Division



realized this, the *Gram Shahayak Committee* was introduced into the Program with the scope of engaging committed and capable local elites in the process of social mobilization. Their role is to act as a crisis solving committee in regard to TUP security and vulnerability, to facilitate access to resources and to raise awareness and funds. Ultimately the aim is seeking assistance from the community beyond the intervention of Program. Thus encouraging a local support system.

The positive outcome of the interaction between the *Committee* and the Ultra Poor highlighted the need for the CFPR-TUP Program to further investigate the existing associational space between strata/groups at community level.

To broaden this associational space (not necessarily a material one or a negative one), Program wants to create platforms on which collective efforts can be initiated that will cover the transactional coasts of the elites but principally work in favor of the ultra-poor. This kind of contact will ease the implementation and the progression of the CFPR/TUP Program.

#### Advocacy and RED

With the ultimate aim of generating a communication product that would encourage community interaction - thus enhancing the quality and quantity of community support the CFPR/TUP program needs for its successful running - BRACs Human rights and Advocacy Unit began its search for probable secondary stakeholders with the potential to take on social actions aimed at mobilizing the ultra-poor. Local elites soon became the apparent candidates due to their overruling mobilizing power and palpable access to resources.

Having identified the possible subjects, advocacy realizes the importance of understanding their perceptions of the ultra poor. Recognizing that perceptions translate/shape into action or inaction, the interactive fabric of the community could thus be explored. Perceptions can reveal levels of social consciousness, responsiveness and involvement, which once understood, Advocacy could encourage/spin off/accentuate/elaborate/trigger through a communication product.

In order to unravel these perception advocacy turned to the BRAC research and Evaluation Division. RED, from its part willingly took on this task as it coincided with the outcomes of another ongoing research, namely Process Documentation Research of implementing the CFPR/TUP Program. This ongoing research covered the area of community response towards assetization, highlighting the need for further exploration into different group perceptions of program and of the ultra poor populace.

working at local level, and tied into a linear system nationally and internationally, are taken into the elite group is a question of utmost priority for us in underlining the action areas. Sarah White was spot on to emphasise on development policies regarding the programs and researches to be taken [White 1992]. The research team, unlike some commentators, would go beyond the perception of eliteness as to having the capacity to do things, but to make others doing and thinking on a particular line

## Objectives

### The broad objective of the study is:

An in-depth analysis of the networks and perceptions of various elites in order to explore possibilities of alliance/ partnership and support for the Ultra Poor.

### The specific objectives of the study are:

- Exploring elite perceptions of the Ultra Poor
- Exploring the existing commitments/involvement of Elites towards the Ultra Poor
- Identifying the existing preferred/ taboo sectors of elite intervention
- Identifying areas of exploitation
- Observing the existing associational space between elite and the poor people
- Exploring the potential to broaden the associational space

## The Theme: Where we are heading

"Attitudes of the Elite Groups towards the Ultra-Poor Secondary stakeholders in the CFPR-TUP" was thus initiated as a combined effort between Advocacy and RED. Secondary stakeholders are those that beyond the primary stakeholders have the potentials to contribute to the success of implementing and running the CFPR/TUP program, by having a crucial impetus in the design of the participatory process. The purpose of the research is to analyze and suggest which stockholders can effectively contribute and how. Secondary stakeholders range from administration officials, civil servants to NGO workers. (see chapter 4)

## Conceptualization

Elites, in its broader and significantly flexible/supple sense, are anticipated to be the Secondary Stakeholders of CFPR/TUP. In her recent unpublished thesis, Naomi Therese Hossain suggests that although polemics frequently arise regarding the 'nature and form of power,' as well as 'the degree of its concentration and the pattern of its distribution, and the coherence and characteristics of the group among whom it is concentrated' [Hossain 2003, p 5], the definition of 'elite' is generally an agreed one. Throughout her study, a position to locate the 'national elite' into the discussion is maintained. Overall, the national-local drift/ parallel/comparison is not explicitly explored, although she argues that poverty is not of utmost priority to the national elites, she portrays local elites and their priorities as being dissimilar.

In another unpublished [DRAFT] paper, Harry Blair sees Civil Society Organizations [CSO] as a part of NGOs and a potential force for approaching pro-poor initiatives in rural Bangladesh. The most interesting, unconvincing though, feature of his narration is his assumption of what he calls CSO [and of NGOs too] as to be located outside the boundary of elite, especially local ones [Blair 2003]. Yet in another case, Hossain Zillur Rahman, though in a paper dealing with issues relating to governance, called NGOs as the 'hegemonic non-state actor' [Rahman 2001]. We should be exploring the way governance is merely a process of resource allocation and consent mobilization towards the policies being designed.

According to the appropriating line of the present study, even the subtle difference between approaches, inevitably guide actions for the program initiators, and thus should be seen as crucial one. Whether or not the NGOs

## Research Methods and Study Design

The study, which was conducted with the objectives mentioned in chapter 1, explores the Elites' perceptions of the Ultra Poor as secondary stakeholders in the participatory design of the CFPR/TUP program.

### Study area

Rangpur, Nilfamari and Kurigram are the pioneer locations for the CFPR/TUP program due to their remote and economic indolent nature. These three districts were taken as our study area and data was collected at district, Thana and union level. Nilfamari proper and Domar of Nilfamari district, Rangpur proper, and Ulipur of Kurigram district were the upazilas under this probe for team 1. Team 2 worked in the same districts but with different locales. Since they have conducted principally the FGDs, they have to focus on the cluster of the elites.

### Study population

In the preliminary phases of the study, a list of categories of Elites was formulated. The three dialogues in each district served to sample the population. (see chapter 4)

### Data collection techniques

Data for the study was collected from the 1st to the 23rd November 2003. A variety of qualitative techniques were used to collect information. Apart from in-depth-interviews, several participatory techniques were used for data collection and data validation that included focus group discussions (FGD), dialogues, case studies, informal discussions, informal interviews and observation.

The participatory techniques used for data collection in the study are given briefly in table 1

Table 1: Techniques used and number of sample.

Data collection techniques	Persons involved	Number			Utility of techniques
		Nilphamari	Rangpur	Kurigram	
In-depth interviews (team 1)	- Elites	22	12	13	- Gain thorough insight on elite perceptions, responsiveness and involvement with the Ultra Poor
Dialogues	- Ultra poor - <i>Gram shahayak committee</i> - BRAC staff	6	3	4	- Validate pre-established categories of elites - Population sampling - Triangulation
Observation	- General				- Validate other techniques - Explore the untold data and relations with the targeted group. - Develop insight on thematic issues.
Informal interviews	- Ultra poor - Elites		3	1	- Access information that usually doesn't come out in formal interviews.
Informal discussions	- Ultra poor - Elites		4	3	- This technique has the flexibility to reach beyond formal arrangements and increases the qualitative standard.
In depth Interviews (Communica)	- Elites - Ultra poor	4	6	6	- Validation of FGDs
Focus group discussion (Communica)	- Ultra poor - Categorized elites	9	8	9	- Explore a collective opinion. - Cross checking data amongst a homogeneous group

### Processing of data and analysis

The data was processed manually through categorization and the analysis was based on coherence and cross-checking. Different categories or codes were formulated from the study themes or research questions to order the data. These very themes were initially used in developing guidelines and checklists for data collection. In the field the researchers would do daily transcriptions of various data, which had been collected during the day. After closing the field the data was processed into matrixes and charts allowing for the interpretation phases to begin.

Throughout the study, data analysis included triangulation through comparisons of facts from different areas, sources and relations between themes. This was possible because the research team was divided into two groups collecting in two distinct regions. Information was regularly shared and compared between the groups. In addition to this, Communicata was hired as team 2 to undertake a simultaneous process of data collection with a greater focus on FGDs and again an interactive information flow took place.

### Limitations

#### The practical ones

In order to avoid the common lose of meaning through translation particular quotation and terminology in Bengali was reproduced verbatim along with the English. The limited time allocated to fieldwork resulted in restricted scope for rapport building between the researcher and the respondent. Practical difficulties as well as thematic misunderstandings impeded a constant interactive progress between the RED team and team 2. However these were overcome and in the long run mutual understanding prevailed.

#### The double-edged sword

The study was conducted in three areas already involved in the TUP programs, this presented an advantage as staff, participants and the community were familiar with the program yet this very familiarity gave way to many preconceived and imposed/formulated/artificial responses to our research. Considering this dynamic it becomes hard to use the research in a generalising way.

#### Beyond the practical

The common assumption of the village/community/field is that of a tradition environment within a set of boundaries seems an idea belonging to the past. Today the field is a modern space with outside influences and pulls. Multinationals have penetrated to the remotest peripheries and global discourses such as the development rhetoric having found room/cover in community talk/conversation.

### Study population

In the preliminary phases of the study, a list of categories of elites was formulated. The three dialogues in each district served to sample the population. (see chapter 4)

The roles of various elites will be identified as well as their potential to improve the interactive fabric of the community and to facilitate pro-poor collective action. The broad objective of the study is an in-depth analysis of the networks and perceptions of various local actors in order to explore possibilities of collective efforts and support for the ultra-poor.

## Constructing the 'Rural': The GSCs and the Elites

The 'rural' has a particular schematic nature concerning the contemporary development programs. However, this particular proposition needs to be elaborated both in the organizing principles of the ideas, and in the systematization of the actions. Development agencies, national or transnational, are exclusively promoter of the category, both as a consumer and a producer. With a firm, if not rigid, understanding of the 'rural', complying its resonance at a particular moment, these agencies are doing things - formulating their schedules, creating agendas, employing personnel people, establishing office buildings and so on. So, one has to be clear it's structural relation with a larger system of what is defined as development work.

'Rural' is utmost necessary for launching the development programs. To be more objective, most of the development programs are designed to reach into, or for the betterment of, the rural Bangladesh and its population. Assumption behind it, understandably, is the lack of development indicators in rural areas. The current anticipated project is no exception to that.

Here, we need to underline the importance of the particular ways CFPR-TUP project assumed rural situation. First of all, it has relation to the already rooted programs of BRAC in general. Moreover, it has relation with the defined *Pallishamaj*<sup>2</sup> in particular. It must be noted that Gram Shahayak Committee [GSC] was an inseparable part of CFPR-TUP program. Fundamentally, forming of GSCs are based on the idea of villages as they are configured by BRAC.

Villages are not defined as they are perceived and maintained by the villagers. This is not a case with BRAC only, but with most of the development agencies working in the rural Bangladesh. Almost every NGO has its own way, and probably reason too, to renaming and re-mapping the rural area. In this line, one can find a village, as it is defined by BRAC, in reference to a name of a nearby bazaar or *mouza*, which is not necessarily a single village. It is, often, a cluster of some villages, in terms of villagers' knowledge. But once again, the area covered by a BRAC-village could well have a different name in another NGO's documents. From NGOs' point of view, the reasons behind this naming are subject to the convenience of maintaining the programs. It is understandable that the location of the area offices is of major consideration in this regard.

<sup>2</sup> *Pallishamaj* is a category to term a defined body of people executed by BRAC local offices through development program. Usually, women who received microcredit in a particular program area are termed as the members of a certain *Pallishamaj*.



GSC, then, is a body that presumably operates not in the domain of a traditional village, but in a redefined one. It is an important feature to understand the intricacy of the secondary stakeholders, hence the elites. The idea was founded upon the concept of community, and community is referred all through; but at the same time, this is a reinvented community in terms of its boundary and composition. However, a GSC is understood as a safety-net for the ultra-poor which is going to function regardless of the presence of BRAC in the field. Specific duties and responsibilities are defined too<sup>3</sup>:

- to arrange for the treatment of the TUP beneficiaries while they are ill
- to arrange for the food while they go without food
- to protect them while they are threatened
- to take care so that their children can go to school
- to organize for establishing sanitary latrines for every TUP beneficiary
- to arrange for safe water for them
- to organize people to ensure they are under different vaccinations
- to take care so that they can access different kinds of poor programs [VGD, VGF, food for work and so on]
- to ensure tin-shed house for every one
- to help for them if they are affected by natural disasters

Again, BRAC cared much to make the GSCs as the autonomous bodies. Firstly, the rules for forming a committee are a defined one. A committee would consist of 7 members: a president, a secretary, a cashier, 3 members and an advisor, necessarily the POTUP [SD] of the area. Further there are defined principles too for how these people should get selected. Besides the POSD, 6 members are to be taken as 3 *villagers*, 2 *pallishamaj*-members, and 1 ultra-poor. Secondly, every GSC is expected to transform into a trust. The motive is to support the body with legal protection. Structure and expected duties of a trust is same to that of a GSC. Also there are particularities as well. A trust must have their members willing to collect money from the elite people, and from themselves too, when possible. A clear set of rules and regulations are undertaken about how a trust should operate. A figure, as on June 2003, shows that BRAC maintains 520 GSCs and 399 of them are trusts.<sup>4</sup>

Here one should note that field situation suggests a possible reduction of the trusts into having a bank account. Every trust should have a bank account so that the transactions could be transparent as much as possible. Governmental rules allow a body to be trust if they have a bank account with 2000 BDT. It is apparent that most of the ultra-poor trusts have an account with only 2000 taka each.

---

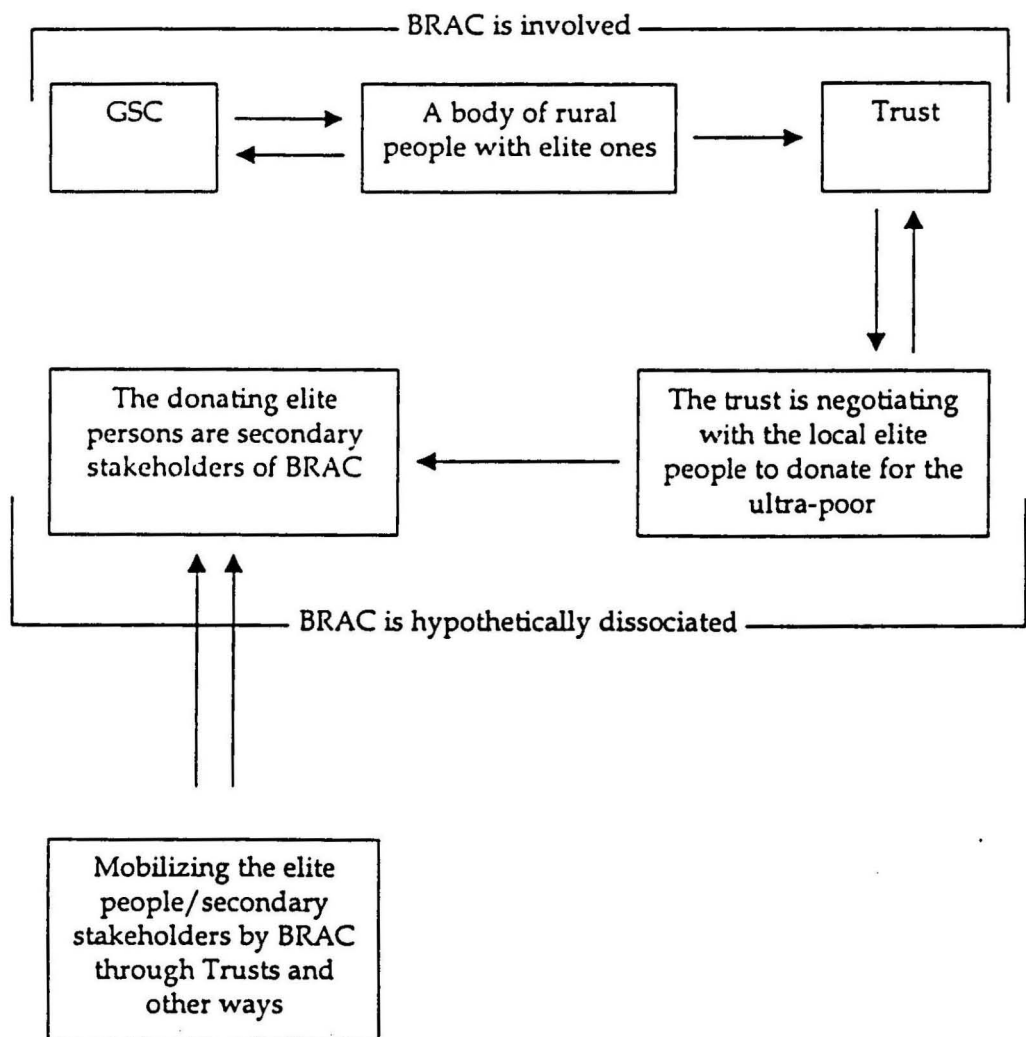
<sup>3</sup> A Concept paper on Gram Shahayak Committee, BRAC, 2003

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

Figure of the total collected amount also supports the fact. But there are other kind of supports from the elite people, and that value for a bigger amount.

The category of villagers in a GSC, or in a trust, is of significance. Persons from this category are the potential elites themselves. Further, they are supposed to be the most influential ones in a body to negotiate with the elite people for fund raising. Therefore, the belt of secondary stakeholders is informal and is linked with BRAC through some definite members of a GSC/trust. This is a fact both for the people already donated, or for those who are probable secondary stakeholders in future. In this line, any attempt to address the elite people is somewhat dependent on the capacity of a trust.

### The Process at a Glance



## Who they Are?: Mapping the Elite People

### Introducing the actors

Elites were subdivided into eleven categories during the preliminary stages of research. The criterion behind the categories was empirical evidence and a literature review. The categories are shown below

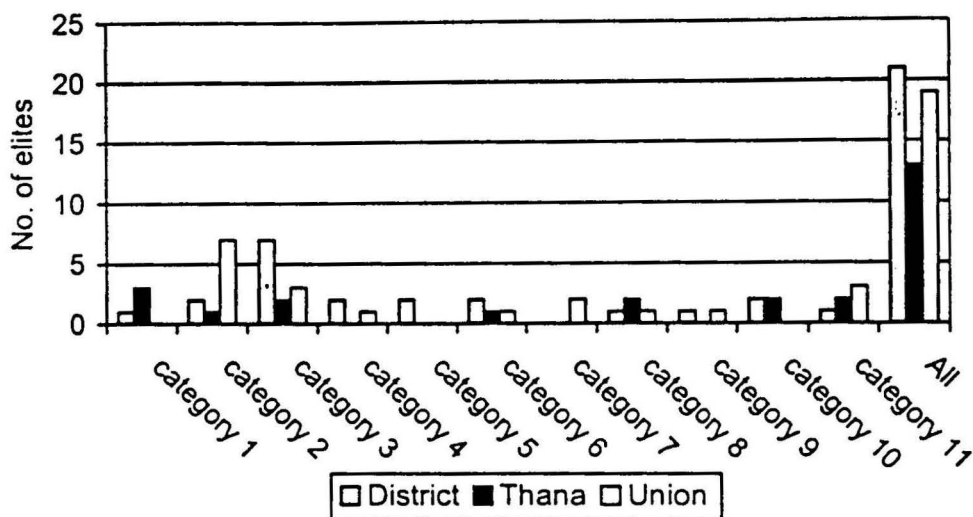
1. Government officers regarding land, revenue, administration
2. Elected representatives and major actors at electoral level.
3. Dealers of pesticides, fertilizers and water (businessman)
4. Middlemen, doing something in court, thana (police station) or 'upazilla' office
5. Local lawyers/migrant lawyers
6. School/college teachers.
7. Mosque committees/school committees
8. Political party offices.
9. Goons and armed cadres.
10. NGO actors
11. Affluent elites (landowners, by heritage...)

The selected categories would serve to cover the wide-ranging varieties of local elites. The overlapping nature of these categories and thus their need to be seen as fluid ones was predominant in our understanding of them. Realities were by an elected representative (category 2) can also be a businessman (category 3) and a member of a school committee (category 7) and many other combinations were frequently revealed throughout the study.

Once in the field the categories were validated through three dialogue sessions covering BRAC staff, the *Gram Shaoyoke Committee* and the Ultra Poor in each district. With their consensus, the categories were approved and the population sampling process began. These dialogues enabled the identification of relevant elites and gave scale to a total of 53 in depth interviews in the three study areas.

Communica, team 2, an external group of specialized consultants that were hired by BRAC to contribute to the research also made use of these elite categories to conduct a total of 26 FGDs and 16 in depth interviews in the same study areas.

Figure 2: Distribution of elites' categories at three levels  
(team 1)



The data for this chart is taken exclusively from the in depth interviews undertaken by the research and Evaluation team (team 1) but can be applied for that of team 2 as well.

The distribution of elites depends very much on the work they do. Due to the presence of the court at district level, lawyers were found to reside there. In this way they could be accessible to clients from all unions (cat.5). Landowners instead tend to live at union level to maintain a contractual relationship with their labor and to ensure adequate land management. Journalists, who we also included in this category, mainly resided at district level because that is where the main news agencies are located (cat.11). Dealers will tend to live at district level as their wealth can be used on the better facilities offered there such as better schooling for their children and a general improvement in living standard. The district also offers wider scope for business networking. (cat.3)

Elected representatives are involved in will tend to be at district level and upazila level. Government officers Problem of finding because busy especially during *monga* time government officials hard to interview with why not found at district level. People in Government officers were hard to engage in interviews as in addition to their fixed work there was the added pressure of the *monga*, which received unprecedented media coverage. Those involved in upazila level offices however are found to stay in at provided accommodation at upazila level like the fishery officers, UNO (chief of administration).

Elite people from government officials at district level are: DC (district commissioner), chief executive engineers, department of public health and engineering, judge of district court, SP, ADC (revenue), ADC (general) etc. Teachers obvious all levels most elites at district level teaching in the colleges such as Karmicheal College. Political party offices tend to exist on all levels but on district level there tends to be more interest. (cat.8) Other categories such as middlemen (cat.4) tend to overlap into other categories and so can exist on different levels according to their other involvements. (eg case)

### **Beyond the numerical:**

#### **The Social Web**

Some elites are more interested to involve their children in the family business from a young age rather than sending them into higher education.

---

#### **Case Study**

Mr. K who is a member of the union Porishod in the Rangpur district, is a small landowner of 10/12bigas of land. He attended school until class 9 then began to work. His 2 children both work for him. The eldest left school after completing class 10 to join his fathers business, he is involved in the management of land and at times works as a labourer. The second having completed his HSC and is now also working on the land as a labourer. Mr. K specified that his children of their own will decided not to peruse further studies to engage in the family business. If second generation elites are working the land what employment prospects do the ultra poor have?

INIC2-RANG-R-10/11/03

---

The majority however are concerned about sending their children to the better-reputed schools partly to offer them the best available education and partly to reinforce their social status. English medium schools locally available are popular although some will prefer to opt for boarding schools in Dhaka. Government officials will tend to send the children to government schools, as they tend to live in compounds with schools.

#### **Kin relations**

Amongst elites strong relationships are maintained if not reinforced through marriage.

---

### Case Study

Mr. P one of the most affluent respondents, who coming from a poor background made his fortune in the tobacco industry, married Miss R the daughter of a well off local chairman. Later Mr. And Mrs. P married their daughter to an army major son of an MP.

IND-C11-RAN-S-11/11/2003

---

Business relations are often entangled with family ones. Most family businesses will be run by several brothers and will employ the extended family (biri case study) in the most prominent posts.

#### Leisure time

Businessmen tend to have little time for leisure as they manage different businesses. Along with personal facilities given to government officials living in districts and thanas, such as a house and car, clubs are also exclusive environments set-up to entertain them during their free time. The nouveau rich will tend to host events at their residences in order to mingle with already established elites and to show off their newly acquired wealth. Most well educated elites such as lawyers and professors are found to spend their leisure time at the press club as well as working for or attending events organized by various associations, civil society organizations and cultural clubs.

#### Mobility

Social web depends on a lot of this mobility is physical. Regular contact with the capital is required for some types of work of lawyers, government officials, and dealers. At district level some of them have cars and usually they don't take their own cars to Dhaka, a meaning could be that this is not safe. More generally, most facilities are centralized in Dhaka. For specialized medical treatment, for what is considered quality higher education the elites will head to Dhaka. Also for political connections, in pursuit of work in ministries or higher offices or for chairmen to request project funding, one will head for the capital. For family ties, many would have relatives in the capital, children married or studying in Dhaka. Many have property in Dhaka or are keen to buy. Also most head offices are in Dhaka, so a banker for example working for a bank will go to the head office for a transfer or a promotion.

---

### Case Study

Mr. f a businessman with a fertilizer factory, phone fax shop, computer training institute, jute tobacco and fertilizer dealership, sugar salt tobacco dealership.....he is respectable and is know to ministers and high officials come from elsewhere he accompanies them good lesion with them and needs to go to Dhaka every week...permit of dealership, catch a bid for a business Secretariat fro dealership permit or an import license.

INDC3-DOMAR-D-08/11/03

---

Lawyers will go for the Supreme Court and usually stay at the Bar guesthouse by the court. Other than the capital, mobility towards the home village is frequent. This can happen for family visits especially in times of religious festivals, marriage or funerals. For those in business visits can be as frequent as once a week

---

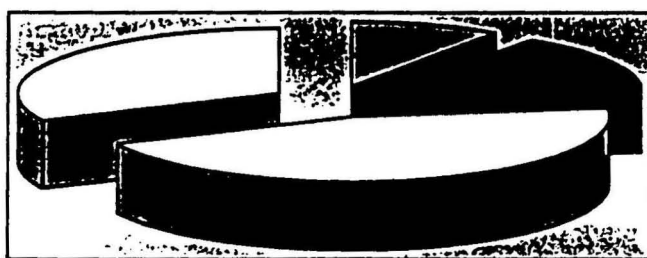
### Case Study

Mr. S who is a prosperous businessman from Nilphamari and runs most owns 70 *highas* of land. Every week Mr.S visits the village to manage his land and laborers and during harvesting time to collect his share of the crops. During these visits he goes to see his extended family.

IDI-C3-NIL-P-5/11/03

---

### Respondent's income range



☐	25000-100000
■	100000-50000
☐	50000-20000
☐	20000-5000



## The elite-poor relationship

---

### Case: *Monga*

Poor people who are living in the northern region of Bangladesh face a seasonal vulnerability every year. Scarcity of food, locally called *Monga*, is a regular seasonal phenomenon to this area. For a case study we are giving an example of a union of Gangchora thana under Rangpur district. The name of this union is lakhsmitari. According to the statistical bureau the number of population of this area is 19,140 and the number of families is 4263. Out of these families only 1142 families have little (0-0.25 acres of land and another 2862 families are landless. Most of them are living on another's land. The remaining 259 families' own the rest of the land.

The land of this area is fertile and the production of rice is abundant. Yet the owners of this huge amount of rice are not the poor people. Only few people and families are the owner of this production. Poor people are only the laborers. They work on the land to grow the crop in exchange for a minimal wage. Their labor goes into producing the finest rice, which after harvesting is left in the possession of the landowners. The laborers buy the cheapest quality of rice for their families consumption.

For the people of this area the only means of living is agriculture. All poor people are agriculture laborers. Only few of them are rickshaw puller and very few of them are businessman (grocer). Many of these huge numbers of laborer usually go to another district or to the capital to work when they haven't any work in their areas. Usually they finish their work in the land planting the *Amon paddy* before the rainy season (August-September). During the rainy season gradually comes to the paddy field and the paddy plant grows tall according to the water level. Then they haven't any work in their hand and fall into *Monga*. This situation continues until the *Amon paddy* harvesting time (November). According to the speech of the people of this area, it has been happening in this area for more than 50 years. But their experiences are changing with the geographical and social changes.

As we have seen they who suffered from *Monga*, are very poor and landless. They live only by working on others land. Usually they get 30-50 TK per day as their wage. But with this money they only can bear their family's daily expenses, nothing more than that. They can save nothing. Moreover their families are not small in number. Only one male can work for each family. There are no opportunities for their wives' work except in the household. Within four or five years of marriage they take 3 or 4 children and with the old father and mother the number of the family becomes huge. So the expenditure of this family is also high. They can't save anything form their daily wage where as they know how unbearable the *Monga* time is!



When this people have no work in the land, they search little work in the rich people's household or in their garden. There are also a little amount of works and only very few people can do these. Even the rich people can get the laborer with the half wage only for the abundant of laborer. Then the other people spend their day workless and gossip sitting in a shop in *Bazaar* (market) or under a huge tree.

When they have no work, they won't have any food in their houses. In the first stage of this crisis their wives search to borrow some money (30 to 50 TK) or some rice (2 or 1 kg) from the wives of neighbor houses. When the wives finish their options, then the husbands search for the same from their friends, relatives and the neighbors. After this they start selling their wealth or household accessories. As they are very poor and they haven't many things to sell in their houses, they start with cattle or ducks and hens. Many of them are very poor and live in the embankment and in the street and govt. land. They don't have any cow but some of them have only goats. Others have only duck or hens. They sell all which could be sold. Even they sell their corrugated tin of their hut' roof. At last they sell their cooking accessories. After selling these they buy low cost soil's cooking accessories to cook and eat. On the other hand they change their consumption pattern. They start to avoid the making sweet and cake for their families. Usually they take food three times a day. In the *Monga* time they eat one or two times a day. Sometimes they don't have their breakfast and only lunch and go to sleep very early. If they keep awaken themselves long in the night, they could feel hungry. Sometimes they take a light breakfast and a late lunch and go to bed early. Thus they try to reduce the expenses and try to cope up with crisis.

After finishing this selling episode and when they haven't any other ways, then they go the moneylenders. But it is not so easy to borrow money from them with interest. If any poor wants money, they will say come tomorrow and let's see what I can do for you. if the poor goes again then the rich understand the poor has no way and he applies hard conditions for getting money. If he find any misbehave before towards him form the poor, he will reject the request. Even they made the poor people promised not to mix with his opponent, to send his wives and daughter to work in his household, if they sell something they must show him before going to others, though they don't give them the money without interest. The poor people have to pay 110 TK per month for 100 TK. Sometimes it goes by 120 TK per month for 100 TK. When the working season will come, the poor will repay the borrowed money by earning again.

Otherwise the rich people will take money to the poor instead of paddy in the harvesting season. They will give 60 TK to the poor and for that they will take 100 or 120 TK or 20 kgs of paddy which will cost 100 or 120 TK in the harvesting season. If the poor has a little amount of land and if it has growing paddy in time of *Monga*, then that poor will be able to repay with his paddy. This way the poor people sell their all crops before the crops ripe or the harvest.

Then they don't know how they will feed their family and children. After giving all the crops, again they will borrow money or paddy from them. Then they shall have to work in their land or their wives will have to work in their household. Usually who have a little amount of land; they can sell their paddy before harvest. But who don't have a little amount of land; they can't sell any paddy before. if anyone promise for that, then he have to buy this paddy from the market and have to return to the rich people. Usually they sell their labor before the working season. But they are paid by dull season's rate. They are being paid by 20/30 TK per day where they shall have to work in those days instead of 40/50 TK. But they don't know what they will do with their families where they have sold all their days labor before.

After finishing all the ways and options, then they migrate to another district or to the capital for work. Those who have at least a house/hut, a quite large family and have extended families, they usually go alone to other place to find work. And those haven't such, they go with their families to another place or district or to the capital by selling all what they had. They who went to work alone to other place and come back with some money for their family and give back all the loans what they had taken before. Thus they start going to outside every year.

---

Where is the Symbiosis?  
Networking Among and Within the Elites

Networking among the elite people could be seen in different levels. Most obvious is the interdependent relationship between and among the categories. Other important concerns are: geographical location, sum of wealth, organizational affiliation and kin bondage. In this study, elite categories were perceived in reference with the professional groups<sup>5</sup>. This particular selection by the research team was for an operational purpose. A detailed picture of their location and social status is illustrated in chapter 4. Team I had 53 elite persons interviewed, whereas team II had 26 groups for FGD, and 17 persons from the groups were interviewed.

A professional tie was looked for throughout the study. Often these ties are not an outcome of conscious attempts from their end, but sometimes they are. Male government officials have their club to meet, elected ones have a council room, school or mosque committees have a regular follow up, and party officials meet at the branch offices of national political parties. So these are the apparent physical spaces for a group of elites to come across among themselves. But there are some spaces also in the business community. For example, a pesticide dealers' association was found in Nilphamari. It was a district-based body and other districts were not any exception either. No wonder that in this kind of gathering, lot of tensions generated since all they are to sell products to a definite population. But that does not necessarily manifest a conflicting situation always. A few of them are the giant ones in terms of expansion in their business, and of course the amount of financial transaction. They lead the group in a form of patronage. In case of the landowners, any sort of formal tie is rare, understandably. But it is revealed through other associations like UP, mosque committee, or in the present days, GSC.

During the conceptualization phase, we assumed two specific points about the categories - a) that the people would overlap the categories, b) hardly there could be found any person in categories like middlemen or goons. Both the team experienced similar things and very much coherent to what we had thought earlier. We perceived that overlapping is an interesting point of reference to networking between the categories or professional groups. This particular feature is more evident in the urban locales. That is: multiple income sources are

---

<sup>5</sup> Those are: government officers, electoral actors, businessmen, middlemen, lawyers, teachers, mosque & school committees, party officials, goons & cadres, NGO actors, landowners

more likely for district elites and less likely in the villagers. In this sense, we are of the position that eliteness has something to do with a broader access over the social avenues: in form of various commerce venture, social connections and tendency towards the metropolis.

### **Geographical Location**

Elite population were selected from district, upazila and union levels. For an elite person, there are reasons for living at a particular location. Mostly these include a foundation of professional life. For example, for a political leader affiliated with a national political party, it is necessary sometime to reside in an upazila or district town, whereas his counterpart from a village could remain in the village just because he is solely encircled in UP politics or he is dependent on the agrarian products. The fact of where a person is living is important for him to make patronage group. We found a number of cases where the village based elite persons are more concerned about the development agencies' programs and missions and are more willing to engage themselves in those acts. We understand that this conviction is a newer one. But the tendency has a serious difference to what the more urban elites have shown. Often the interest to engage with development agencies has a hype. To illustrate the fact, there found number of occasions where the village leaders introduced a number people as members of a GSC which was impossible since the formal structure allowed only 7 persons to form a GSC. One way to analyze the fact could be underlining their perception of development discourses. They find no reason to dissociate themselves with the development activities, though it has not any necessary correlation with what they feel about the ultra-poor people.

The government officials are the most fluid ones in a locale. They have particular insecurity and rule to encapsulate themselves. But it is not a simple matter to find their role in the network. It depends on the specific power an officer has and on his willingness to manipulate his formal authority for sake of an elite's interest. For traders, it is more likely to reside in a town. But shifting his family into a town depends on several questions including whether he is willing to provide modern facilities to his [nuclear] family, or whether he is involved in rural political activities. Among the town dwellers, an upazila-elite frequently visits district towns, specially the businessmen and political leaders, to meet the professional dealings, thus they maintain a recurrent network. And a district elite does the same where his goal is a metropolis - Rajshahi, and mainly Dhaka.

### **Sum of Wealth**

Amount of wealth has a serious influence upon the character of networking. The quantity is not apparent in the lives of villager-elites, or of political leaders

government officials. But it is more visible for the traders, particularly the ones from districts. Almost every businessman has more than one bank account. They also have modern houses and their children usually go to the recognized better educational institutions.

The elite people have a tendency to make frequent links to the people from his similar capacity. For example, a pesticide dealer from Nilphamari with a couple of huge buildings and personal motor vehicles is likely to maintain regular social bondage with the transport based businessman nearby, and not with a simple landowner of a village unless it has some significance on a certain transaction. The point could be illustrated here is the fact that even in the elite people, there is heterogeneity must be underlined.

### **Organizational Affiliation**

Another concern of networking is organizational affiliation. Unlike the previous ones, it gives more formal space for the people to get closer, to form a tie among themselves. Most significant instance would be of branches of national political parties. BNP and Awami League are two parties for local elites, particularly of upazila and district levels, to get affiliated. But the region of this study is marked as a strong camp of JP lead by Lt. Gn. Ershad. Also there is a significant hold of Jamat-i-Islami. So, these are four political parties that form bonds of distinct types for the elite people. Political parties have a specific nature of maintaining status quo within its bondage. This particular feature should be noted regarding the nature of networking. Conflicts are of course subjects of concerns, and one should follow that these conflicts are not only inter-party ones, rather they can be inner-party too.

Besides political parties, there are other forms of organizations like religious ones or sports clubs. Welfare organizations are also a form, whereas a most common form is district association. But the latter is more seen in the metropolis and are lead by the migrated politicians and businessmen who have close connections with their fellow and/or clients in the district or upazila levels.

### **Kin Bondage**

Elite people in the study area have strong kin bondage among them. Affinal relations are strongly maintained between the similar kind of capable parties. Apparently, there are some particular indications that could play a crucial role on a certain point. For example, education is serious point of reference. Therefore, there are some kin groups a bit distant among themselves just because of a difference in educational status. However, kin groups have strong hold in power network. The fact is more evident in electoral politics and formal modes of power, and in the business sector. Kin-groups are often a muted force of

networking and mobility. It is activated, usually, in a crucial phase and somewhat could be the strongest tie amongst all.

The variables of networking are important but not the exclusive ones. Often these cross-cut the boundary of each other. Networking is always a horizontal and vertical at the same time. In this regard, it is a hierarchical patronage system and a peer group altogether. Further, the scenario is complicated with local-national elite system, urbanization factors, development agencies and national political parties. It is more and more apparent, in the study areas, that the NGO officials and local elites maintain a sound symbiotic relationship among them characterized with patience and vigilance.



**How do they Think?  
Perceptions and Attitudes Towards the Ultra-Poor**

Understandably, huge difference is seen among the perceptions. It revealed in the utterances range from being anti-poor to a degree of radicalism. But there could be marked some of the tendencies in those perceptions. For example, a gross difference was evident between the village-based elite people and town-based elite people. While the former ones grossly indicated their dissatisfaction over the nature of ultra-poor and about the development activities, the latter showed a little empathy to their lives. We understand that this is not definitely a general condition of Bangladesh and has connection with a particular set of labor-capital circular in a particular locale. Another feature is a tendency, regardless of their feelings about the ultra-poor, to refer largely with the development activities and development ideas. Most of the people have shown their conviction on the development agencies. Sometimes, these attitudes were a bit contradictory to what they reduced as a result of development activities - a possible avoidance from ultra-poor's standpoint, of the elite people. But the position of the elite people adequately subscribes the contemporary developmentalism.

Basic perceptions and attitudes of the elite people could be marked as some statements and are discussed bellow. It should be noted that poverty seemed to be a descriptive category and referred in rather a general term. Therefore, any demarcation was not there, while the elite people were expressing views, between poor and ultra-poor.

**'Poor people are idle'**

A major discursive pattern is found, particular in the more rural areas, that the poor people are idle ones. In this line, 'idleness' is seen as the utmost reason for their poverty. Many elites in the villages suggested that they did not see any drive in their [ultra-poor] attitudes. Most obvious example they mentioned was about ultra-poor's reluctance to do work for them [elite] when asked. *"They want to be like that, no one can change their position ... they want to move around and then get fed without any hardwork."* It was a statement from one of the respondents, but not the only one to feel it in that way. Not unlikely that some identified NGOs for generating this idleness.

**'Their nature is to remain unproductive'**

Among the negative perceptions, another major statement was the above. *"Look, they are the most unproductive ones in the society. Which society can you imagine to*

*prosper with so many unproductive people?"* According to this view, ultra-poor people lack imagination and cannot handle the pressure of anything newer. The process of being unproductive remained an unexplored though. But a further suggestion was found that this unproductiveness was an outcome of poverty-hood it self. Some went further to posit the situation into a historical background whatsoever. That the poor could be found in every phase of the history was the fact about an unproductive sect of the society throughout. They are simply dependents to other people's sympathy and support. Here, once again, NGOs were marked as the enhancing one for this.

#### **'They are non-cooperative and jealous'**

This particular view, of course, is supplementary to the previous ones. It should be noted that the question of non-cooperation or jealousy is not referred in terms of their intra-group relations, rather it is referred to their attitudes towards the elite people. As it was discussed, the ultra-poor people would not pay attention to any work if it were for a betterment of the elite people. They are believed to be jealous and competitive to the prosperity and social status an elite person achieved. This very attitude does not help to make elite people sympathetic towards them, according to the elite people. Often it was mentioned, some elite persons were once tending to do something for the poor. But they pissed off as they found the other end jealous to them.

#### **'The poor people are vulnerable and weak'**

Principal mode of positive attitudes about the poor is revealed in the statement above. Governmental officials, political leaders in particular and the urban elites in general were assertive about this. The perception is: poverty causes a series of incapability and vulnerability, then it becomes more and more difficult to come up with any new strategy, even to accommodate with an external effort, to overcome poverty. They lack social networking and any attempt towards that is discouraged by the well-off people. Some supporters of this view think that the vulnerability is furthered by the governmental policies about and towards the poor. Though some expressed a faith in development agencies' activities as to be favorable to bring the courage back in the poor people, some are really convinced that it went against the poor.

#### **'They are hardworking and deprived'**

Although this view is not declared by a large number of elite people, but the constitution of this statement has its own strength needs to get attention. This view is founded upon the discourse of '*Mehanat*' [hard-work]. People who implied this view explored a lot of social causes for explaining the condition of poverty. These included unjust wage, elite manipulation of the situation, even the credit program run by the NGOs. "*How can you improve one's life if the wage-structure is this much low? A poor person hardly can earn the amount he needs a day. So*



*it needs a massive restructuring.*" It is one selection from this kind of positions elite people have mentioned. In this line, poor people are believed to work hard day after day and it should have meant a lot for any change in their lives. But, as some elite people addressed the matter, elite people appropriate the labor, which continue the process of poverty. Some mentioned the credit program as to be a serious tool to suppress the possibility of emancipation of the poor. Because, as they perceive it, credit programs appropriate the low profit in place of the labor force.

**'No need to further pro-poor development programs'**

This attitude, expressed by only a few, is supplementary to the perceptions mentioned earlier at the top. This is supported by the fact that there is already a huge amount of development works for the poor. Also the richer people are doing their best to support the poor people. So this should have been enough, and no need for any extension of development programs. *"Yes, roads and construction could be done."* But a sense of dismay is seen about future development ventures since it could lead to further disharmony in a village situation.

**'More pro-poor programs are needed and could be more efficiently done'**

Some of the elite people have shown this attitude. It is founded on the general conviction upon the regular development programs and a sense of inadequacy of those. One point that strengthens this position is that of the huge size of poor people in Bangladesh. This school, in this line, suggests that any attempt could be inadequate in terms of the tremendous pressure of poverty. A linear progress, may be slow, is perceived by these elite people. They are simply underlining to enhance the process. Usually, they do not have any serious critic as such about what the development personnel, in the field level, is doing. But they are convinced that more efficiency could be attained at program end. In brief, this view supports the present mode of developing, just with additional programs.

**'Nothing is being done for the poor, all are being eaten'**

A more radical position is to term development activities as worthless. Though only a few, defenders of this view have shown a deep distrust about the development agencies. They think these activities are all about to justify their accumulation of the development funds. They see only a thin line between the government activities and the development ones. Because, as they express, both governmental funds and development funds are consumed by someone else, and not are used for the purpose of the poor people. To substantiate the point, when asked, some elite respondents directed to the fact that despite the huge budget spent in the name of development, poor people are at stake as they were before.

**'There must be some ways but we don't know that'**

Some elites simply denied the capacity to comprehend poverty situation. However, they realize the possibility of a change in ultra-poverty situation, or in poverty situation as such. But they do not think that they could well be a participant of the process to change this, or even to design a pathway. One reason to assert this is an overall understanding of the vastness of contemporary development think tanks. *"If these many intellectuals are failing to map a way, how can we be able to do so?"* With a second thought, it could be understood that this particular view has something to do with a sense of reluctance to the process of poverty and/or to the organizations involved to combat it.

**'The poor should be supported only in a hard situation'**

This attitude has been shown in number of occasions. Mostly it was a remark by the people unhappy to the ultra-poor, but it was also a remark by others. Their point is a definite one. Whether a poor person or household is satisfied with a set of services provided by any development agency is subject to their necessity on a particular moment. So, the viewers suggest, it is not a very wise to run regular programs to support the poor population. Doing so necessarily make them more and more dependent and they hardly can differentiate the affect of a support in their livelihood. Since the form of aid becomes a part of everyday activities, it loses its importance. The idea is to restrict development services only for the critical situations like natural disasters or economic scarcity. This is how, the school subscribes that, significance of development aid into their life would be recognized by the poor people.

**'Can do something only when I feel to do, and by myself'**

This particular line of attitude is grounded on self-confidence and a sense of independence. Referring to *zakat* or this kind of community works, some argue that well-off people are well aware of the condition of the poor people. And also they are willing to support them as situations allow. They do not need to get learnt of the charity works from any external force, nor do they lack of proper knowledge of social development. Though only a very few, these people have shown a strong conviction about what they feel as duties. Helping someone is a personal matter they maintain. They find no reason to be a part of development works, as they have their distinct reasons to support a poor person or family.

**'Poor people move away'**

This position is complementary to that where poor people are seen as idle or less challenging. Mainly ultra-poor people are referred in this proposition. Addressing the massive migration to the metropolises, they mainly criticize the tendency of the poor people. They feel it as a weak behavioral pattern to combat the situation in a rural setting. According to them, metropolis chain provides them with a vast offer of manual jobs and they just become provoked by this.

Regardless of the real situation in a metropolis, this view grounded on a general allegation against the ultra-poor people in particular of lacking in loyalty to the villages.

#### Perceptions and Attitudes in Brief

---

- Poor people are idle
  - Their nature is to remain unproductive
  - They are non-cooperative and jealous
  - NGOs are making them more arrogant and ignorant
  - The poor people are vulnerable and weak
  - They are hardworking and deprived
  - No need to further pro-poor development programs
  - More pro-poor programs are needed and could be more efficiently done
  - Nothing is being done for the poor, all are being eaten
  - There must be some ways but the elites don't know that
  - The poor should be supported only in a hard situation
  - Can do something only when elite people feel to do, and by themselves
  - Poor people move away
-

**Preference and Reluctance  
Sectors they are Interested in Assisting, Sectors they are Not**

Elite people have their specific interests to get involved with the ultra-poor people for their betterment. The research findings here are most consistent in two teams' documents. Mentioned sectors have no discontinuity with what the priorities set by the NGOs. The sectors being addressed for years by the development agencies were referred once again by the elite people as to be their preferences. But also they exclude some sectors NGOs are promoting frequently. Actually, they expressed unwillingness to some areas that have been the intervening areas of NGOs. Some of the preferences are marked as their priority to initiate an effort. Some preferences are simply a conviction to existing modes of development services to the poor, and are not a point of initiatives from their end.

Preferred sectors are:

- Education
- Housing and shelter
- Helping the destitute
- Small income generating projects
- Loans

Taboo sectors are:

- Family matters
- Drug addiction
- Gender equity
- Providing land to the landless
- Large-scale financial project
- Stop *mahajani* business
- Developing communication system
- Creating market opportunity

It is not so easy to get a proper sense of the priorities of the elite people. For example, preferred sectors like 'small income generating projects' and 'loans' are not the areas they really want them to get involved personally. Rather it is their approval to the initiatives taken by other party. It should be mentioned that micro-credit program is appeared to be very popular, of course not homogeneously, and specially by the urban elites. But they are not going to take a part in it. Small-scale income projects are also a point of reference where they expect other, hence BRAC in particular, to initiate the ventures. Other sectors like

education or housing are the ones already the major areas of NGO activities. Moreover, GSCs have their systematically designed program to run housing support for the ultra-poor. The rural elite people, being the secondary stakeholder, are the major actors to substantiate the project. They are providing land, whatsoever, to the ultra-poor under supervision of a GSC or trust.

Among the taboo sectors there are a lot of areas NGOs have specific interest to get involved. But the crucial one is 'large-scale financial project'. Although some the elites mentioned that BRAC or some other agency could initiate large-scale farms, but they expressed strong reservation from their end to take any part of this. Some of the taboo sectors do have moral implications. The elite people do not want to be a part of familial crises or gender equity. Drug addiction was amazing reference, because no one actually referred a case where they found an ultra-poor person were addicted.

Both the research teams came to some points they share about the field situations. The point of references in their common understanding lie in the definitional aspects, influence of development discourses and jargons, importance of local-urban-national drift of the elite people, impact of possible large scale farms etc. Similarity of the insight, from two different teams worked with completely different research strategies, has an interesting point to talk about. It is about an overall perception derived from a team-ship.

It should also be noted that the mode of field materials collected by two teams differ to a degree. Also they have come with different recommendations at the end. With an initial look, these could be seen as an obvious discontinuity. But with a further scrutiny the differences could be comprehensible in terms of a social process. Team I suggested something more long-term and embedded into a set of social processes. Whereas, team II suggested something more pragmatic in terms of tangible development actions.

#### Broadening Operational Definitions

Since GSCs were a point of reference in the literature BRAC produced, the suggestion is to broaden, and specify at the same time, its definition. It seems to be necessary because of the fact that local people, particularly the elite ones, seriously care for what is being said in development arena. The current definition operates in a certain domain of redefined villages and is dependent on the program areas and program personnel. A broader definition, which would include a range of elite persons from villages, and from a more urban locales as well, and campaigning for that could open up an avenue for more influential ones to come into.

#### Promoting Specific Terminology

Considering the specific nature of contemporary development discourses, a further recommendation is to promote some specific terminology to encompass a range of elite people. To illustrate the idea it should be mentioned that terms like *shomaj sheba* [charity works for the community] was found to be very much powerful among the well-off people. There could be deliberate attempts to launch these sorts of terms in designing some works for the ultra-poor. The suggestion, in brief, is to incorporate concepts like *sheba* in the formal name of a body.

### **Involving District Level Elite People**

Another suggestion is to involve district level elites. In essence, the idea is to take seriously the rural-urban drift among the elite population. Since last century, district boundary has been a serious point of reference to form many social organizations. Considering its importance in constituting identity, it is recommendable to involve district level elite persons in formal bodies. In brief, the suggestion is to launch committees like GSC with a significant portion of the members from district towns.

### **Initiating Income Generating Programs with Elites as Stakeholders**

Elites are not, usually, the stakeholders of the income generating programs taken by the NGOs. One suggestion is to take elite people as partners of these programs. There is a space to explore this a little more. Some NGOs, including BRAC, have their own products to sell into the local people, particularly the agronomic products. Elite people could be part of this process given the present aims and structure of the venture. It could well be a route to lessen a local pressure from this group of people.

### **Exploring Large-scale Farms as Joint-venture with Elite People**

Large-scale farms are a risky option and not a preferred one by the development agencies. Yet, in regards to some of the remarks by the elite people about the necessity of big farms, an exploration in this line is recommendable. It should be noted that the field covered by this research experienced a major success by a large [multinational] business farm in tobacco industry. The farm made its own labor chain still prominent to comprehend situations in the region of north Bengal.

Some specific pragmatic suggestions are made from the other part of the study team [team II]. Those are:

- To establish small cottage industries since the region has a reputation for bamboo and cane.
- To encourage people farming more than one crop a year.
- Collecting the zakat and fetra in a community fund and then distribute the amount for promoting small business ventures for the ultra-poor.
- Collecting local aids, and then establishing factories like sandal, garments etc.
- To establish cold storage for potato preservation since Nilphamari has a huge potato production.
- To establish milk processing centers in Kurigram and then marketing packaged milk.



- To ensure care for the good species of poultry and dairy animals, marketing of the meat products.
- To establish rice-processing mill where women would find jobs.
- To establish jute based small industries.
- To establish cement factory in Fulbari, Kurigram since raw materials from India would be cheaper in this area.
- To ensure a fair wage policy.
- To ensure marketing of the local products.
- To ensure monitoring if the credit is being utilized properly.

It is understandable that recommendations are made on the comments found from the elite people's discussion. Therefore, these are largely a reflection of their perceptions. Further scrutiny and discussions are necessary at policy makers' end to critically foresee the possibilities of new ventures.

The elite people are not, in general, willing to have a regular social bondage with the ultra-poor people. Either they are ignorant of, or reluctant to the situations of the ultra-poor. Socially they do maintain a huge distance. Only exception is the rural landowners and the persons in the GSCs. We had a feeling that some of them were talking on the issue just because they were asked for. So, in a number of cases the views they expressed were to some extent on extempore basis. But, it is understandable that there are some specific areas where they do not have any conflict of interests and could be explored. The development programs generally are accepted among the elite people. Therefore, the principal mode of allowing some space for the poor was revealed as a conviction to the development agencies. This should be the referent point of taking any initiatives from BRAC's point of view.

47 28



## Bibliography

A Concept paper on Gram Shahayak Committee, BRAC, 2003

Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction. Targeting the Ultrapoor - Targeting Social Constraints [Poverty Programme Proposal: Volume 1 and 2], BRAC, Dhaka, Bangladesh, March 2001

Rahman, Hossain Zillur, Re-Thinking Local Governance Towards a Livelihoods Focus [PPRC Policy Papers], Power and Participatory Research Centre, Dhaka, Bangladesh, March 2001

Blair, Harry, "Civil society and pro-poor initiatives at the local level in Bangladesh: Finding a workable strategy," [DRAFT Paper], Political Science Department, Yale University, USA, February 2003

Hossain, Naomi Therese, Elites and Poverty in Bangladesh, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sussex, UK, January 2003

Scott, James, *Weapons of the Weak. Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Princeton University Press, 1983

White, Sarah C, *Arguing With The Crocodile. Gender and Class in Bangladesh*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1991