

Threats and Opportunities of Globalization for Rural Development: Bangladesh Perspectives

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Abstract

In a globalized world dynamics of rural development in Bangladesh has changed immensely. This article focuses on three major impacts of globalization on rural development. In responding to the research questions that how globalization helped damage environment, what impact it made on poverty and women in Bangladesh, the author wrote this paper using mixed methods. From content analysis it was observed that globalization caused massive damage to environment such as land degradation; deforestation; soil erosion, loss of soil fertility by toxification and salinity; water logging; destruction of coral reefs, mangroves, fisheries; loss of bio-diversity and ecosystem; pollution of air and water bodies etc. Findings relating to impact of globalization on poverty unearthed the fact that exponential increases of rice production and wages of labour employed in agriculture have contributed to reduction of rural poverty in Bangladesh. The increase of agricultural growth was the end result of massive privatization of agricultural inputs in Bangladesh that in fact helped the farmers to adopt modern agricultural practices such as use of HYV, agrochemicals, pesticides, fertilizers. Constant growth with huge remittance earning also helped reducing poverty. In tandem with reducing poverty, globalization has increased income inequality in Bangladesh.

Lastly, from both content analysis and case studies, it was found that globalization has created employment opportunities of women in the export

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oriented garments industries in the export processing zones of Bangladesh. These poverty stricken rural women were migrated to capital city for work but they were exploited by the foreign investors by providing a low salary employing them in excessive hours for ensuring their optimum production. The article concludes that government should immediately enact laws so that without establishing treatment plants, nobody is allowed to set up industry in Bangladesh for the greater interest of the future generation.

Government should also create more employment opportunities in order to reduce income inequality. In order to reduce exploitation of women, government should fix minimum wage and working hours; and should help promote some basic amenities for the women workers working in foreign companies. In a globalized world, Bangladesh has no choice but to be integrated with the global economic system. Hence, the best way to deal with globalization is to coexist with it so that Bangladesh can solve its problems utilizing mutual cooperation and collaboration at regional and global levels.

Keywords: Impact of globalization, environment, poverty, women in rural development, Bangladesh

ภาวะคุกคาม และโอกาสของโลกาภิวัตน์ต่อการพัฒนาชนบทในประเทศไทย

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บทคัดย่อ

ในโลกยุคโลกาภิวัตน์ พลวัตของการพัฒนาชนบทในประเทศไทยบังคลาเทศมีการเปลี่ยนแปลงเป็นอย่างมาก บทความนิ่งศึกษาผลกระทบหลักสามประการของโลกาภิวัตน์ต่อการพัฒนาชนบท ผู้เขียนใช้วิธีการศึกษาแบบผสมผสานเพื่อตอบคำถามการวิจัยที่ว่าโลกาภิวัตน์มีส่วนทำลายสิ่งแวดล้อมอย่างไร และผลกระทบต่อความยากจน และต่อผู้หญิงในประเทศไทย บังคลาเทศ จากการวิเคราะห์เชิงเนื้อหา พบว่า โลกาภิวัตน์เป็นสาเหตุที่ก่อให้เกิดการทำลายสิ่งแวดล้อมเป็นอย่างมาก อาทิ ความเสื่อมโรมของที่ดิน การทำลายป่า การกัดเซาะหน้าดิน การสูญเสียความอุดมสมบูรณ์ของดินโดยมีการปนเปื้อนสารพิษและความเค็มของดิน น้ำขัง การทำลายแนวปะการัง ต้นโกกกา และประมง รวมถึงการสูญเสียความหลากหลายทางชีวภาพ และระบบนิเวศ เกิดมลพิษทางน้ำและอากาศ เป็นต้น ผลการศึกษาที่เกี่ยวข้องกับผลกระทบของโลกาภิวัตน์ต่อความยากจน พบว่า การขยายตัวแบบก้าวกระโดดของการผลิตข้าวและค่าจ้างแรงงานในภาคเกษตรมีส่วนช่วยลดความยากจนในเขตชนบทของบังคลาเทศ ซึ่งการเติบโตของภาคการเกษตรก่อให้เกิดการปฏิรูปการผลิตข้าวใหญ่ เกษตรกรรมมีการปรับใช้แนวทางที่ทันสมัยในการเพาะปลูก เช่น การใช้พันธุ์พืชที่ให้ผลผลิตสูง การเพาะปลูกโดยใช้สารเคมี ยาฆ่าแมลง และปุ๋ย เป็นต้น การเติบโตอย่างต่อเนื่องนักวิชาการส่งเสริมรายได้ช่วยให้ลดความยากจน แต่ผลที่ตามมาควบคู่ไปกับการลดปัญหาความยากจนคือโลกาภิวัตน์กลับเพิ่มความไม่เป็นธรรมในบังคลาเทศ

ผลการศึกษาประการสุดท้าย จากการวิเคราะห์เชิงเนื้อหาและกรณีศึกษา พบว่า โลกาภิวัตน์ช่วยสร้างโอกาสในการจ้างงานแก่ผู้หญิงในอุตสาหกรรมเสื้อผ้าในเขตอุตสาหกรรมเพื่อการส่งออกของบังคลาเทศ ความยากจนทำให้ผู้หญิงในชนบทพอยพเข้ามารаботาในเมืองหลวง แต่กลับถูกแสวงหาประโยชน์โดยไม่ถูกต้องจากนักลงทุนต่างชาติโดยการให้เงินเดือนที่ต่ำ การใช้แรงงานเกินชั่วโมงเพื่อสร้างการผลิตสูงสุด บทความนี้ได้สรุปไว้ว่ารัฐบาลควรออกกฎหมายอย่างเร่งด่วนเพื่อไม่ให้มีการจัดตั้งโรงงานที่ปราศจากการกำกับดูแล ไม่ยอมให้มีการจัดตั้งอุตสาหกรรมในบังคลาเทศเพื่อแสวงหาผลประโยชน์เกินครัวเรือนในยุคต่อๆ ไป

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รัฐบาลควรสร้างโอกาสในการจ้างงานให้มากขึ้นเพื่อลดความไม่เสมอภาคทางรายได้ นอกเหนือจากนี้เพื่อลดการห้ามอยู่ในเมืองต้องจากผู้หญิงรัฐบาลควรกำหนดค่าจ้างขั้นต่ำ และจำนวนชั่วโมงในการทำงาน รวมทั้งช่วยสนับสนุนสิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกขั้นพื้นฐานสำหรับ แรงงานหญิงในบรรษัทข้ามชาติ ในโลกยุคโลกาภิวัตน์ บังคคลาเทศไม่มีทางเลือกอื่นใดนอกจาก ที่จะต้องบูรณาการเข้ากับระบบเศรษฐกิจโลก ดังนั้น วิธีที่ดีที่สุดที่จะรับมือกับโลกาภิวัตน์คือ การอยู่ร่วมกันอันจะทำให้บังคคลาเทศสามารถแก้ปัญหาของตนเองโดยการใช้ประโยชน์จากการ ทำงานร่วมกันและความร่วมมือทั้งในระดับภูมิภาคและระดับโลก

คำสำคัญ: ผลกระทบของโลกรีวัฒน์ สิงแวดล้อม ความยากจน ผู้หญิง การพัฒนาชนบทในประเทศไทย

1. Introduction

Globalization is now generally accepted as an irresistible force affecting every aspect of human life in today's world. Unobstructed trade of goods and services, and prodigious development of information and communications technologies (ITCs) and socio-cultural integration across the globe appears to be a major consequence of globalization. *Ipsso facto* there is little scope to escape from such a reality. Globalization has both positive and negative consequences and ramifications. Likewise, it brings opportunities and poses threats to both rural and urban life. Free trade, privatization and market forces are increasingly putting the rural economy at stake. In order to combat the situation, the threats have to be dealt with and opportunities grasped. The aggressive advancement of globalization coupled with the market economy has been persistently changing the old concepts, practices and systems of rural development, especially in the developing countries. Against such a backdrop, this article will examine the impact of globalization on rural life in Bangladesh.

2. Methods and Materials

Research Questions

This article endeavors to answer the following questions: How has globalization resulted in environmental degradation in Bangladesh? What impact has globalization had on poverty? How has it affected women's lives in Bangladesh?

Research Methods

A mixed method research approach is employed, that is, "research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry" (Tashakkori & Cresswell, 2007: 4; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003: 711). In the last three decades, mixed method research has gained wide acceptance by academics, given that the use of only one method can never fully describe all aspects of a phenomenon.

Sources of Data

Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. To supplement quantitative data from secondary sources, three in-depth evidence-based case studies were added to illustrate the impact of globalization on the environment, poverty and women.

3. Conceptual Underpinnings of Globalization and Rural Development

In this section, the concepts and dynamics of globalization and rural development are discussed briefly. In an age of globalization, the traditional concept and role of rural development has changed.

3.1 Concepts and Issues of Globalization

Globalization is a crosscutting issue in the firmament of today's academic discourse. Globalization connotes free flows of goods, services, capital, ideas, information and people. Rapid globalization has narrowed distance among the world's population. As the political economist, Robert J. Samuelson (2012) observes, "(G)lobalization is a double-edged sword: A powerful vehicle that raises economic growth, spreads new technology and increases living standards in rich and poor countries alike but also an immensely controversial process that assaults national sovereignty, erodes local culture and tradition, and threatens economic and social stability." Globalization is a highly contested, complex, multidisciplinary discourse. No single definition can tap its broader meaning, implications and ramifications. According to Stiglitz (2002) globalization means, "the removal of barriers to free trade and the closer integration of national economies." Globalization means worldwide interpenetration and interdependence of all sectors-economic, political, social, cultural, and military (Barakat, 2007). Globalization is perhaps the most profound source of international transformation since the industrial revolution.

Globalization is an institutional process that began in 1986 through the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations and continued with the creation in 1995 of

the World Trade Organization (WTO), an international organization designed to enforce the rules of international trade. Globalization has become a buzzword among development thinkers, but most definitions miss the point that capitalism is the force currently driving globalization. Globalization is a phenomenon produced by historical changes within a broader framework of continuity. The history of globalization has passed through five different phases: mercantilism (1350-1650); colonialism (1650-1830); imperialism (1830-1945); neo-colonialism (1945-1985); and globalization (1985-present).

Globalization involves costs, risks, challenges, conflicts, loss and potential benefits. Some scholars denote it as “globaphile” (pro-globalization), meaning that it is pro-poor, while others view it as “globaphobe” (anti-globalization), meaning that free trade is inherently bad for poor states. There are supporters and critics of globalization. Supporters equate globalization positively with openness, cosmopolitanism and integration, whereas critics equate it with Western imperialism, corporate domination and rampant consumerism.

In a globalized world the integration of global political, cultural, social norms, intensification of activities, and interconnectedness results in a concept akin to a “shrinking globe”. Kegley (2004: 267) referred to globalization “as short-hand for a cluster of interconnectedness phenomena that help transforming world politics.” The most common notion in globalization is internationalization, which describes the increase in transaction flows, investments and capital among states. The internationalization process has facilitated and is shaped by interstate agreements on trade, investment and capital, as well as by domestic politics permitting the private sector to transact abroad (Wood, 2008: 252). From this perspective, Scholte (2000: 15) views “global” as simply another adjective to describe cross-border relations among actors, while Annan (2000) adds that the adjective “global” refers less to a place than to a space defined by electronic flows and a state of mind. Internationalization includes movements between people, and messages and ideas shared among different states. Globalization refers to a process by which economies of the world become increasingly

integrated through the global economy and policymaking. It also refers to an emerging “global culture” in which people often consume similar goods and services across countries and use a common language of business, such as English, thereby facilitating economic integration (Todaro & Smith, 2006).

In short, globalization is a continuous process of internationalization of capital accumulation. There are some guiding forces of globalization that encompass key ideas, issues and concepts such as liberal democracy, freedom, individualism, free enterprise and pluralism, which are indistinguishable from the globalization process. Globalization can be viewed as homogenization versus heterogenization (or unification versus fragmentation) and is linked to discussions on modernization and development (Robertson, 1992; Featherstone, 1995; Hall, 1997). Globalization can be viewed as another term for Western colonialism and a buzzword to denote the latest phase of capitalism. Economists consider globalization as a step towards a fully integrated world market. Political scientists consider globalization as the decline of territorial sovereignty and rise of non-government power players. The business school defines the term to mean a borderless world. In this article, globalization refers to free trade, open market economy, privatization and interconnectedness of the Bangladesh economy with global economic systems.

3.2 Concept and Issues of Rural Development

Rural development (RD) is a multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary concept, which includes economics, political science, public administration, public health, business management, cooperative credit, community operation and other fields (Mashreque & Nasrullah, 2005:1). The World Bank (as cited in Obaidullah, 1995) defines RD as a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of specific groups of people, i.e. marginal farmers, landless peasants, share-croppers, tenants, small traders, etc., who seek to earn their livelihood in rural areas. RD means raising productivity and real income of rural families by increasing employment opportunities in farm and non-farm activities, thereby raising their physical and socio-cultural wellbeing (Sen, 1996). It encompasses

a wide range of developmental activities involving productive sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, livestock, small industries, infrastructural development (e.g. irrigation, roads, electricity), social welfare (e.g. health, nutrition, education) and support for productive activities such as research, extension, credit, processing and marketing. Thus, rural development presents government with complex problems of management of numerous public services and non-governmental organization (NGO) efforts.

RD means creation of those values, socio-economic systems, institutions and incentives which will provide people greater meaning and purpose to life and will assure reasonable satisfaction of basic, physiological, psychological and aesthetic needs to members of rural society (Ahmed, 1983). Very often little distinction is made between national development strategy and RD policy in political discussions, planning exercises and academic discourses. According to Julias Nyerere (1991: 3), President of Tanzania, “a policy of RD is a policy for national development.” RD as a strategy for national development is necessary for countries having a sizeable rural sector (Todaro, 1991). RD connotes the idea of development which implies induced quantitative and qualitative changes in a socially desirable direction (Faizullah, 1981). It means improvement of living standards of rural people. It involves change in agricultural and industrial productivity of the rural sector, changes in health, education and communication levels, changes in attitudes of rural people towards better thinking and better living. It includes technical changes and innovation for modernizing farm structures to meet rising demands for food, appropriate government economic policies for creating an effective support system and supportive social institutions to improve living in rural environments (Assaduzzaman, 1981). RD creates markets and food supply to support a country’s industrialization processes (Abdullah, 1979).

4. Changed Perspectives of Rural Development in Bangladesh

The history of RD is rich in Bangladesh. The journey of conventional RD started on the subcontinent with the Village Agricultural and Industrial Development (V-AID) program, which was basically a community development

program (CDP). It was started simultaneously in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and many other developing countries of the world, under different names and programs. These CDPs were sponsored by the United States under a food assistance development program (PL-480) with a view to counter revolutionary tendencies in Third World countries.

With the advent of globalization, privatization, market economy and intervention of NGOs in the early 1980s, state-fostered RD underwent massive changes with multiple players and actors. In this changed context, government line agencies were deemed inefficient, technically incompetent, understaffed and philosophically conservative for implementing RD. It was recognized that NGOs and community-based organizations have a significant role to play in improving service delivery and providing improved mechanisms for targeting disadvantaged groups in RD. The following figure shows today's RD actors in Bangladesh.

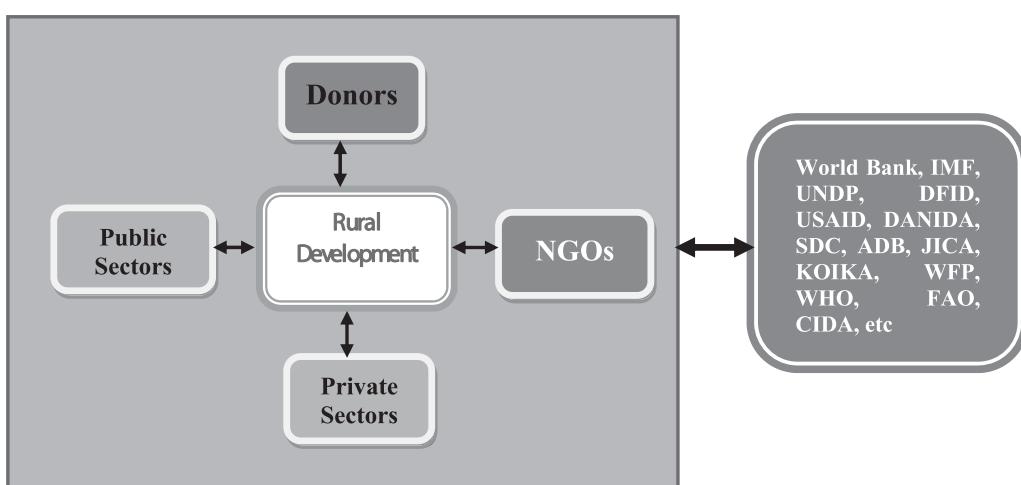


Figure 1. Major Players in Rural Development

Source: Prepared by the author, 2012

5. Globalization: Comparative Scenarios of South Asia and Bangladesh

In the 1980s and during 1990-2010, the average annual growth rate of real gross domestic product (GDP) in South Asia was, respectively, 5.6 percent and 5.5 percent. In spite of moderate economic growth, however, South Asia continues

to be one of the world's poorest regions with a high prevalence of poverty. Table 1 shows that Sub-Saharan Africa is the poorest region in the world, followed by South Asia.

Table 1. Poverty Situation in Various World Regions

Region	% Poor					
	\$ 2 a Day Poverty Line			\$ 1 a Day Poverty Line		
	1981	1990	2001	1981	1990	2001
East Asia & Pacific	84.6	69.6	46.4	56.7	29.5	14.3
Europe & Central Asia	4.7	4.5	19.1	0.8	0.5	3.5
Latin America & Caribbean	27.4	29.0	25.2	10.1	11.6	9.9
Middle East & North Africa	28.9	21.4	23.2	5.1	2.3	2.4
South Asia	89.1	85.5	77.7	51.5	41.3	31.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	73.3	75.0	76.2	41.6	44.5	46.4
High income countries	0	0	0	0	0	0
World	54.3	50.4	44.3	32.6	23.2	17.7

Sources: The New Economic Foundation, January 2006, World Bank's World Development Indicators Online and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook Database, April 2012.

Among South Asian countries, India has the best economic performance. Bangladesh demonstrates macro-economic stability with average growth of 6 percent for the last several decades. The South Asian countries show little variation with regard to income share of the poorest 20 percent, as well as of the richest 20 percent (see Table 2).

Table 2. Economic Profiles of the South Asian Countries in 2010

Countries	Population (Million)	Area (Sq. Km)	GDP Growth Rate	Life Expectancy	GNI based on PPP Per Capita	Income Share (%)	
						Poorest 20%	Richest 20%
Afghanistan	28.40	647,500	8.9	48.0	800	9.40	39.00
Bangladesh	160.00	147,570	6.5	63.0	1998	9.05	41.35
Bhutan	.70	38,816	6.8	63.2	3330	-	-
India	1191.50	3,287,240	8.3	64.0	3262	8.89	41.63
Maldives	.39	298	8.0	68.0	7640	-	-
Nepal	29.46	147,181	3.5	59.9	1471	7.60	44.80
Pakistan	171.44	796,095	3.4	61.0	2567	8.75	42.29
Sri Lanka	20.24	65,610	6.9	72.6	4145	8.02	42.80

Sources: The New Economic Foundation, January 2006, World Bank's World Development Indicators Online and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook Database, April 2012.

Table 3. Remittance Earnings by South Asian Countries (\$ Millions)

Countries	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
South Asia THIS IS NOT A COUNTRY	17198	19980	23015	31575	30445	35118
India	13106	15856	16838	22162	20844	24276
Nepal	-	-	-	700	794	908
Pakistan	983	1087	2389	4237	3871	4168
Sri Lanka	1160	1155	1287	1414	1564	1918
Bangladesh in the recent past	1949	1882	2501	3062	3372	3848
Bangladesh in the current times	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	4802	5978	7915	9689	10987	11775

Source: Prepared by the author using World Bank data, 2012.

In the recent times Bangladesh remittance earnings have been continuously increasing, which is one of the major contributory factors to reducing poverty (Table 3). In recent times employment generation among female workers, almost exclusively in the garment industries, has increased tremendously. Among the two million garment workers, 75 percent are women. This surely has a immense positive socio-economic effect, which can be termed a "Silent Revolution". However, this industrial development and export performance has both negative and positive consequences for Bangladeshi society as a whole, and it also has ramifications for rural Bangladesh in particular, which will be discussed in the following sections. Table 4 indicates that Bangladesh is becoming increasingly integrated with the globalized economy.

Table 4. Extent of Globalization's Penetration into the Bangladesh Economy
(Million US Dollar)

Item	1981	1991	2001	2003
1. Exports	724.9	1718.0	6008.0	6548.4
Primary Goods (%)	35.0%	17.8%	7.5%	7.1%
Industrial Goods (%)	65.0%	82.2%	92.5%	92.9%
2. Imports	1954.1	3472.0	9362.9	9141.3
3. Remittances	379.0	764.0	1882.1	3062.0
4. ODA	1146.0	1732.0	1588.0	1442.0
5. FDI	n/a	23.5	222.3	96.2
Total	4204.0	7709.5	19063.3	20289.9
GDP	19811.6	30974.8	47825.8	51898.1
Extent of Globalization (%)	21.2%	24.9%	39.9%	39.1%

Source: Rahman, 2004. (Based on CPD-IRBD Database, 2003).

6. Impact of Globalization on Rural Development in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's integration with the global economy has spawned both positive and negative ramifications for RD. Global pressures are increasingly changing the character of states and nature of RD, local governance and institutions. This article examines the impact of globalization on three major aspects of RD in Bangladesh. First, the researcher examines the huge environmental damage caused by rapid industrialization. After that, the impact of globalization on poverty is discussed. Finally, the impact of globalization on women is portrayed.

6.1 Impact of Globalization on the Environment

Like many countries Bangladesh has encountered numerous environmental problems, some of which are global, some regional and some local, but all more or less emanate from socio-economic and politico-cultural integration with the globalization process, trade openness and privatization of Bangladeshi society, which basically started during the early 1990s. The impact of environmental damage, its causes and effects are discussed in detail below.

As an effect of globalization and rapid industrialization, deforestation in the Asia-Pacific region has emerged as a growing menace and potential threat not only to the rural population but also to the ecology, bio-diversity and climate (Waliullah, 1996, cited in Quddus et. al., 1996: 89). The Bangladesh scenario is no exception. Felling of trees for timber and fuel and encroachment on forested

areas has reduced total reserve forest area in Bangladesh by 50 percent in the last 20 years, affect topsoil and causing land erosion (GOB, 1995: 13-14; UNEP, 2001). ESCAP/UNDP (1990: 3) identifies that land degradation, deforestation, soil erosion, soil fertility loss, water logging, salinity and toxification of soils, loss of biological diversity, damage and destruction of coral reefs, mangroves, fisheries extraction and associated problems relating to underground reservoirs of fresh water are critical environmental problems in the Asia and Pacific region. Degradation of soil quality in the floodplains is caused by improper use of fertilizers and pesticides to boost agricultural production. Dispersed industrial growth and gradual siltation in the flood plains deteriorate the quality of land and soil (UNEP, 2001: 2). Phenomenal growth in food production has occurred owing to adoption of high yielding varieties (HYV) that require intensive use of agro-chemicals, which has led to soil impoverishment and health hazards (GOB, 1995: 13-14). Untreated industrial pollution coupled with dumping of industrial waste into rivers, causing pollution of both terrestrial and aquatic environments, has restricted migration and spawning grounds, and has decreased flood plain availability for fish (Rahman, et. al., 1994: 9-20).

Owing to free trade in a globalized economy, shrimp exports have grown considerably, but shrimp farming and aquaculture have had to compete with agriculture and forestry (GOB, 1995:14). Shrimp culture has proved to have adversely affected the agricultural growth of those areas due to intrusion of saline water. During net fishing for shrimp fry from rivers, hundreds of other species of fish are destroyed for every fry caught Rahman, et. al., (1995, cited in Rahman, et. al., 2001: 104). Furthermore, growing urbanization has caused shrinking of wetlands and contamination from urban areas threaten aquatic resources. Unplanned urbanization by real estate companies and huge migration of the rural populace to urban areas as a result of wide-scale landlessness and lack of gainful employment opportunities have also caused environmental degradation. Rahman, et. al. (2001:21) found that among the rich flora and fauna and animal species, 50 vertebrates have been identified as nearly extinct and 33 are seriously

threatened; nearly 250 species of birds are in danger as the forests in which they live are rapidly being cleared. Due to loss of biodiversity emanating from globalization and rapid urbanization, these resources have become endangered.

Some environmental problems are common to both developed and developing countries, including depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, the greenhouse effect and acid rain. The ESCAP/UNDP (1990:3) report reveals major predicted implications of the greenhouse effect and rise in sea level for some regions of Asia and the Pacific including more frequent storms, floods, coastal erosion, negative effects on freshwater supply, changes in agriculture yields, loss of biodiversity and loss of entire low-lying islands. The deleterious effect of ozone layer depletion will cause damage to human health, i.e. increases in degenerative skin and eye disease (ESCAP/UNDP, 1990:5). As consequences of climate change, floods, cyclones and storm surges bring untold suffering to millions of people and result in human death tolls, loss of livestock, spread of diseases and hunger, damage to standing crops, physical, economic infrastructures, fish, shrimp ponds and hatcheries and significant destruction in the coastal areas of Bangladesh almost every year (UNEP, 2001: 6). Climate change and sea level rise will affect the whole of Bangladesh. Roughly 25 percent of mankind lives in the developed countries but they consume more than 80 percent of the resources. The global environment is now threatened due to this excessive consumption. The developed world is responsible for 87 percent of the eco-disaster. The share of the developing countries in this regard is only 13 percent (Rahman, 1998: 14). All these environmental disasters are basically the product of globalization.

Summary and Analysis

International trade and an open market economy have unleashed enormous impetus for developing ready made garments (RMGs) in the export processing zones (EPZ) of Bangladesh. The rapid but unplanned industrialization, developed without adequate treatment plants, has caused immense damage to the environment. Huge remittance earnings from the expatriate Bangladeshi labor force have increased purchasing power of their families. Instead of investing

surplus money gained from remittances in productive investments, most resources were employed in real estate sectors that facilitate illogical and rapid expansion of urbanization, which in turn caused damage to low-lying water bodies and affected riverine systems in Bangladesh. The major environmental hazards that have emanated as an aftermath of globalization are: frequent floods, cyclones, tidal bores, tornados, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, soil degradation, air pollution and water contamination. Rapid industrialization reduces arable land and causes environmental pollution. Lured by the multinational agro-vet and agro-chemicals companies, the poor have been tempted to use excess and unscientific insecticides/pesticides for crops and fisheries, destroying the ecosystem in Bangladesh. Indigenous and locally developed HYV varieties have become extinct as hybrid seeds have been imported from multinational agro-business companies and agro-product companies.

6.2 Impact of Globalization on Poverty

As long as Bangladesh is integrated with the world economic system, it has been observed that, due to globalization, poverty in rural areas has been reduced but at the same time globalization has intensified inequalities, which has resulted in less improvement and less well-being of the rural poor.

Osmani (2005) found that compared to the 1980s, the 1990s witnessed accelerated growth and faster reduction of poverty in Bangladesh but also saw widened income inequality. The poverty situation was somehow static, which was 52 percent in 1983-84, but poverty levels fell to 50 percent in 1991-92. Another study found that the poverty situation has shown improved trends, which was 58.8 percent in 1991/1992 and reduced by 49.8 percent in 2000 with an annual reduction rate of 1.8 percent (BBS, 2001; World Bank, 2002). Poverty trends continued and poverty levels were further reduced to 31.51 percent in 2010 (World Bank, 2012). In Bangladesh, both urban and rural areas enjoyed reduced poverty in the 1990s, but poverty reduction was observed mainly in rural areas. Urban poverty maintained a steady decline in the last two decades, falling from 41 percent in 1983-84 to 34 percent in 1991-92 and then further to

26 percent by 2000. By contrast, rural poverty changed very little in the 1980s and the proportion of people in poverty was 54 percent in 1983-84 and 53 percent in 1991-92. But by 2000, it had fallen to 44 percent. Moreover, poverty in both urban and rural areas declined by an impressive 19 percentage points in the last decade and a half (Word Bank, 2012). Thus, the accelerated rate of poverty reduction observed in the 1990s was essentially a rural phenomenon.

Table 5. Trends in Poverty (Percentages)

Indices of Poverty	1984/85	1988/89	1991/92	2000	2010
Rural	53.8	49.7	52.9	43.6	35.16
Urban	52.3	47.8	49.7	39.8	11.28
National	40.9	35.9	33.6	26.4	31.51

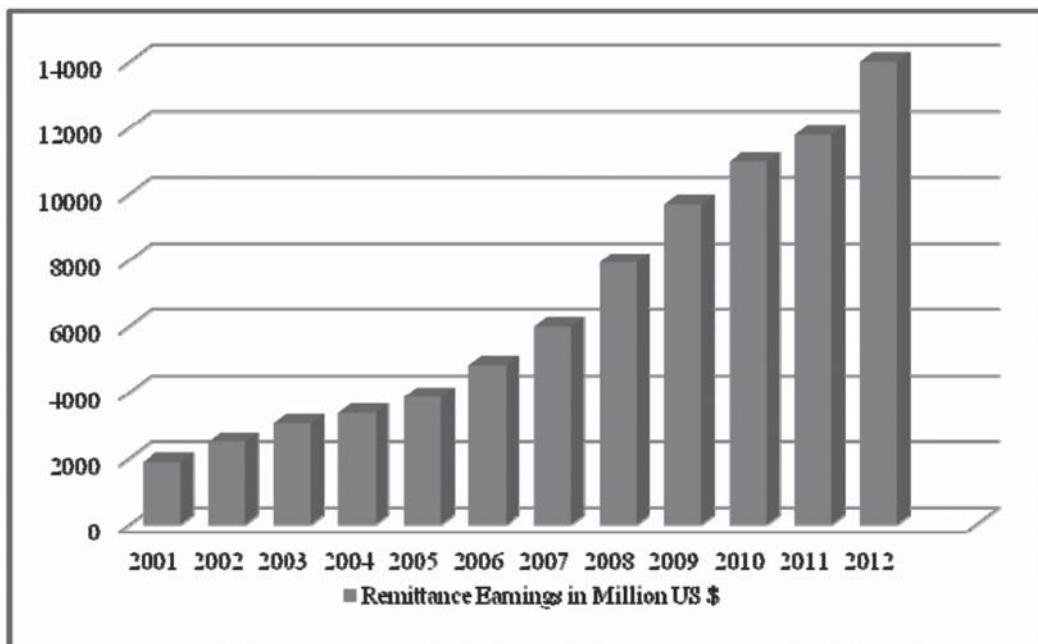
Source: Osmani, et. al., 2003 and the World Bank, 2012.

On the other hand, evidence shows that the negative consequence of globalization on poverty has enhanced income inequality. Nath and Al Mamun (2004) found that as an result of globalization, trade openness promoted investment but it did not enhanced distribution of income, rather it had augmented income inequality, especially for the rural poor. Dev et. al. (2008) also found that income inequality measured through the Gini Coefficient had increased from 0.432 in 1995/96 to 0.451 in 2000 and then increased further to 0.467 in 2005. In case of income of rural households, income inequality has increased from 0.385 in 1995/96 to 0.393 in 2000 and 0.428 in 2005.

Summary and Analysis

Myriad factors facilitated poverty reduction in Bangladesh. Firstly, a globalized labor market has helped Bangladeshi workers to enter into the global job market easily, which in turn helped massively increase remittances from emigrant Bangladeshi workers. This remittance earning helped rapid economic growth in Bangladesh. Evidence shows that in the last two decades since 1980, the volume of remittances sent by Bangladeshi workers has grown at the rate of 8.5 percent annually in real terms. By the end of the 1990s, the annual receipts amounted to roughly 30 percent of export earnings and over 4.0 percent of GDP.

Even recent remittance earnings also show the same trends (see Figure 2). The same case happened to the RMG sector as it also increased remittances earning by an average of 17 billion takas in 1980s and in the next decade it rose by nearly 50 billion takas. As a result of this accelerated growth, the size of remittance as a proportion of GDP went up from 2.5 percent in 1990-91 to 4.1 percent in 1999-2000.



Source: Prepared by the author using World Bank data, 2013.

Figure 2. Remittance Earnings in Bangladesh : 2001-2012 (in Million US \$)

The second factor behind accelerated growth was enhanced agricultural production, which registered the biggest jumps in rice production in the late 1980s. After hovering around a total of around 15 million metric tons throughout the 1980s, the production of rice jumped to 18 million in 1989-90 and stayed unchanged for most of the 1990s until it jumped again towards the end of the decade. This 20 percent jump in production of the biggest crop of Bangladeshi agriculture was a major source of enhanced demand stimulus for the rural non-farm sector. The reason behind increased agricultural production was liberalization of agricultural inputs, especially elimination of non-tariff barriers for importation of

cheap irrigation equipment, i.e. shallow tube-wells. Before liberalization, shallow tube-wells were distributed by the government at a subsidized price in order to promote irrigation, but it failed to satisfy demand properly. Liberalization helped reduce the market price of shallow tube-wells almost 40 percent, which was even below the subsidized price. This price fall, combined with relaxation of existing restrictions, resulted in an enormous expansion of irrigated area. Evidence shows that from 1986-1996, the total irrigated area jumped to an average of 3.5 million acres, an increase of nearly 50 percent. The expansion of irrigated areas brought about a correspondingly sharp increase in the use of fertilizer. The combined effect of expanded irrigation and enhanced use of fertilizer was reflected in discrete jumps in rice production during the late 1980s. Econometric evidence has confirmed the predominant role played by trade liberalization of irrigation equipment in boosting rice production in the late 1980s (Ahmed, 2001; Hossain, 1996). Ahmed (2001) has estimated that the net effect of liberalization amounted to some 38 percent of the incremental rice production between 1988-89 and 1996-97.

Thirdly, the increase in labor wages in the agricultural sector has helped reduce poverty in rural areas more than urban areas. The Household Expenditure Survey (BBS, 2001) showed that salaried employment in the rural non-farm sector was much more rewarding for the poor than any other mode of employment (Osmani et. al., 2003). Thus the relative expansion of larger non-farm enterprises, allowing for greater absorption of labor into salaried employment, has played a key role in reducing poverty in the 1990s. Underemployment has declined from 43 percent in 1990-91 to 35.3 percent in 1999-2000 (Salmon, 2002). At the same time it was found that the rate of unemployment increased among educated people (bachelor's degrees and above) but those with no education at all had an unemployment rate of only 1.4 percent (BBS, 2000). However, employment status has also improved, in the sense that the proportions of both self-employed and wage-workers have gone up relative to unpaid family workers (Salmon, 2002). Therefore, rural populations were not affected much by globalization current.

The adverse effect of globalization is that it has widened the income gap significantly in Bangladesh. Growth gained from remittances has had a negative impact upon the poor, although they have received a small portion of the resources through tickle down effects. But this extra flow of money into rural areas has marginalized the poor. In the market economy, these poor people could not invest in the agricultural sector; rather, they have become the victims of eternal drudgery and slavery as globalization has forced them to remain in the labor class. Some have migrated to cities and some have become low paid domestic workers. In summary, rapid expansion of RMGs, increased flow of remittances, a quantum jump in rice production in the late 1980s, and an increase of labor wages in the agricultural sector have contributed to national economic growth. But the negative feature of globalization lies with income equality, and increased remittances have also contributed negatively in widening income inequality.

6.3 Impact of Globalization on Women

To some extent globalization has improved the social and economic status of women in the developing world. The Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights (2003), in its film entitled “The Hidden Face of Globalization”, showed the cruel picture of globalization for women in Bangladesh. Women garment workers need to work long hours to support their families. Lengthy work hours and pressures to meet work quotas have caused nervous breakdowns. Workers in textile factories are exposed to dust and lint which cause lung disease. Electronic factory workers are exposed to carcinogenic chemicals as they are forced to handle dangerous materials without proper tools. Bangladeshi garment workers producing clothes for the American market work 20 hours in a 24-hour cycle, then take an hour's break and push on for another 16 to 18 hours. There are 1.8 million women garment workers in Bangladesh, 80 percent of them belong to the 6-25 year age group. The film also states that factory workers are rarely given breaks during the day and cannot afford to take sick days. This film reveals the grim picture of exploitation of women workers in Bangladesh which is necessarily a by-product of free trade and globalization.

Privatization of the health system in the developing countries propagated by the World Bank has seriously affected women's health care. Research shows that privatization as a condition of structural adjustments programs in the developing countries has greatly reduced government funded primary care, thus limiting access of healthcare to women (Desai, 2002; Elson, 1992). Another hidden impact of globalization is that some women are infected with HIV and AIDS by their repatriated husbands although in Bangladesh these cases are less reported due to social stigma attached to it.

In Bangladesh large numbers of women have become victims of environmental disasters which has also contributed to poverty augmentation for poor rural women. Deforestation and desertification caused by the increased demand for natural resources has created obstacles in the lives of women in developing nations. For women in the Third World, destruction of the environment means that women have to spend more time every day to gather wood for fuel, fodder for cattle, and fetch drinking water (Desai, 2002). Moghadam (1999, cited in Bacchus, 2005) found that globalization has enhanced demand for women workers as the corporations desire female labor for assembly production because women work in labor-intensive industries at wages lower than men accept and in conditions that unions may not permit. Globalization has reduced the ability of women in developing nations to find paid work that offers security and dignity (Desai, 2002). Although women's roles in the labor force have changed from traditional agricultural and domestic roles to manufacturing and assembly production, the overall effect of globalization has proven to be negative.

Summary and Analysis

Research findings reveal the fact that globalization has opened up new vistas for women's employment but at the same time it is evident that the work environment, work hours, remuneration paid to the workers and recreational facilities are inadequate. Unfortunately, women are the most common victims of corporate capitalism. Trade liberalization has helped to provide more employment for women in foreign countries, but the challenges are safety,

security and dignity. Due to privatization of health facilities propagated by the World Bank, poor women's access to health services has been thwarted.

7. Impact of Globalization on Rural Development: Empirical Evidence

How globalization and a free market economy have changed the dynamics and intricacies of rural development in today's Bangladesh is illustrated below through three case studies based on practical insights from the researcher's institutional and professional affiliation with a RD academy for almost two and a half decades.

Case Study 1: Sahnaz Begum in the Globalized Economy

Globalization manifests itself in unexpected ways. Five years ago, Sahnaz Begum left her village in south-east Bangladesh to find work in the capital city, Dhaka. Today, she lives in Ashulia, a sprawling slum on the Dhaka's northern outskirts, a place of relentless poverty. Water supply and sanitation are major problems, especially in the rainy season. Sahnaz rents a one-room home that is little more than a shack, made of a mud walls, wooden slats, and a plastic roof. But six days a week she enters a different world. Like most young women in Ashulia, Sahnaz works as a machinist in a garments factory. Located in an export-processing zone and owned by a South Korean company, the factory produces designer label shirts for a supply chain which leads to clients ranging from Pierre Cardin to Adidas. The labels on the shirts read "Made in Bangladesh" but the factory imports yarn from India, cloth from Taiwan and Korea, lining and packaging materials from China, and buttons from Indonesia. For her part in the operation, Sahnaz is paid \$1.50 for a ten-hour day. One piece of this garment is sold on the international market mainly in America at 100 to 200 US\$.

Analysis of Sahnaz's case represents how interconnected and interdependent we are now in a globalized world. This is the grim reality of globalization. In the context of free trade, open markets and a borderless world, international investors wish to maximize their comparative advantage. Due to the availability of cheap labor, the South Korean garment owner has invested in Bangladesh to

exploit its advantages. Sahnaz's case testifies to the fact that the South Korean firm is making a huge profit margin. But the owner of these foreign firms used to pay very low wage to those poverty stricken women garment workers, which represents the grim picture of transnational capital. Although Bangladeshi Sahnaz Begum has found a job here, she had no say about the profit they are making. Globalization thus helps rich countries more than poor countries.

Case Study 2: Shafiqul's Success Story through Privatization and NGO Intervention

Shafiqul Islam is the second son of Mir Mohammad Tayebuddin. He has three sons and lives in a joint family of 13 members in a remote village of Fulbaria Upazila¹ of Mymensingh District of Bangladesh. Recently Shafiqe attended a training program organized by an NGO named Social Association for Rural Advancement (SARA) where he received some practical knowledge of modern methods of fish culture in rice fields in January 2007. He learnt that rice-fish cultivation is more profitable, compared to cultivating only rice. Sharing this idea with his father and two brothers, he made a small ditch in a corner of a 22 decimal plot. Mamanur, Field Assistant at SARA, regularly visited his field to provide necessary counseling and technical assistance. Shafique and his brothers transplanted a high yielding rice variety. He collected papaya seedlings from a nursery and planted them on the dikes. He also planted some seeds of snake gourd, ridge gourd, bitter gourd and sweet gourd for intercropping. When the rice plants were about a month old, he stocked fingerlings of *rohu*², *katla*, common carp, silver carp and *shorputhi* in the rice field. Shafique and his family members started collecting leafy vegetables and gourd for household consumption within the third month of cultivation. They grew plenty of vegetables on the new dikes. Shafique's large family consumed much of the vegetables grown on the rice field dikes and also sold some vegetables in the market. After two months he

¹Upazila is an administrative unit at the sub-district level in Bangladesh. The present ruling party (2009-2014) formed an elected local government body at the Upazila level in 2009.

²Fishes in the italics are given local names only.

started selling green papaya. At the end they harvested 483 kg of paddy, which was four times higher than the previous years. They started harvesting fish from June 2007. Shafique and his family members were surprised at the large number of fish produced in their rice field. After five months, the size of the fish in the rice plot was larger than those grown in any of the neighboring ponds. Shafique's father told that they started consuming fish after two months of stocking. The total expense for rice field preparation, fertilizer, transplantation, fish stocking and vegetable cultivation was Tk.8,900 (115 US\$). But the gross income he made from selling of rice, vegetables and fish from the integrated aqua-agriculture was Tk.48,950 (631 US\$). Shafique made a net profit of Tk.40,050 (516 US\$) in 2007 from the rice-fish and dike intercropping.

Analysis of Shafiqul's success uncovers the fact that due to privatization of rural development and NGO intervention in Bangladesh villagers are receiving various services from NGOs. Villagers can utilize their entrepreneurial capacity, taking benefit of NGOs and privatization. In a globalized world people can benefit immensely from such non-state actors. People hardly bother with government services. In an era of well-connected networks, they are quite able to opt for the best option and gain benefit from it. In fact globalization has unleashed some potential impetus to the traditional village society of Bangladesh as well. By using mobile phones they are now receiving updates and required information from various sources taking comparative advantage of them. Privatization, NGO-ization, commercialization, openness, net-working and revolution of ICTs helped Shafiqul to become a successful entrepreneur.

Case Study 3: Sad Demise of Deedar Cooperative Society in Free Market Economy

In the realm of cooperative movement and community leadership the "Deedar Comprehensive Society" of Comilla played a vital role in RD. This is one of the glaring examples of a genuine community program on the sub-continent. In the year 1960, a suspended police constable named Md. Easin started forming a cooperative society organizing nine rickshaw pullers of Kashinathpur and

Balarampur villages. Villagers, composed of poor farmers, landless, unemployed youths and a few money lenders etc., were hard pressed by their eternal enemy i.e. poverty and other concomitant sufferings such as illiteracy, malnutrition, lack of necessary civic amenities. In such a context, Easin thought day after day how to save the poor villagers from their sufferings. One day he gathered a few poor rickshaw pullers and villagers in a meeting where Dr. Khan delivered a speech on the importance of cooperatives. Being encouraged by the utterance of the then founding director of BARD, Dr. Akhter Hameed Kahn, Easin made up his mind to form a cooperative society composed of nine rickshaw pullers who were employed in his own garage. On request from Easin these nine poor men started to save one *ana*³, the cost of one cup of tea, from their daily budget spent in Easin's grocery shop where he sold tea, pan⁴, and cigarettes along with other commodities. This was just the beginning of a successful community organization. Every week they sat together to count their total savings gathered from daily thrift saving and started thinking of few investment plans. Slowly, more villagers started to join the society. After some years their savings turned into huge amount to be invested in profitable investments. After that they invested money in purchasing rickshaws and gave them to some members following "higher purchase"⁵ method.

³One ana = 6 paisa. One paisa = 1/100 of a taka, that represents Bangladeshi currency. Ana was in practice as a unit of exchange in the early 1950s but it is non-existent now a days. For clear understanding of the readers please note that 1 US\$ = 77.63 Bangladeshi Taka (as on 23 April, 2014). The fraction has been transformed in full.

⁴A kind of leaf which is taken with betel-nut, sprinkle of lime and zarda (a kind of chewing tobacco flavored with spices). It is a popular habit to rural people in Bangladesh and few other South Asian countries.

⁵Hire purchase is the legal term for a contract, in which persons usually agree to pay for goods in parts or installments. For example, if the price of a rickshaw is 3000 taka but in higher purchase system the total price may be fixed at 5000 taka. Member can rent a rickshaw giving 1000 taka at a time and the rest of the amount he can pay at installments from his own earning. As soon as a member repays the whole amount the contact ends and that member can own the rickshaw for good.

Within a short span of time the society members started to harvest the benefits of a cooperative society. The society never turned back. It started to grow in a geometric way and due to huge demand its membership was expanded to include children, youth and women. With increased membership and saving, the society's investment plan was diversified. To make society self-reliant, the managing committee of the society developed some innovative, participatory and democratic modus operandi, which they promised to follow unequivocally. Thus villagers from different occupational groups such as farmers, day laborers, factory workers, rickshaw pullers, track and tractor drivers, mansons, carpenters, government employees, businessmen and school teachers started joining the society. To improve financial condition of the members, the society undertook various productive projects such as embroidery, sewing, poultry and livestock rearing, cow fattening, fisheries, vanki business⁶, fruits and vegetable cultivation in homesteads, stock and preservation of seeds, weaving fishing nets, petty business, various cottage industries, and savings and capital formation. Started with only nine anas capital in 20 years, the Dideer Society became owner of huge assets amounting to 10 crores⁷ taka. At the same time the society also owned huge moveable and immovable resources including 4 acres of arable land, a model high school, a primary school and a *madrasa*⁸.

Immediately after its phenomenal growth, as a successful cooperative society, Deedar started receiving many awards namely the Presidents Award in 1976, Best Cooperator Award in 1982 and the Magsaysay Award in community leadership in 1988. After receiving that international award there started a

⁶Vanki is a local term used by the Bangladeshi villagers to denote a special type of business, in which villagers used to buy raw and unprocessed paddy from the farmers and they process the paddy into rice by boiling, drying and finally preparing rice using mechanized rice mill. After having the final product, the villagers then sell the rice in the market with a high margin of profit. This whole process of this business is popularly known as *Vanki*.

⁷Crore is a unit of money which is popularly used in Bangladesh where one crore = 10 million tk.

⁸Madrasa is a religious school for the Muslim community.

skirmish between Easin and the members. Some members claimed that Easin should share his prize money with the members because it was the devoted members for whom he received the Magsaysay Award. Keeping this issue in mind members were bifurcated into two streams and after long hither and dither members were successful in receiving a share of the prize money, but this issue led to the disintegration of this very successful cooperative society. Easin was severely demoralized and gradually Deedar Samity turned into a fiasco. Now in a globalized world many of its income earning projects have already lost their potentiality in the community due to the open market and availability of better products. Villagers do not purchase fertilizers from the cooperative shop rather they purchase agricultural inputs at competitive market prices. Instead of solidarity and unity, individualism has become the common pattern of the villagers and nobody wants to remain in the cooperative organizations anymore. It is now all history like other successful cases in Bangladesh.

Analysis on the sad demise of Deedar Samity⁹ represents the grim picture of globalization and the free market. Primarily visionary leadership, democratic practices, shared values, trust and belongingness of the members played a crucial role in the success of Deedar Samity. But due to sudden onslaught of privatization, market forces and technological revolution arising out of the irresistible and draconian reality of globalization, such a community organization collapsed without notice. In an age of commercialization and globalization, nobody wishes to take the helm of social development unless some personal interests are involved. Thus owing to the dearth of benevolence and altruistic thinking, Dideer's efforts ultimately collapsed. Factionalism and personal interest hinders collective action. Any organization collapses when its members or stakeholders hanker after monetary gain and want to exploit petty group interests and start skirmishing for trifling matters that in turn help destroy team spirits, social solidarity, cohesiveness and thus factionalism turns into fiasco. Nowadays, cooperative and community organizations are infested with the problems of

⁹Samity is a Bengali word which stands for cooperative society.

regionalism, grouping, sub-grouping and factional feelings, which are playing a negative role in promotion of any collective action at the national and local level. All these negative elements of cultures for maximization of individual interest and consumerism are basically the end product of globalization, capitalism, free trade and openness.

Summary of the Findings of the Case Studies

The three case studies reveal that rural development in a globalized world has become more complex and dynamic. Rich and middle class rural persons have emerged as an entrepreneurial class, taking advantage of privatization and market mechanisms. Some villagers have involved themselves in self-employment in non-formal and off-farm rural businesses, which has further created growth and employment in rural society. Traditional cooperative organizations have faced serious challenges to encounter the irresistible forces of globalization and private capitalism.

8. Suggested Policy Interventions

In order to coexist with the changed perspectives of globalization it is imperative to suggest a few policy interventions to overcome the shocks and seize the benefits of globalization based on the above case studies and content analysis.

To sustain growth and development there is no way but to compromise with issues such as environmental degradation, equity and equality. Poverty is the number one problem of Bangladesh and to combat it, it is sagacious to promote industrialization and free trade through RMG exports and other productive sectors of the economy. Bangladesh should give top priority to sustainable development to address environmental degradation and therefore be able to continue the process of industrialization. Therefore, it is exigently essential to take necessary action for the industries which are creating environmental hazards for human, animal and aquatic life. In order to maintain bio-diversity and ensure sustainable development, legal provision should allow industrialization on condition that no industrial set up

can be authorized in Bangladesh without setting up treatment plants so that Bangladesh can protect her environment for future generations.

Rapid urbanization has caused huge losses of agricultural land, which is being done by the real estate companies. These are creating massive problems for the environment, human habitat and life. The real estate companies are mostly using low lying wetlands for building flats and apartments, which are basically responsible for the destruction of the ecosystem as these wetlands or water bodies are directly linked to the riverine system of Bangladesh. Rapid urbanization that results in loss of ecology and bio-diversity should be immediately stopped and therefore serious legal measures should be undertaken so that these real estate companies cannot destroy the environmental system of Bangladesh. Government can encourage the remittance earners to utilize their money in productive sectors and government can provide tax holidays for them so that they can generate employment in Bangladesh.

Farmers should be provided with innovative techniques and knowledge so that use of agro-chemicals and insecticides can be rationalized. Organic and integrated farming is an available alternative, which can be promoted by the agricultural extensions department. Without quarantine tests, HYV varieties should not be accepted, as they enhance the use of agro-chemicals and insecticides, the main cause of environmental damage in rural areas. Through use of agro-chemicals and insecticides, land degradation and loss of bio-diversity is occurring on a large scale and should be stopped with suitable measures from the government.

To save cooperative organizations from the shocks of privatization and globalization, loans for modernization, innovation and business diversification should be properly guided under the public initiatives so that members will no longer be marginalized or further pauperized. These cooperative organizations, especially those which are engaged in productive, financial

and commercial activities, should be equipped with modern technologies, and they should diversify their business into areas for which there is greater demand, in order to survive. To reduce poverty and minimize the migration of the rural poor, effective safety net measures should be implemented and existing safety net programs should be expanded. In order to deal with income inequality, effective measures to enhance employment opportunities for the poor should be undertaken through enhanced pro-poor public spending.

To minimize exploitation of women workers by foreign companies in the export processing zones, it is necessary to fix minimum wage and working hours. Necessary facilities and extra benefits for women workers, along with provisions for basic amenities, such as food subsidies, health care, day care centers, reasonable rest hours and recreational facilities should be made compulsory so that women can earn a reasonable wage with comfort and safety.

9. Conclusion

Based on the literature review and three case studies, it can be inferred that globalization has changed the reality of rural development in Bangladesh. In this changed context, the public sector should play an enabling role for rural development, taking cognizance of other actors such as donors, NGOs and the private sector. The conventional role of cooperative based rural development can no longer be the best alternative for ensuring rural development. Rather, the government can provide required know how, technology and updated knowledge to the farmers. Cooperative organizations and farmers should be made aware of the harmful impact of indiscriminate use of agro-chemicals and insecticides. Environmental degradation can be managed through undertaking effective precautionary measures by the state. Regional and global cooperation should be developed for the management of environmental problems. The researcher notes that globalization has created job opportunities for women in Bangladesh, but these women are exploited by foreign companies. Therefore, state intervention

is required to further the cause of women workers to obtain their due share from employers. Income inequality should be addressed through the creation of more employment and enlarging safety net measures. In the author's view, a unique feature of globalization is that it has had little impact on the economy of Bangladesh. Although the Bangladeshi economy is interconnected with the global economy with exports of RMG, shrimp and manpower, only low cost RMGs are exported to the US and European markets. The economy has enjoyed vibrant growth owing to huge remittances. Food security has more or less been ensured through using HYVs and modern technology. Therefore, Bangladesh need not fear shocks arising from globalization. This is evident from the global recession of 1995-2000 when most Southeast Asian countries were highly affected by the global economic downturn, whereas the Bangladesh economy was affected little. In the present geo-politico-economic context, it would be impossible for Bangladesh to avoid globalization by shutting down its borders and attempting to become self-sufficient. Economic growth is essential for development, which can be attained through trade liberalization, but that growth must also satisfy equity standards. Specific protection and special boosting mechanisms are necessary for Bangladesh to become mature to compete globally. Regional economic cooperation and local politico-economic treaties/conventions must be developed to reap the maximum benefits of globalization.

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