

Achieving Sustainable Social Safety Nets in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Government of Bangladesh has been distributing cash, food or both through different social safety net programs since the independence in 1971. This article is an attempt to discuss whether those safety net programs are achieving socio-economic sustainable development or not for the vulnerable people of the country. The study has been done based on the information gathered from secondary sources like articles of different scholars, government publications, and study reports of NGOs and so on. Most of the studies followed the quantitative methods for assessing successes and failures of the safety net programs. However, this article is dedicated to assess the current social security policies, to analyse the budget and performance of the social safety net programs, to find out the effectiveness safety net programs in reducing the poverty and ensuring social security for the vulnerable and poor people of Bangladesh and also to make suggestions for the successful implementation of the programs and sustainable policy design.

Keywords: Social protection, safety net program, inclusion/exclusion errors, means test and proxy means.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Statement of the problem

Over the last few decades, the concept and practice of Social Safety Nets (SSN) under social protection scheme has gained enormous popularity in policy level in order to address the poverty and vulnerability in developing countries and which has become an essential component of national development strategies (Barrientos and Hulme, 2008). Despite recent socio-economic progress, around 24.3 percent population of Bangladesh still live under the national poverty line². Moreover, vulnerability is increasing due to different types of risks such as individual or household affected by accidents; frictional unemployment, illness, economic disparity; impacts of climate change like river erosion, draughts, floods, cyclones etc.; breaking down of traditional joint family structure; lack of family and social supports etc. (Rahman and Choudhury, 2012). Like many other developing countries, the government of Bangladesh has been implementing a number of social safety net programs as the Constitution of the country make it obligatory for the as it mentioned that State shall provide public assistance in cases of undeserved want

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arising from poverty, unemployment, illness or disablement, or widowhood, or orphan hood or in old age, or in other such cases (Articles 15 [c]).

1.2 Significance of the study

In order to fulfil its commitment for ensuring the ever-increasing social security needs of the vulnerable population to cope up with poverty and vulnerability the government currently expending 13.54% of Budget and 2.44% of GDP in the FY 2017-18 for 145 social safety net programs implement by 23 ministries. However, the success and sustainability of these programs remain questionable as Masud-All-Kamal and Saha (2014) say that higher budget could not play significant role for eliminating the chronic poverty. The authors also state that the effectiveness of the programs are being challenged by issues such as administrative complications, high rates of leakage, mis-targeting of beneficiaries, corruption, manipulation of program funds, low accountability, weak governance, and elite and political capture etc.

On the other hand, Pradhan, Mohd & Sulaiman (2013) examined whether higher budget allocations for SSNs is linked to poverty reduction. The study shows, through analysis of statistical data, that higher budget allocations have been associated with decreases in poverty rates during recent decades in Bangladesh. However, as a disaster prone country, different types of vulnerabilities are creating new types of poverty in Bangladesh. As a whole it can be said that, safety net programs are uplift the poverty condition of the poor. In addition, BIDS study (2013) claimed that, social safety net program named Old Age Allowance (OAA) work as effective tools for food insecurity in later age of the poor. Ahmed, Jahan and Zohura (2014) discussed the issue of regional disparity of budget allocation of SSNPs. The study also showed that, benefits could not reach to the actual poor due to regional disparity of distributing the safety net budget in Bangladesh.

There is a limitation in the implementation of the SSNPs, that is, a single window for monitoring and evaluation of the SSN programs could not be possible to establish as the programs implementing by different ministries. In addition, new form of vulnerability in ages is causing different problems due to climate change, migration, urbanization, increasing nuclear families and many other factors. Moreover, there is contradictory opinion among many social scientists that the safety net programs should be for only chronic poor to eliminate poverty and inequality or all citizens as basic needs to ensure equity (Masud-All-Kamal, M & Saha, CK, 2014). Rahman (2012 and 2014) also focuses on the effects of SSNPs on calorie consumption within poor households in Bangladesh. He argues that SSNPs play a vital role to protect the vulnerable from food insecurity. In his later study he

3. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) has been conducting the HIES, a cross section survey, on Bangladeshi households every five years since 1991 with the financial support from the World Bank.

analysed quantitatively the data of the HIES³ (BBS 2010) and concluded that SSNPs have a high impact on calorie consumption of the target group (Rahman 2014, p.14). He further suggested continuation of the SSNPs as effective tools for alleviating food insecurity with strong grounds to increase the budget allocation.

Corruption, nepotism, lack of transparency and digital data, inclusion/exclusion errors, means test and proxy means, community selection process, influence of the political/elite people and other factors interrupt the selection process of the actual beneficiaries of the programs identified by many scholars in different countries including Bangladesh.

1.3 Scope of the study

This paper is an attempt to analyse the current state of social safety net programs in Bangladesh. Firstly, it provides a conceptual framework; secondly, it presents historical background of SSNPs in Bangladesh; thirdly, findings and data analysis; fourthly, it presents discussion and finally the article draws conclusion some recommendations.

1.4 Objective of the study

In light of the above discussion, the objectives of the study are as follows:

- To find out the problems in implementing of the safety net programs of Bangladesh.
- To analyze the relation between the budget and information constraints of the SSNPs.
- To provide the recommendation to achieve the goals in sustainable manner.

2.0 Research methodology

This article attempted to analysis different findings of the different scholars in this area. The study analysis is based on secondary data like articles of different scholars, government publications, and study reports of NGOs by using different search engines like Google scholar, Flinders University Library online, Sage etc. Endnote software was used for referencing. Simultaneously, some case studies are used from qualitative research of the researcher's own Master's thesis done in Australia.

3.0 Conceptual frameworks

3.1 Social protection and social safety net

Many researchers identified the Social Safety Net (SSN) concept is related to the scheme or programs for a short-term safeguard while social protection or security means long term interventions. According to Barrientos (2011), social protection has emerged as a policy framework employed to address poverty and vulnerability

in developing countries in the last decade. According to AusAID, social protection is “Publicly funded initiatives that provide regular and predictable cash or in-kind transfers to individuals, households and communities to reduce poverty and vulnerability and foster resilience and empowerment” (AusAID 2012).

Koehler (2011) says that social protection issue is frequently linked with the global economic crisis of 1998. Many developing countries are adopting social protection strategies within their poverty reduction planning after the economic recession. The main issue for the emergence of social protection is to eliminate poverty and vulnerability. For the first time, UN General Assembly MDG Meeting declared the policy recommendations for social protection in 2010. Recently, social protection issue has become a pressure for the governments for targeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) after the performance of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) agenda. The performance of the programs is positive in some countries but the progress of the MDG goals is not being achieved due to the lack of well targeting and occurrence of inclusion/exclusion errors in many countries.

Barrientos *et al.* (2011) in their report for the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC) described that more than 860 million people in the world are covered under social protection programs. A World Bank report titled ‘Conditional cash transfers: reducing present and future poverty’ by Fiszbein & Schady (2009) mentioned that social assistance programs have been spreading rapidly in over 30 countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Bangladesh, Indonesia and Turkey have initiated large-scale programs. The report discussed and compared social protection programs of many Asian countries including Bangladesh and according to the report social transfer in developing countries has two functions: it ensures basic levels of consumption and it eliminates chronic and intergenerational poverty.

Barrientos and Nino-Zarazua (2011) discussed three policy questions related to social assistance programs:

Is chronic poverty addressed by program objectives such as reducing poverty, access to education, access to health care and nutrition and promoting human development interventions?

Are the benefits of the programs properly reaching poor households through effective implementation of the program?

Are the chronically poor receiving social assistance program benefits in the form of nutrition, health and schooling?

Addressing the first policy question, Barrientos and Nino-Zarazua identified microcredit program of BRAC in Bangladesh helps to rebuild and strengthen the productive capacity of ultra-poor households. The main conclusion from the first policy question is that the programs are designed to rebuild the productive capacity of households in terms of human capital investment and to secure and/or establish physical assets for those who are facing longer term poverty.

Addressing the second policy question, the report shows means tests (categorical and geographical methods of identification along with community based selection) and proxy means tests (effective targeting of households on the basis of income or wealth) are methods used for the selection of beneficiaries in most developing countries. They give an example of the Primary Education Stipend Project in Bangladesh which follows ‘means tests’ and ‘proxy means tests’ methods for selecting the beneficiaries. Around 47% of beneficiaries are identified as non-poor and misuse of resources by elite groups causes inclusion errors (2005 cited in Barrientos & Nino-Zarazua 2011). The study indicated that for the duration of transfer there is no principle to guide policy. Households that are facing chronic poverty may need longer periods of assistance and programs like old age and disability pensions or schooling related programs may need long term assistance. They conclude that targeting of social assistance programs aims to reduce chronic poverty although it depends on programs and country specific situations.

Addressing the third policy question, related to nutrition, health and schooling, Barrientos and Nino-Zarazua (2011) mentioned that the future earning capacity of a person depends on his/her childhood nutritional condition. By giving examples of transfer programs in Mexico, Columbia, South Africa, Ethiopia, India and Bangladesh, they have shown that income transfer, food consumption and improvements in child nutrition are interrelated. Malnourishment declined from 97% to 27% after integrated poverty reduction programs were initiated in Bangladesh. The authors identified that securing good health for the mother and children is a necessity for better growth of future generations and that proper utilisation of health care support affects morbidity rates. Similarly, support programs for education increased school enrolments in some countries including in Chile, Bangladesh and Columbia. According to them, social transfer can be a way to strengthen asset protection and asset promotion of the chronically poor. They concluded that social transfers can contribute to building human capital as well as protecting and promoting physical assets. As a whole, the main aim of social assistance programs is to eradicate chronic poverty.

Correspondingly, Subbarao and Smith (2003, p 1) reported on the role of safety net transfers in very low income countries where absolute poverty and lack of fund transfers is very common. According to them, some of the possible roles for safety nets are to decrease the poverty gap, to arrange programs for all, and to protect against major shocks. The authors identified three main constraints for the successful implementation of social transfers:

- information constraints (lack of accurate data about the actual beneficiaries);
- administrative constraints (to target the beneficiary); and
- fiscal constraints (affordability of designing the program and providing benefits).

3.2 An overview of social protection in Bangladesh since the independence (1971)

In Bangladesh, social safety nets had historically been associated with natural shocks (causing disruption in production) and structurally determined poverty; and the Government and non-government agencies had significant roles to play in the past. After the Independence of Bangladesh in 1971 and until the famine of 1974, huge relief and rehabilitation programs were undertaken with the support of foreign aid (Clunies-Ross & Huq 2013). From 1974 famine to floods in the 1980s, safety net programs were based on only public works and other food aid programs supported by different foreign agencies. Since the Famine in 1974, the Bangladesh government initiated different social safety net programs for the vulnerable including Five Years Plans and expanding the budget on a regular basis for different SSN programs. There were only a few programs until the mid-1990s, and most of them were designed for income support, but from the second half of the 1990s new program types have been initiated almost every year. The government started to initiate different food based programs those addressed poverty in the lifecycle of the poor like school stipend programs, Food-for Education program. Cash based programs like allowance for the elderly (1998), people with disabilities and widows were the major initiatives at late 1990s. To reduce unemployment, the government introduced a number of food based programs since Independence like, the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) program (1974), the Food-for-Works (FFW) Program (1975), Rural Maintenance Program (RMP), Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) in late 1980s, and the 100-days Employment Generation Program. Foreign food assistance was picked off and replaced by food transfers from local tax in the mid-2000s for geographic targeting like 'Monga' affected area ('Monga' is different type of famine exist for few months in the year due to lack of agricultural production and unemployment in northern part of Bangladesh). Launched initially in 1972, SSN programs impact on 11.6 percent of the population and 30 percent of the poor (The World Bank, 2008). The budget allocation for social safety nets increased from 1.3 percent of GDP in 1998 to 2.3 percent in FY 2011 (NSSS 2015, p.xix). Both NGOs and government initiated small schemes of social security during this tenure.

Since the prolong flood of Bangladesh in 1998, there has been a gradual shift of different safety net programs either directly commissioned by external partners or in partnership with the GO-NGOs or international agencies. Different housing projects like '*Guchcho Gram*'/ '*Asrayan Prokolpo*', food relief programs like 'Food for Work' are some of the initiatives for ensuring safeguards of the vulnerable. Due to the price hike of food during 2007-08, concepts of safeguard significantly shifted from the past norm. The crisis did call for urgent attention to the needy with relief in kind during late 2000s. These are two types:

- Open Market Sale (OMS) distributed at spots close to clusters with poor people helped keeping prices affordable for some urban poor.

- Cash for employment and cash transfers under other SSNPs helped the beneficiary groups.

There was a significant role of donors in various programs operated by non-government organizations (NGOs) and they operated a range of social services including social transfer.

3.3 Results and data analysis

There are different types of programs in Bangladesh such as cash transfer programs, food security programs and social empowerment programs (Ministry of Finance [MoF] 2014). Allowances (a fixed and small amount of money different among the programs) are distributed among the beneficiaries of the SSN programs on a monthly basis. The government of Bangladesh is operating nearly 145 SSN programs by 23 Ministries/Divisions and spending Tk 306.4 billion which is equivalent to 2.02 percent of GDP in FY2014-15 (NSSS 2015, p.7). In the HIES survey (2010) total 11 SSN programs were estimated in 2005 while total 30 SSN programs were estimated in 2010. The HIES (2010, p 129) study estimated that 31.5 percent of the population of the country are poor using upper poverty line and 17.6 percent of the population living below the lower poverty line are extreme poor. Currently (HIES 2010) 24.57 percent households are receiving benefits from SSN programs which was 13.02 percent in 2005 (HIES 2010, P 129). Moreover, 64 percent of the poor households still are not included to any social safety net programs though the budget and coverage are increased over time (NSSS 2015, p. xix). Expenditure of the Pension for retired government employees is the largest social protection scheme in Bangladesh, although it pays generally high benefits to few people. The government is spending 24.0 percent of total SSNP budget for the pension scheme for retired government employees. The Old Age Allowance (OAA) program started in 1998 has been reached 2.4 million people now and spent 3.9 percent of total SSNP budget (NSSS 2015, p.9). 1.6 percent of total SSNP budget is spending for the Honorarium for Insolvent Freedom Fighters who are also older people, and 1.4 percent of total SSNP budget is spending for the Widow Allowance (started in 1998) who are elderly also.

Table -1: The Broad Categories of SSNPs in Bangladesh

Cash Transfer	Food transfer	Price subsidy	Job generating	Others
Old Age Allowances	Vulnerable Group Feeding	Agricultural inputs Subsidy	Vulnerable Group Development (VGD)	Housing for the Homeless

Maternity allowance Allowance for Retard/Disable Person	Test Relief, Food for Works	Subsidy for Marginal Farmers to cope with the Fuel Price Hike	Rural Employment Opportunities for Public Assets	Efficiency Development Fund for Expatriate Workers
Allowance to the Widowed	Gratuitous Relief	Food Subsidy	100 days Employment Generation Program	Ekti Bari EktiKhamar
Honorarium for the Insolvent Freedom Fighters	Primary education Stipend Project	Power Subsidy	Employment Project for Beggars	Microcredit
Female Secondary School Assistance	Community Nutrition Program	health care	National Service	Free schooling

Table 2: The following table shows the distribution of budget for SSNPs in different years:

Fiscal Year	% of Total Budget	% of GDP
2009-10	15.22 %	2.52 %
2010-11	14.75 %	2.50 %
2011-12	13.79 %	2.51 %
2012-13	11.87 %	2.18 %
2013-14	11.40 %	2.13 %
2014-15	12.28 %	2.01 %
2015-16	12.72%	2.19%
2016-17	13.28%	2.31%
2017-18	13.54%	2.44%

Source: Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh Govt. Website ([http://: www.mof.gov.bd](http://www.mof.gov.bd))

Historically, disbursement for social safety net has been less than 1% of GDP till the late 1990s. However, this expense has been increasing in recent years, due to unprecedented economic growth of above 6%. Social safety net expenditure was 1.21% of GDP during 2006-07 and about 1.60% of GDP for the 2007-08 fiscal year. But it is stand for 2.5% of GDP in FY2009-10 (*Bangladesh Economic Review*, 2012). In recent years, the GoB has increased budgetary allocation and identified various types of vulnerability in striving to improve social safety net during the current fiscal years. Launched in 1972, SSNPs now cover nearly 30 percent of the

poor households (NSSS 2015). The programs leave out 35 million poor people and around 31.5 percent of Bangladeshi households live in poverty (HIES, 2010).

4.0 Discussion

4.1 Literature review

Many scholars have tried to correlate with the issue that increase of monetary allotment could not decrease the poverty ratio during last decades in Bangladesh. They found that as a disaster prone country different types of vulnerabilities are creating new types of poverty in Bangladesh. They opined that improvement of social indicators like infant mortality rate, life expectancy, literacy rate, per capita income remains a vital problem for the bottom level people of the country. Traditional joint and extended family structure has been breaking down due to rapid urbanization, social mobilization, increasing the number of nuclear families which ultimately causing individualistic society and weaken social ties. Elderly poor are affected by this changing situation (Pradhan *et al.* 2013).

Again, the study (Pradhan *et al.* 2013, p. 140) has also shown whether the higher budget allocation for SSNs is linked with poverty reduction or not. The study shows through the graphical analysis by using different statistical data that higher budget allocations have been associated with decreases in poverty rates during last decades in Bangladesh. Currently, the Bangladesh government spent USD 2,450 million, 13.28 per cent of its annual budget and 2.31 per cent of real GDP, in 2016–2017. The World Food Program (WFP) and other agencies, in general, spent twice as much as the government (Rahman, 2014, p. 4).

Rahman (2012) argues that SSN Programs play a vital role to protect the vulnerable from food insecurity. In his later study he quantitatively analyzed the data of HIES* (2005) of BBS and concluded that SSNPs have a high impact on calorie consumption of the target group (2014, p. 14). He further suggested continuing the social safety net programs as effective tools for food insecurity and there is a strong ground to increase the allocation. BIDS evaluation study on Old Age Allowance of Bangladesh also statistically indicated that the food and health related supports are the top most priority to the elderly poor.

Moreover, there is long-established debate on how social policy should be designed to eliminate poverty and inequality. There is contradictory opinion among social scientists whether safety net programs should be for only chronic poor to eliminate poverty and inequality or all citizens as basic needs (Masud-All-Kamal and Saha, 2014, pp. 196-197). New dimension of social protection strategy is needed to think for them. Besides SSNPs, government needs to initiate new strategies and budget for sustainable social protection strategies.

In particular, it is necessary to reduce system leakage and improve targeting in order to realize greater benefits from the existing social safety-net programs.

Currently, only 25%-30% of eligible beneficiaries are getting benefit from the programs. Besides, findings of the different studies are that- corruption, nepotism, lack of transparency and digital data, inclusion/exclusion errors, community selection, influence of the political people and other factors interrupt the selection process of the actual beneficiaries of the programs. Safety net system of Bangladesh still need to improve transparency and accountability in selection procedure, to establish digital database for proper data of the actual eligible poor beneficiaries, to strengthen administrative system free from political influences. Community selection process needs reformation in order to eliminate inclusion and exclusion errors and the safety net budget should be increased through proper collection of taxes in Bangladesh. In this regard, digital database should be initiated and activated immediately. Some sort of invisible problems like corruption, nepotism can possible to avert by initiating those actions. Furthermore, safety net programs being implemented with different ministries of Bangladesh. Sometimes lack of coordination creates the causes about missing data and information gaps related to the programs. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop an integrated social safety net policy for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Strong monitoring and evaluation cell should be established to oversee or supervise SSN programs.

Barrientos (2011) discussed policy design, implementation process, challenges and opportunities for social pensions in low income countries like Bolivia, Lesotho and Bangladesh. According to him, policy design of social pensions in low-income countries is well structured but there are large knowledge gaps regarding the incidence and impact of the program. Beneficiaries in Bangladesh and Lesotho who are eligible for benefit from one program cannot receive benefits from other programs. In Bolivia, beneficiaries can also enjoy their pension facilities. Allowances are distributed annually in Bolivia, quarterly in Bangladesh and monthly in Lesotho. Barrientos finds that community selection processes increase the power of local elites in Bangladesh, which is also found in the BIDS (2013) study. He also finds that many low income countries are not able to collect revenues properly.

In conclusion, besides budget constraints, community based selection processes face problems such as nepotism and lack of data on the actual needy in implementing SSNPs in developing countries, as discussed by Barrientos (2009), Adato and Haddad (2002), and Sumarto *et al.* (2002). Barrientos (2011) identified the main challenges, other than budget constraints, for expanding safety net programs in developing countries are: capacity to study and analyse poverty; capacity to design and implement the appropriate policies; and capacity to evaluate the safety net programs. Monitoring systems and digital databases, mentioned by Adato and Haddad (2002) and Sumarto *et al.* (2002), should be launched immediately in order to better support SSNP implementation in Bangladesh.

4.2 Case studies

The researcher had been conducted a qualitative research on “Social Protection for Elderly as a Development Strategy: The Case of Ageing Population in Rural Bangladesh” while she was doing her Master by Research in Australia. The Study was based on performance of two safety net programs of Bangladesh named Old Age Allowances (OAA) and Widow Allowances (WA). Three constraints like fiscal, administrative and information (Subbarao and Smith, 2003) are found within the implementation process of the programs.

The study found that there is wrong targeting (inclusion/exclusion errors) in the selection process of beneficiaries and, quite often, prospective beneficiaries must pay a bribe to be selected. Other factors affecting the fair and impartial selection of beneficiaries include: a lack of information or a common database about the actual needy; often eligible elderly are unaware the SSNPs exist; and, anomalies with the date of birth recorded on NID cards and the actual ages of the card holders. Although the allowance is not a significant amount of money, beneficiaries can at least buy food and medicine. Many use the money for other purposes like repair of homes, paying dowry for daughters, payment of loans, giving to others and supporting habits like chewing betel leaf or smoking.

Administrative barriers in the proper functioning of the SSNPs for older persons were identified, such as: misuse of community targeting; lack of a monitoring and evaluation system; political influence; tendency for elected representatives to recoup money spent to get elected from the SSNPs; bribery; lack in announcing and circulation of program details; absence of a publicly monitored selection process; no door to door verification of eligibility; and lack of vehicles and manpower in the local social services office.

5.0 Conclusions and recommendations

In relation to information constraints raised by Smith and Subbarao (2003), there is a lack of proper data/information about the poor in Bangladesh. Different scholars, like Sumarto *et al.* (2002), Smith and Subbarao (2003), BIDS (2013), Masud-All-Kamal and Saha (2014), emphasized the proper listing of eligible poor or an up-to-date database of the beneficiaries of the SSNPs in order to eliminate targeting errors in the programs. Like in other developing countries, in Bangladesh there is a need to improve transparency in the procedure of selecting beneficiaries in order to eliminate corruption and nepotism. In order to ensure accurate selection of beneficiaries, a digital database that allows clear identification of the eligible poor based on program criteria should be initiated nationally. This would allow verification of information about the poor in an area as well as being able to check whether there is anyone receiving several safety net allowances or not.

In relation to fiscal constraint raised by Smith and Subbarao (2003), Bangladesh Govt. expending a good number of safety net budget, as described before that is 13.54 percentages of the national budget and of 2.44 precents of GDP in FY 2017/18. Moreover, it could not be possible to reach the benefits to the actual needy due to lack of digital data, regional disparity in distribution the safety net budget, inclusion/exclusion errors, means test (categorical and geographical methods of identification along with community based selection) and proxy means (effective targeting of the households on the basis of income or wealth), different administrative constraints etc. With the support of existing budget, only 30 precents of actual needy are getting benefits. The BIDS study (2013) also identified inclusion/exclusion errors, nepotism and corruption in the selection process and misuse of power by local authorities.

A single window for monitoring and evaluation of the SSN programs could not be possible to established as the programs implementing by different ministries. There should be a strong Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Cell within the Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW) at each level of government from the Upazila level to the National level in order to ensure a fair selection process of beneficiaries for SSNPs and to evaluate the impact of the programs on the lives of the poor. The monitoring system should be transparent. Information about the eligible poor for the SSNPs should be gathered by visiting households door to door in the villages. For this, a committee could be formed including government officials and civil society members. In order to select the eligible beneficiaries, a proxy means test (effective targeting system of the households on the basis of income or wealth) in conjunction with a means test (categorical and geographical methods of identification along with community based selection) should be clearly indicated in the policy.

There is a general lack of qualitative studies on the sustainability of the social safety net programs in Bangladesh. Very few studies focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the social safety net programs. Some NGOs who work or deal with related SSN programs are trying to analyse the social safety net programs in their publications. MoSW initiated to evaluate the performance of the Old Age Allowance by BIDS in 2013. Like Australia, we should give emphasis on multi-disciplinary researches and make policy to find out the actual results or problems, steps to be needed further and other areas needed to keep on eye etc. SSN programs (Department of Health and Aged Care,1999).

In conclusion it can be said that, Government has to give emphasis to make sustainable social protection strategies or policies for the social development of the country. New areas or issues of social protection like healthy ageing issue, new dimensions of vulnerability and poverty, climate changes, different vulnerabilities arise from global warming affects should be included in preparation of new strategies. Bangladesh as a developing country has been achieving different social development indicators in aspects of low birth rate, low mortality rates, increase of

life longevity, education rates etc. Per capita income and GDP growth is also uprising. Now the country needs sustainable policies for achieving SDGs for the poor as well as all citizens in aspects of social and economic welfares, education, heath, environmental issues and food security. Poverty and vulnerability are the main issues for sustainable social protection strategy. For achieving this, the role of safety net has had an immense effect on the life of poor.

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