



## *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*

### **Volume 8, Number 2. July 2011**

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**ISSN 1819-8465**

*The Official Journal of*



# **Bangladesh Sociological Society**

**Committed to the advancement of sociological research and publication.**

*Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*  
(Biannual e-Journal of the Bangladesh Sociological Society)

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**Published on the Internet**

**URL: <http://www.bangladeshsociology.org>**

**Published by**



**Bangladesh Sociological Society**

**From**

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### Note from the Editor

Major objectives of the journal, when launched, were to facilitate the growth of sociology in Bangladesh and to encourage publications by the Bangladeshi sociologists. So far, both these objectives have failed to meet our expectations. Contributions from the Bangladeshi sociologists have been few and far in between. During the initial years of the Journal, Bangladeshi sociologists, mainly from the University of Dhaka, contributed research articles for publications. But the numbers soon declined. The Journal flourished largely because of the articles sent by international scholars, primarily from Nigeria, to the extent that it almost read like the *Nigerian* journal of sociology, instead of being the Bangladeshi journal.

The reasons for this lack of contribution from Bangladesh are disconcerting, forcing on us a pessimistic view of the future of sociology in the country. In general, scholarship in Bangladesh is on the decline. It is particularly true of sociology in an alarming way. Because of a switch to Bengali as the medium of instruction after the independence of the country, there has been a serious drain on the knowledge of English in the population while among the university students, especially the sociology students, it has acted as a barrier to any serious scholarship, since most books still available in any subject are in English. This, after their graduation, translates into near complete lack of research and publication, irrespective of whether they become teachers or choose other professions. So that, other than the few still working seniors, no new sociologists are publishing.

Also, the universities in Bangladesh are almost completely teaching universities with very little or no scope for research, particularly true for the social sciences. With no support from the institutions, the researcher is forced either to convert the few "consultancy" projects s/he may be engaged in into academic research or to spend personal funds to do research. Under such conditions research and publication dwindle and become occasional and personal enterprises.

These general problems are compounded by the fact that there is little or no real or even perceived benefits accruing from research and publication since promotion or career advancement at the university has become almost totally dependent on the membership of the "faculty group" associated with the party occupying state power. Thus, "belonging" to the right group can ensure anything up to the Vice Chancellor's job and beyond into the highest level of state bureaucracy. Hence, one is perceived to be better placed in one's career by active involvement, often full time, in "party politics" instead of than "wasting" time in research and publication. In this, rather, anti-academic atmosphere growth of any discipline is thwarted. Sociologists in all public universities in Bangladesh, unfortunately, have, more often than not, been at the forefront of such anti-academic pursuits bringing down the discipline to its current demise.

It is very heartening, therefore, that the current issue is able to report three research papers on Bangladesh and by Bangladeshi scholars (one in joint collaboration). They are all young scholars and are extremely talented as is demonstrated by their papers. One of them actually takes up the English learning situation itself. We hope, very earnestly, that such contributions from Bangladeshi scholars will continue and the Journal will eventually be able to build up a "Sociology of Bangladesh", its avowed objective.

The Nigerian contributions remain strong as ever and cover a wide range of topics, some moving into areas like, 'bullying in schools' and 'agricultural credits', not covered by the Journal earlier. 'Child labour' and 'community health situation' are also covered in this issue. "Northeast India" is again analysed, this time in terms of the very validity of the concept.

We hope the readers will find this enlarged issue as rich as the previous ones.

# Estimation of Population and Food Grain Production in Bangladesh by 2020: A Simple Moving Average Approach to a Time Series Analysis

Dayal Talukder\* and Love Chile†

## Abstract

*The study used a time series dataset for a period of 23 years to estimate and analyse the size of population, food grain production and requirements for next ten years in Bangladesh with a view to providing policy makers and government with information for policy formulation and analysis. Using a simple moving average (SMA) method, a five-year average technique is applied for smoothing observed data series to generate a linear trend for the estimation of projected values of population, food grain requirements, net food grain production and food grain balance. The results indicate that the growth of population over next ten years will be very similar to the observed period. Increase in domestic food grain production shows a higher trend than food grain requirements leading to a food grain surplus over the same period. However, the size of population is growing too large to accommodate in a small country with a very low per capita income. The growing population will put enormous pressure on available resources thereby making future development unsustainable. The study suggests that the government should formulate policies to significantly reduce population growth.*

## Introduction

Appropriate policy formulation, planning and programme implementation are keys to socio-economic development of a country. Accurate projection of data plays an important role in providing policy makers with information and analysis that are required for policy formulation, planning, programme design and implementation for maintaining a sustainable socio-economic development in future. Projections of population and food grain production are intended to be useful for farmers, governments, agribusiness industries and policy makers. This sort of projection is crucial for developing countries like Bangladesh with a large size of population, small size of land area, low per capita income, high level of poverty, persistent food shortage, prolonged dependency on foreign aid, and low productivity in food grain sector.

Since its independence in 1971, Bangladesh has been considering high population growth as a number one problem for the economy. Although it strived to reduce population growth; the size of population became almost double over last three decade from 72 million in 1972 to 140 million in 2005 with an average increase by over 2 million per year (MoA 2007: Table 101). This enormous size of population living in a land of 145567 sq kilometre (with a density of over 1000 people per sq km) has posed a serious challenge for future development of the economy in following ways: putting huge pressure on environment and available resources; limiting agricultural growth and

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food grain production through reducing arable land for housing and non-agricultural purposes; raising requirement for food grain; and raising the number of poor population thus slowing down the rate of poverty reduction (Ali 1995: 95; Baffes and Gautam 2001:528; Rahman 2010: 957). Therefore, projection of population and proper population policies are crucial for sustainable development in Bangladesh (CPD 2003: 1).

Similarly, the food grain requirement also increased to double over the same period. Although, the domestic net food grain production increased by three times during this period; there are growing concerns that future food grain production will be constrained by reduction of arable land due to acquisition for housing, rapid urbanisation, infrastructure development etc., and lack of technical progress and modernisation in agriculture (Baffes and Gautam 2001:534). The increase in net food grain production might be attributed to a shift from local varieties to modern high yielding varieties (Bayes et al 1985: 225; Baffes and Gautam 2001:529). Most countries including Bangladesh consider domestic food grain production as an important factor for food price stabilisation and food security, and thereby pursue food self-sufficiency policies, in large part to avoid macroeconomic and political instability from food price shocks (Byerlee, Diao *et al.*, 2005): 8; Deb et al 2009: 1).

The projection of population and food grain production has increasingly become an important tool for development planning in many developing countries like Bangladesh, with the primary purposes: to (i) help policy makers develop appropriate population and food policies, (ii) help decide future investments and decisions on food grain production to improve food security, (iii) aid in addressing population and environmental issues, and (iv) allow for planning of future food requirement, as well as to identify national infrastructure and research and development requirements (Li *et al.* 2010: 16). Understanding the size of population, their demand for food grain and net domestic food grain production are keys to the development of policies on population and food to ensure sustainable development in Bangladesh. Although the debate over the value and effectiveness of the technical analysis of projection of population and food grain production still remains substantial along with consideration of costs, seasonal variation, uncertainty, risk involved etc.; technical analysis is based on the argument that the movements of population and food grain production are not random rather they move in trends, which are somewhat predictable (Ming-Ming and Siok-Hwa 2006: 146). Therefore, the main objective of this study is to estimate and analyse population size, their food grain requirement and food grain production in Bangladesh by 2020 with a view to providing policymakers and government with information for policy formulation and planning.

Many studies attempted to shed light on issues of projection of population and food grain production. Tarrant (1982) found that food policies in Bangladesh were conflicting- focusing on the interests of producers and consumers. He argued that these conflicting policies affected food grain production and estimation. Clay (1986) found that projections of food grain production, requirements and consumption would be crucial for policy analysis. He argued that World Food Programme (WFP) and International Food Research Institute (IFPRI) estimates were based on an extrapolation of trends in production. The models of Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) explored the implications of normative moderate or high growth scenarios for the agricultural sector. There were two general results from the two gap models: (1) food requirements were typically estimated as substantially in excess of current levels and expanding; (2) estimates were based on World Health Organisation (WHO)/FAO nutritional guidelines produced far higher requirements and projections reflected a demand, either based on past trend or improved growth scenarios. Allen (1994) extensively reviewed literature on economic forecasting in food grain and agricultural production. He argued that because of the special position of food production in a nation's food security, governments became both major suppliers and main users of agricultural forecasts. He found that for short-term forecasting, composite methods led to more accurate forecasts, better than those produced by single method. Also surprising was that econometric models and univariate methods both did badly as compared to naive models such as simple averaging methods. Baffes and Gautam (2001) found that in short run the current level of per capita food grain production could be sustained only through increased yields of modern rice varieties in Bangladesh. In long run, population control was found to have significant benefits in the economy. Koning *et al* (2008: 275) argued that the world's technical potential for food production seemed sufficient for feeding a significantly larger population than was expected by mid-century. Nevertheless, the productivity of land was being depleted, so that decreasing returns, rising energy prices and the underutilisation of potentials in some regions might cause a new change in the secular trend in food prices. This entailed transition risks, not least by the interaction of a trend change with endogenous price fluctuations in world food markets. This study will contribute to the literature by projecting population and food grain production in Bangladesh. It has applied a simple moving average (SMA) method to estimate the projected values of population, food grain requirements, net food grain production and food grain balance of the economy.

Simple moving averages (SMA) are frequently used in forecasting system when data changes over time but exhibits negligible growth and seasonality (Johnson *et al* 1999: 1199). They are useful in smoothing a time series data towards linearisation. Karen *et al* (2009:251) argued that SMA is perhaps the simplest of the smoothing algorithms but one of the most powerful

techniques in prediction. If the duration of the cycle is short and data exhibits low seasonal effects then SMA can produce significant accuracy in predicting projected values of parameters.

### Methodology

This study used a steady state model (SSM) of Johnson *et al.* (1999) for application of a SMA method to prediction of population and food grain production in Bangladesh. The SSM can be defined by two equations- (a) the observation equation that defines how the data points result from a random disturbance about a true but unknown level, and (b) the system equation that represents the movement of this level through time as a random walk process. This model provides a realistic characterisation of data generation. In this formulation observations are treated as stochastic disturbances about the unknown mean which itself undergoes a random walk. It can be represented by the following two equations as written in Johnson *et al* (1999: 1262) and Johnson *et al* (1999a: 1199).

Observation equation:

$$y_t = O_t + v_t; \quad v_t \sim [0, V] \quad (1)$$

System Equation:

$$O_t = O_{t-1} + w_t; \quad w_t \sim [0, W] \quad (2)$$

Where  $y_t$  is the observation at time  $t$ ;  $O_t$  is the underlying level at time  $t$ ;  $v_t$  and  $w_t$  are stochastic terms from distribution with zero means and fixed variance,  $V$  and  $W$  respectively. The optimal length of the average is related to the ratio of two variances  $V/W$ , often denoted by  $r$ . The optimal length of average can be presented by the following equation.

$$\begin{aligned} N^2 &= 3(V/W) + 1/2 && \text{or} \\ N^2 &= 3r + 1/2 && (3) \end{aligned}$$

The model argues that for the time series under examination, the optimal average length may be unknown. As a broad generalisation, simple averages are often chosen on the basis of the characteristics of time series data such as monthly, fortnightly, weekly etc. Therefore, in practice, a single arbitrary or compromised value  $\hat{N}$  has to be selected that may or may not be ideal for any individual series but satisfactory over all the series.

This study examines Bangladesh's annual data for a period of 23 years (Appendix: A1) to estimate and forecast the population and food grain production, requirement and balance. Bangladesh practices 5-year plans system. Each 5-year plan consists of 5 consecutive annual

plans. Therefore, it is rationale to select 5-year as an arbitrary length of moving average ( $\hat{N}$ ). Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) used this length for time series analysis (MoA 2007: Table 1.01). Thus, this study arbitrarily selects 5-year as the length of average ( $\hat{N}$ ) for calculation of simple moving average.

The simple moving average  $m$  of  $\hat{N}$  values (number of periods), made after the information of the observation  $y_t$ , can be defined as

$$m = (1/\hat{N}) \sum_{i=0}^{\hat{N}-1} y_{t-i} \quad (i = 0, 1, \dots, \hat{N} - 1) \quad (4)$$

In this study,  $\hat{N} = n = 5$ -year length. So, equation (4) can be rewritten as

$$m = (1/n) \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} y_{t-i} \quad (i = 0, 1, \dots, n - 1)$$

Where  $y_t$  is independent and identically distributed observation at time  $t$ .

Application of a SMA computation to a time series data generates a moving group of data with a new mean calculated as the group steps along one data point at a time. Each time a new data point is added at the leading end, another is dropped off at the trailing end in order to maintain the selected length ( $n$ ) of average. Each data point is therefore included in a sequence of  $n$  successive SMA calculations before it drops off the trailing end (Hay and Bull 2009: 251). This process continues until all data points are covered at the leading end.

The data used in this study comprises population, food grain requirement and net total food grain production in Bangladesh from 1985-86 to 2007-08. The characteristics of the data set are presented in Table 1. The value of mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of population, food grain requirement (FR) and net total food grain production (NTFP) suggest that data are fairly dispersed and distributed around the mean. However the standard deviation of food grain balance (FB) is nearly three times greater than the mean indicating that the observations are scattered and far away from the centre or mean. This situation is reflected in Figure 1.

In 1985-86, net food grain production and food grain requirements were 14239.2 and 16605.8 thousand tonnes respectively indicating a food grain deficit by 2366.6 thousand tonnes. Net food grain production exceeded food grain requirement in 1999-00 and continued this trend by 2007-08 (Figure 1).



**Table 1 : Descriptive statistics of data**

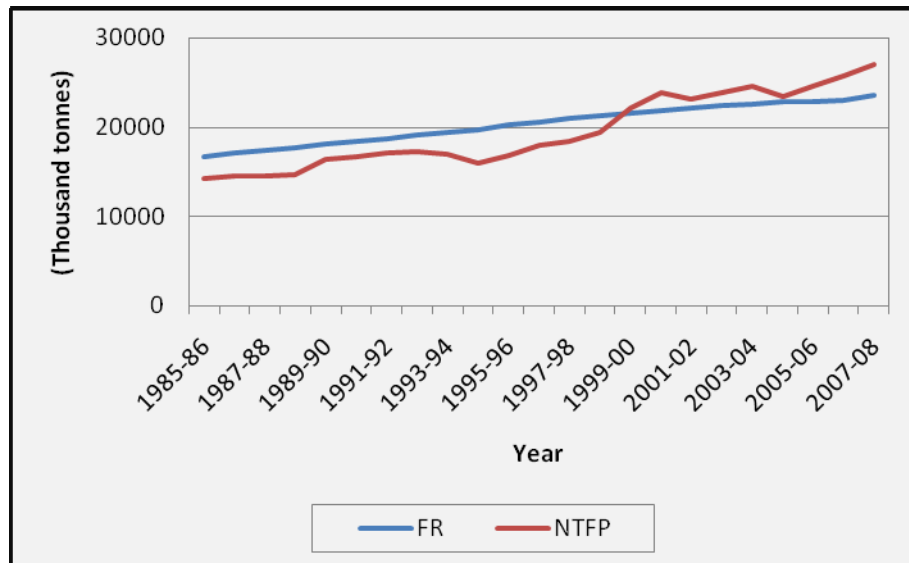
	Population (million)	FR (000 tonnes)	NTPF (000 tonnes)	FB (000 tonnes)	
<b>Number of observations</b>	23	23	23	23	
<b>Minimum</b>	98.10	16605.78	14239.16	-3691.74	
<b>Maximum</b>	142.40	23576.31	26942.25	3365.94	
<b>Mean</b>	Statistic	121.13	20319.04	19513.87	-805.16
	Std. Error	2.87	451.63	857.91	454.56
<b>Std. Deviation</b>	13.78	2165.95	4114.42	2179.99	
<b>Variance</b>	190.02	4691363.51	1.693E7	4752398.84	
<b>Skewness</b>	Statistic	-.102	-.208	.360	.51
	Std. Error	.48	.48	.481	.48
<b>Kurtosis</b>	Statistic	-1.24	-1.27	-1.414	-1.25
	Std. Error	.935	.935	.935	.935

**Note:** FR, NTPF and FB are Food Grain Requirement, Net Total Food Grain Requirement and Food Grain Balance Respectively.

**Source:** Authors' calculation

### Result Analysis

A 5-year SMA technique has generated two new data sets: one for population in column 3 (SMA-population) and another for NTPF in column 5 (SMA-NTPF) as shown in Table 2. Interestingly, the observations in SMA-population show a trend very similar to the original data set of population as may be observed from the table. Even, some observations in SMA-population are same as their original counterparts suggesting that the rate of population growth follows almost a linear trend. This result indicates that both data sets for population are merged with each other and follow almost the same trend line as seen in Figure 2.



**Figure 1: Net Total Food Grain Production (NTFP) and Food Grain Requirement (FR) in Bangladesh**

Source: Authors' calculation from Table 1.01 (MoA 2007)

**Table 2: Computations for the 5-year Simple Moving Average (SMA)**

Year	Population (million)	SMA-Population	NTFP	SMA -NTFP
1	2	3	4	5
1985-86	98.1		14239.2	
1986-87	100.3		14591.1	
1987-88	102.5	102.5	14558.3	14897.6
1988-89	104.7	104.6	14650.5	15373.0
1989-90	106.8	106.8	16449.0	15871.8
1990-91	108.9	108.9	16615.9	16412.8
1991-92	111.0	110.9	17085.4	16875.8
1992-93	113.0	113.0	17263.1	16788.0
1993-94	115.0	115.0	16965.7	16840.4
1994-95	117.0	117.2	16010.0	17026.4
1995-96	119.0	119.5	16877.6	17239.6
1996-97	122.1	121.8	18015.3	17718.8
1997-98	124.3	124.0	18329.3	18942.7
1998-99	126.5	126.2	19361.8	20325.4
1999-00	128.1	128.0	22129.5	21334.1
2000-01	129.8	129.9	23791.4	22425.9
2001-02	131.5	131.6	23058.5	23449.1
2002-03	133.5	133.4	23788.4	23707.4

2003-04	135.2	135.2	24477.9	23863.0
2004-05	137.0	137.0	23420.7	24377.1
2005-06	138.8	138.8	24569.3	25007.8
2006-07	140.6		25629.1	
2007-08	142.4		26942.3	

Source: Authors' calculation

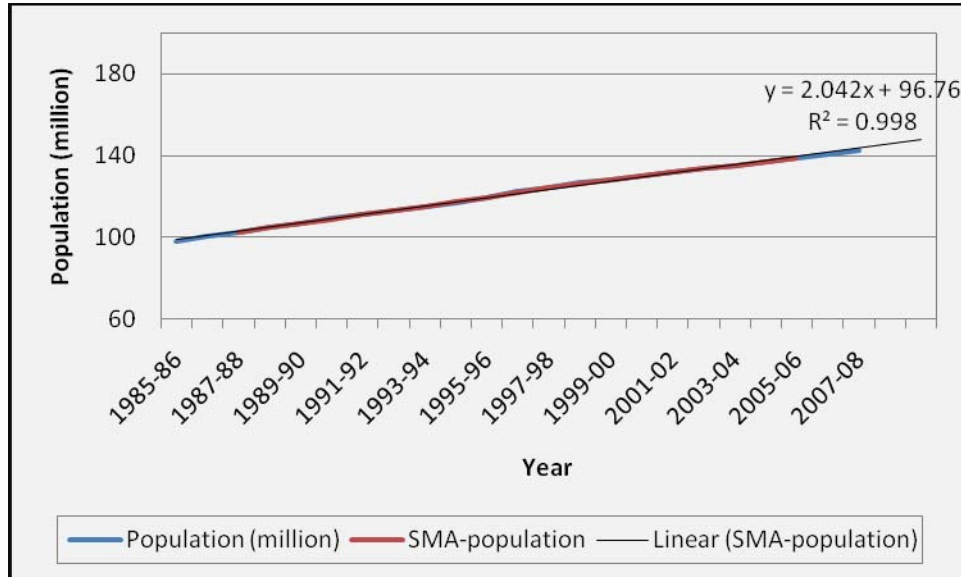
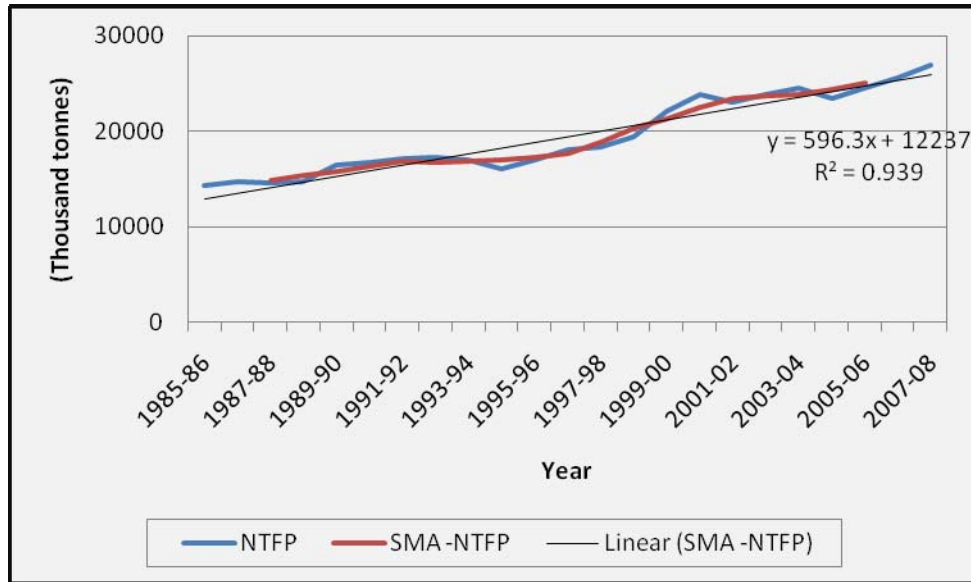


Figure 2: Population Size and 5-Year Simple Moving Average (SMA)

Source: Authors' calculation

On the other hand the SMA-NFTP data set varies from original NFTP observations. This variation is apparent from column 4 (NFTP) and 5 (SMA-NFTP) in the Table 2. For instance, in 1993-94, the figures for actual food grain production (NFTP) and randomly estimated food grain production (SMA-NFTP) are very similar- 16965.7 and 16840.7 thousand tonnes respectively but in 1994-95, the value of NFTP (16010) is much smaller than estimated SMA-NFTP value (17026); whereas in 1999-00, this value of NFTP (22129.5) is much greater than the value of SMA-NFTP (21334.1). This result suggests that the food grain production in Bangladesh has got seasonal and cyclical trends, and it is subject to some risks and uncertainty that might be caused by natural calamities such as floods, cyclone, drought, over-rainfalls etc and/or originated from market forces such as demand, supply, prices etc. This trend of fluctuation in estimated food grain production is presented in Figure 3.

As mentioned earlier the trends of true observations and randomly generated (through SMA) stochastic observations of the size of population are similar as shown in Figure 2. This result is expected and realistic in terms of the nature of the data (population). It suggests that the growth



**Figure 3: Net Total Food grain Production (NTFP) and 5-Year Simple Moving Average (SMA)**  
 Source: Authors' calculation

of population is almost in a linear trend and free from seasonal and cyclical bias. The regression line (trend line) of stochastic observations is represented by the equation

$$y = 2.0425x + 96.767 \quad \text{or}$$

$$y = 96.767 + 2.0425x, \quad (x = 0, 1, 2, \dots, N).$$

Where  $y$  is the size of population and  $x$  is the reference year of that population. The coefficient of determination,  $R^2$  is a statistical measure of how well a regression line approximates real data. In this model  $R^2 = 0.998$  suggests that 99 percent of the estimated observations are likely to be predicted by this model.

Figure 3 presents the values of observed (NTFP) and estimated (SMA-NTFP) food grain production. There is a seasonal and cyclical variation in the trend of food grain production as mentioned earlier. The SMA method generated a linear trend in future food grain production as shown by the linear (SMA-NTFP) line.

This line is represented by the equation

$$y = 596.37x + 12237 \quad \text{or}$$

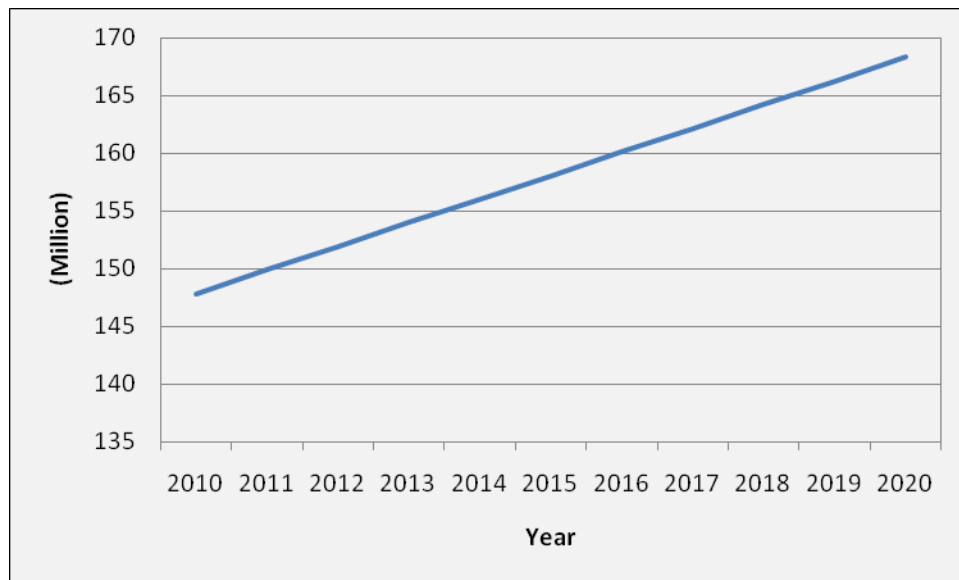
$$y = 12237 + 596.37x, \quad (x = 0, 1, 2, \dots, N).$$

Where  $y$  is the value of estimated NTFP and  $x$  is the reference year of that food grain production. In this model  $R^2 = 0.9395$  suggests that this model is likely to have the capability of predicting 93

percent of the estimated observations. On the basis of the above two trend lines and models the study suggests that prediction of population growth will more likely be precise than the projection of food grain production.

Using the above estimated linear equations (trend lines) the study has projected the size of population, NTFP, food grain requirement and food grain balance in Bangladesh for a period from 2010 to 2020. These projected values are presented in Figure 4 and Figure 5. The size of population will grow from 147.8 million in 2010 to 168.3 million in 2020. This projection suggests that the size of population will increase over 2 million per year indicating a similar trend of growth to the observed period between 1985-86 and 2007-08. Therefore, the study predicts that the size of population in Bangladesh will grow by 20.5 million over next decade.

The food grain requirement is estimated on the basis of necessity of 453.66 gm per day per head as estimated by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (MoA 2007: Table 1.01). Therefore, FR estimation is based on estimated size of population and their food grain requirements. In 2010, the estimated FR is 24480.6 thousand tonnes. This figure is estimated to increase to 27862.9 thousand tonnes in 2020. The study forecasts that there will be an increase in FR by an average of 338.2 thousand tonnes per annum over next decade.

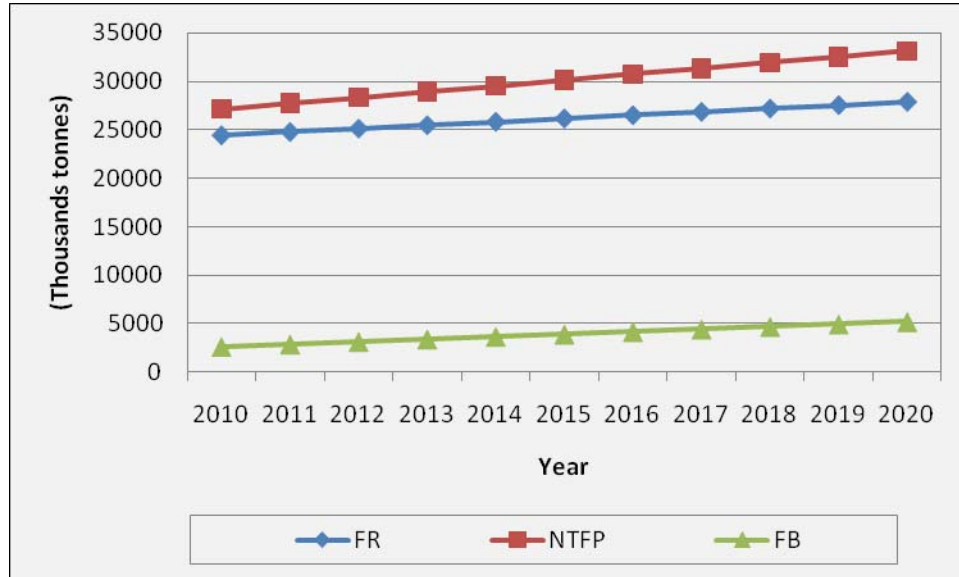


**Figure 4: Projected Population in Bangladesh by 2020**

Source: Authors' calculation

In Bangladesh net food grain production is calculated by deducting 11.58 percent from total food grain production for seeds, wastage as per study on '*Seed, Feed and Post Harvest Losses*' conducted by Ministry of Food (MoA 2007: note (ii) for Table 1.01). The projected values of NTFP in 2010 and 2020 are likely to be 27142.8 and 33105.1 thousand tonnes respectively. It is

expected that the NTFP will increase by an average of 596.37 thousand tonnes per year over next decade exceeding annual FR over the same period resulting in a positive balance of food grain.



**Figure 5: Projected food grain requirement (FR), net total food grain production (NTFP) and food grain balance (FB) in Bangladesh by 2020**

Source: Authors' calculation

The estimated balance of food grain of a particular year is estimated by the difference between NTFP and FR of that year. Therefore, the study projects that food grain balance will be positive and will increase by an average of 258.17 thousand tonnes. The food grain balances in 2010 and 2020 are expected to be 2662.2 and 5242.1 thousand tonnes respectively.

**Conclusion**

The projections of this study suggest that the NTFP in Bangladesh will be likely to increase by a faster rate than the rate of population growth by 2020. So, Bangladesh is expected to continue to experience food surplus over next decade. However, the size of population is too large to live in a small country posing a big challenge to the government and policy makers in ensuring future sustainable development. On the other hand, food grain production in Bangladesh is much dependent of natural calamities such as floods - mixed with risks and uncertainty. The uncertainty elements of natural conditions may hamper future food grain production leading to food grain shortage of the economy. The study suggests that the trend of population growth will likely be more predictable and accurate than the movement of food grain production indicating an important policy implication for population reduction. The government should adopt population

policies to reduce the rate of population growth to ensure sustainable development in future. These policies may include incentives for late marriage and small family size, increasing awareness of population problems and policies to improve child mortality rate so that couples are not indented to expect more children in their family because of uncertainty of lives of existing children due to high rate of child mortality. These policy measures may reduce the growth of population and help the government solve population problem and reduce food grain requirement in future.

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**Appendix****A1: Population, Food grain Requirement (FR), Net Total Food grain Production (NTFP) and Net Food grain Balance (NFB) in Bangladesh: 1985-86 to 2007-2008**

Year	Population (million)	FR (000 tonnes)	NTFP (000 tonnes)	NFB (000 tonnes)
1985-86	98.1	16605.8	14239.2	-2366.6
1986-87	100.3	16970.0	14591.1	-2378.9
1987-88	102.5	17334.3	14558.3	-2776.0
1988-89	104.7	17681.9	14650.5	-3031.4
1989-90	106.8	18029.6	16449.0	-1580.6
1990-91	108.9	18377.3	16615.9	-1761.4
1991-92	111.0	18708.4	17085.4	-1623.0
1992-93	113.0	19039.5	17263.1	-1776.4
1993-94	115.0	19370.7	16965.7	-2405.0
1994-95	117.0	19701.8	16010.0	-3691.7
1995-96	119.0	20215.0	16877.6	-3337.4
1996-97	122.1	20579.2	18015.3	-2563.9
1997-98	124.3	20943.5	18329.3	-2614.2
1998-99	126.5	21208.4	19361.8	-1846.6
1999-00	128.1	21489.8	22129.5	639.7
2000-01	129.8	21771.3	23791.4	2020.1
2001-02	131.5	22094.1	23058.5	964.4
2002-03	133.5	22350.8	23788.4	1437.6
2003-04	135.2	22549.4	24477.9	1928.5
2004-05	137.0	22855.7	23420.7	565.0
2005-06	138.8	22855.7	24569.3	1713.6
2006-07	140.6	23029.6	25629.1	2599.6
2007-08	142.4	23576.3	26942.3	3365.9

Source: MoA 2007: Table 1.01; MoF 2008: 241



## Women Empowerment or Autonomy: A Comparative View in Bangladesh Context

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**Abstract:** *This study attempts to measure and distinguish women empowerment and autonomy from each other by constructing indices in three specific dimensions namely economic decision making, household decision making, and physical movement in Bangladesh context. Using data from BDHS-2004, we observe that there prevails a mid-level of women empowerment but autonomy level of Bangladeshi women is absolutely low. The level of women autonomy decreases with the increase of education whereas education increases the level of women empowerment but not smoothly. Women's current age, place of residence, education, religion, media exposure etc. are the important factors affecting women empowerment and their autonomy.*

### Introduction

Based on the biological (sex) differences every society imposes certain rules, regulations, responsibilities, and rights of men and women. If we try to observe these behaviours and practices carefully, we will see that most of these rules and regulations are discriminatory. This discriminatory behaviour creates difference between men and women, which eventually gives a lower status to women in terms of men socially, culturally, religiously, economically and legally. At the 2005 World Summit, Governments of all nations agreed that “progress for women is progress for all”. But the technical terms such as autonomy, empowerment, status, gender equality etc. through which we indicate the progress of women are sometimes difficult to separate from each other, for example, autonomy from empowerment, and sometimes because of misconception, are used improperly.

It is important to understand the actual meaning of these terms to find out the absolute way of meaningful progression of women as well as society. The frequency of the use of a technical term has usually been inversely proportionate to the understanding of its meaning. For example, “empowerment” is a very widely used term, particularly in the context of women and the poor, but is often misused and poorly defined. It is not always clear whether those who use terms such as

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women empowerment, gender equality, female autonomy or women's status are referring to the same or different concepts. Some scholars argue that often there is no clear demarcation between these terms. Mason (1998) and Mason and Smith (2000) for example, treat empowerment, autonomy, and gender stratification interchangeably. Similarly, Jejeebhoy (2000) considers autonomy and empowerment as more or less equal terms, and defines both in terms of women "gaining control of their own lives vis-à-vis family, community, society, markets."

In contrast, other authors have explicitly argued that autonomy is not equivalent to empowerment, stressing that autonomy implies independence whereas empowerment may well be achieved through interdependence (Govindasamy and Malhotra 1996; Kabeer 1998; Malhotra and Mather 1997). Various studies of "women's status" often covered aspects of empowerment without explicitly labelling it as women's status, refers only the women's overall position in the community. Acharya and Bennett (1981) used the more general term "women's status" but located a nexus of gender-related power differentials in the household, noting how important the family unit is to understanding the operation of gender in a society. They also highlighted the links between women's economic roles and their control over resources and life options. While defining status, Dixon (1978) stated "women's power can be distinguished from women's status, in that status refers to women's overall position in the society, while power refers to women's ability to influence and control at the interpersonal level. Thus, female power can be defined as women's ability to control or change other women's or man's behaviour and the ability to determine important events in their lives, even when older women are opposed to them.

Empowerment may be defined as the process of removing the factors which cause the powerlessness. Empowerment has been used to represent a wide range of concepts and to describe a proliferation of outcomes. The term has been used more often to advocate for certain types of policies and intervention strategies than to analyse them, as demonstrated by a number of documents from the United Nations (UNDAW 2001; UNICEF 1999). Kabeer (2001), whose definition is the most widely accepted, defines empowerment as "the expansion of people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them". Bennett (2002) described empowerment as "the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions which affect them." Keller and Mbwewe (1991) described women empowerment as "a process whereby women become able to organize themselves to increase their own self-reliance, to assert their independent right to make choices and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination". The core of the meaning of women empowerment lies in the ability of a woman to control her own destiny. Almost all definitions of women empowerment

include some reference to an expansion of choice and freedom to make decisions and take the actions necessary to shape life-outcomes (Malhotra and Schuler 2005).

According to the framework developed by the Task Force on Education and Gender Equality of the United Nations Millennium Project, resources can be seen as including capabilities (including health, nutrition, and education); access to opportunities (including access to economic assets and resources and political opportunity); and security (safety from violence and conflict). In the Task Force's conceptualization, the term gender equality reflected equality in access between women and men to each of these sets of resources. Such equality, however, is necessary but not sufficient to achieve empowerment. It creates the enabling context for an empowerment process, but does not guarantee empowerment.

Gender equity "recognizes that women and men have different needs, preferences, and interests and that equality of outcomes may necessitate different treatment of men and women" (Reeves and Baden 2000). As a result, any discussion of empowerment emphasizes the process of engaging people more than the content of what is done with them. It encompasses the ability to formulate strategic choices, and to control resources and decisions that affect important life outcomes. From the above discussion we can conclude that women empowerment is a process through which they start gaining more power and control over their own lives and circumstances than that of the previous times whereas women autonomy is certain power of women by which they can do whatever they like to, without seeking permission or without having consent of others. The status of women means that the power and facilities women are presently having in the society. The determinants of women's status are ratio of male to female adult literacy rate, ratio of female to male life expectancy at birth, earned income share etc. (Haddad 1999). Gender equality refers to the equal opportunities for women to have in case of law, resource, power etc.

### **Objectives**

This study attempts to clarify the differences among the technical terms like women empowerment, autonomy, status, gender equality etc. which have frequently been misused in many studies. Due to the lack of direct data, in many previous studies, proxy variables have been used to measure the empowerment of women. This study measures the empowerment and autonomy of women directly by computing indices. It presents levels of women empowerment and autonomy in different dimensions and their differences. Also an attempt has been made to examine the net effect of different variables on women empowerment and autonomy in Bangladeshi context.

### **Data Source and Methods**

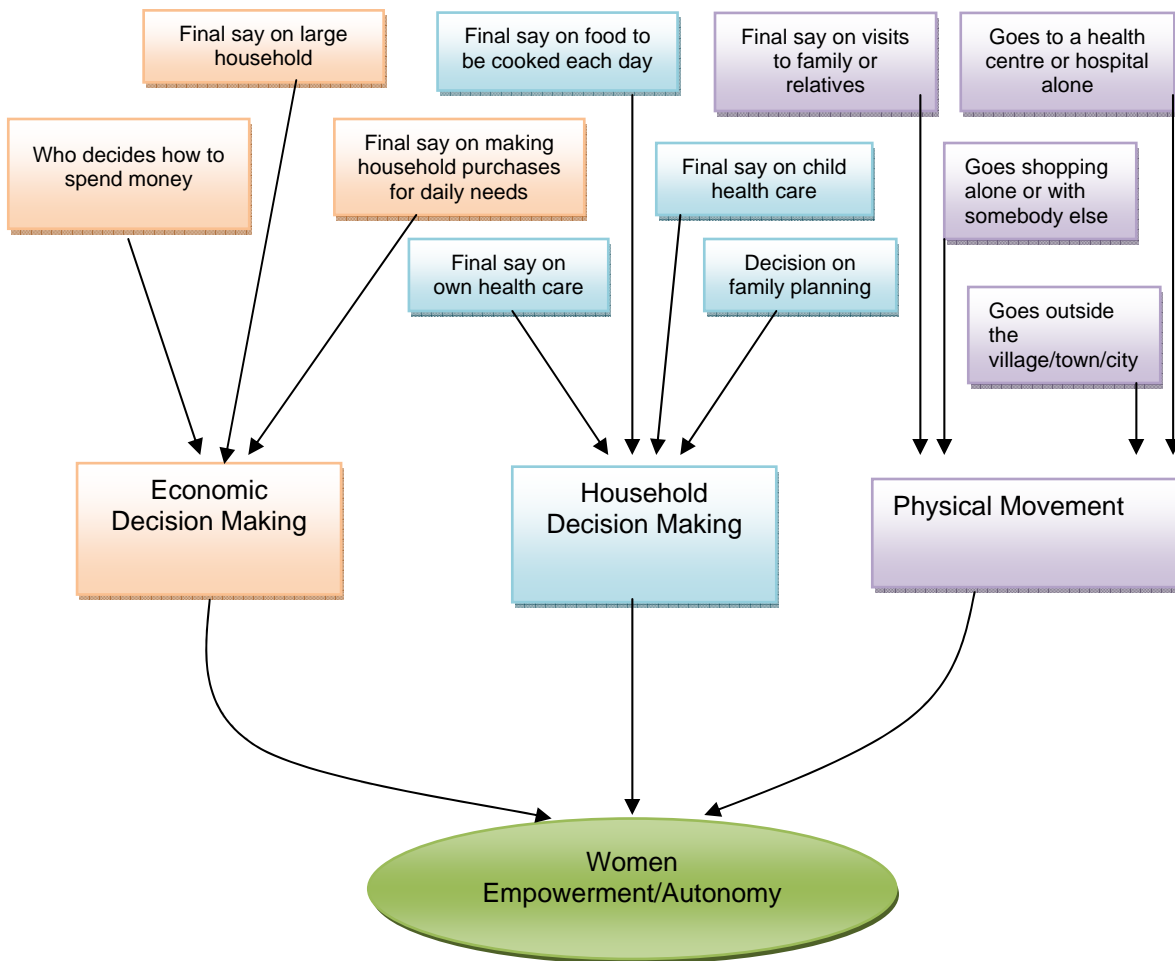
This study utilizes the data extracted from a nationally representative survey, Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) – 2004, which was conducted under the authority of National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT) of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The data collection took place over a five-month period from January 1 to May 25, 2004. Information were collected from 11,440 ever-married women of age 10-49 and 4297 men of age 15-54 from 10,500 households covering 361 sample points (clusters) in 122 urban areas and 239 rural areas throughout Bangladesh. The planning and implementation of the 2004 BDHS has not been done specifically for women empowerment. Therefore, in this study, due to missing data, instead of 11,440 ever married women, information of 2282 women for economic decision making, 5106 women for household decision making and 5699 women for physical movement dimension were available.

First we compute indices in different dimensions of women empowerment and autonomy in accordance with Haque, Tareque and Mostofa (2010) which has been explained in next section named construction of index. At the bivariate level, simple descriptive method of mean analysis and finally at the multivariate level, multiple linear regression analysis are employed.

### **Construction of Index**

Although the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) 2004 was not designed to capture the specific concept of “women empowerment” or “women autonomy”, the information in this survey did cover the major dimensions of these concepts, namely, (a) economic decision making, (b) household decision making, and (c) physical movement. The indicators for different dimensions used are in accordance with Mason and Smith (2003). They included the indicators, “Who decides how to spend money”, “Final say on large household purchases” and “Final say on making household purchases for daily needs” under **Economic Decision Making**, “Final say on own health care”, “Final say on child health care”, “Final say on food to be cooked each day” and “Decision on family planning” under **Household Decision Making** and “Final say on visits to family or relatives”, “Goes outside the village/town/city alone”, “Goes to a health centre or hospital alone” and “Goes shopping alone or with somebody else” under **Freedom of Movement** dimensions. They used actual score only for their study. But we went one step further in indexing the scores similar to Human Development Index (HDI).

The whole process can be presented in a diagrammatic form which is shown in Figure1.



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the construction of women empowerment and women autonomy index**

In this study an attempt has been made to measure women empowerment and autonomy in the domestic sphere by making women empowerment index and women autonomy index for the aforesaid dimensions. The detailed description of these three dimensions with their relevant indicators is given in table 1. The index of each dimension (economic decision making, household decision making, and physical movement) is constructed following HDI made by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP 2005) using the formula below:

$$\text{Dimension Index} = \frac{\text{Actual score} - \text{Minimum score}}{\text{Maximum score} - \text{Minimum score}}$$

The actual score of each dimension is calculated by summing the positive responses of the respondents in favour of their empowerment or autonomy. Maximum score of each dimension is

the total number of indicators belonging to that dimension and minimum score is zero with all negative response. The value of those indices ranges from zero to one and one minus the indices value measures the gap of empowerment or autonomy.

**Table 1: Description of indicators and dimensions for constructing women empowerment and autonomy indices**

Dimension	Description of indicator	Coding	Frequency (Percent)	Measurement Scale for Empowerment	Measurement Scale for Autonomy
<b>Economic Decision Making</b>	Who decides how to spend money	1=Respondent alone 2=Respondent and husband/partner 3=Respondent and other person 4=Husband/partner alone 5=Someone else	48.0 36.3 3.1 11.0 1.7	1,2,3 = 1 4,5 = 0	1=1 Else=0
	Final say on large household purchases	1=Respondent alone 2=Respondent and husband/partner 3=Respondent and other person 4=Husband/partner alone 5=Someone else 6=Decision not made/not applicable	12.2 35.8 9.4 30.5 12.0	1,2,3 = 1 4,5,6 = 0	1=1 Else=0
	Final say on making household purchases for daily needs	1=Respondent alone 2=Respondent and husband/partner 3=Respondent and other person 4=Husband/partner alone 5=Someone else 6=Decision not made/not applicable	21.4 28.1 8.2 30.0 12.4 0.0	1,2,3 = 1 4,5,6 = 0	1=1 Else=0
<b>Household Decision Making</b>	Final say on own health care	1=Respondent alone 2=Respondent and husband/partner 3=Respondent and other person 4=Husband/partner alone 5=Someone else 6=Decision not made/not applicable	21.5 22.1 5.4 42.9 8.2 0.0	1,2,3 = 1 4,5,6 = 0	1=1 Else=0
	Final say on child health care	1=Respondent alone 2=Respondent and husband/partner 3=Respondent and other person 4=Husband/partner alone 5=Someone else 6=Decision not made/not applicable	20.9 31.0 5.4 28.3 7.0 0.0 7.5	1,2,3 = 1 4,5,6,7 = 0	1=1 Else=0

		applicable 7=Not applicable/no child			
	Final say on food to be cooked each day	1=Respondent alone 2=Respondent and husband/partner 3=Respondent and other person 4=Husband/partner alone 5=Someone else 6=Decision not made/not applicable	72.3 4.4 9.6 3.2 10.5 0.0	1,2,3 = 1 4,5,6 = 0	1=1 Else=0
	Decision on family planning	1=Mainly respondent 2=Mainly husband 3=Joint decision 6=Others	15.4 8.0 76.4 0.2	1,3 = 1 2,6 = 0	1=1 Else=0
<b>Physical Movement</b>	Final say on visits to family or relatives	1=Respondent alone 2=Respondent and husband/partner 3=Respondent and other person 4=Husband/partner alone 5=Someone else 6=Decision not made/not applicable	16.4 34.0 8.0 31.6 10.0 0.0	1,2,3 = 1 4,5,6 = 0	1=1 Else=0
	Goes outside the village/town/city alone	0=No 1=Alone 2=With children 6=Others	30.9 22.2 43.5 3.4	1 = 1 0,2,6 = 0	1=1 Else=0
	Goes to a health centre or hospital alone	0=No 1=Alone 2=With children 3=With husband 6=Others	9.1 30.9 20.1 34.0 5.8	1 = 1 0,2,3,6 = 0	1=1 Else=0
	Goes shopping alone or with somebody else	1=Alone 2=With children 3=With husband 4=With relatives	46.9 18.6 22.5 12.0	1 = 1 2,3,4 = 0	1=1 Else=0

**Notes:** Here the number of items (indicators) is 11; Cronbach's alpha value is 0.706 and Cronbach's alpha value based on standardized items is 0.689.

### Dimensions of Women Empowerment/Autonomy:

In a study, Malhotra et al. (2002) synthesized and listed the most commonly used dimensions of women empowerment. They categorized women empowerment into six dimensions such as economic, socio-cultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political and psychological. But due to unavailability of all the data regarding aforementioned dimensions, here women empowerment and autonomy have been divided into three dimensions viz. economic decision making,

household decision making and physical movement with different measurement scale (see table 1).

#### *Empowerment/Autonomy in Economic Decision Making*

Control over decision-making is a fundamental component to the concept of empowerment/autonomy. Women empowerment/autonomy in economic decision making refers to the women's ability to share or to control over the decision processes regarding domestic financial matters with husband or other male family members. It would uplift the status, control over resources, meeting the basic needs and altogether improving self-reliance, thereby reducing women's economic subordination. Indeed, the measurement of women empowerment in economic decision making is based on three indicators such as participation in the family's major economic decision, final say on household or daily purchases, and opinion on how to spend money. Economic decision making index tends to provide the measurement of empowerment/autonomy of women regarding economic decision making.

#### *Empowerment/Autonomy in Household Decision Making*

Empowerment/autonomy of women regarding household decision making refers to the extent of women's ability to participate in formulating and executing decisions on domestic affair, child-welfare, own health care and family planning in coordination with other male family members. The increased role in household decision making would enable women to improve their self-determination, control over resources, self-esteem, autonomy, and status and power relations within households. Measurement of women empowerment/autonomy in household decision making is calculated on the basis of four indicators such as women's participation in decision on their own health care, child health care, which food to be cooked each day and their participation in discussion on family planning.

#### *Empowerment/Autonomy in Physical Movement*

Empowerment/autonomy in physical movement refers to the freedom of women to move to their necessary places without being escorted. Several studies have revealed that promotion of women's freedom of movement is necessary to make them capable of making their own choices, to change their attitudes, to improve their social networks and to reduce their level of poverty. According to Parveen and Leonhauser (2004), the lack of women's physical mobility deprives them of getting better livelihood opportunities. Here, we measure women empowerment/autonomy in physical movement by making index on the basis of questions about whether they can go shopping, outside the village/town/city or to hospital alone and whether they can visit their relative's house alone.



## Results and Discussion

Decision making has been a central concern of much prior research on women autonomy. It is commonly believed that economic empowerment and stringent legal instruments have important role to play in combating social inequalities and disparities. Economic solvency is vital to ensure basic necessities and opportunities for every citizen including men and women. It is hypothesized that a greater involvement in household decision making will place women in a better position to exert influence over health, control over household resources etc. and women's freedom of physical movement outside the home may have important implications for exposure to information, development of interpersonal skills, increased self-confidence, and opportunities to take independent action. Table 2 presents the comparative result of women empowerment and women autonomy by mean values of economic decision-making index (EDMI), household decision-making index (HDMI), and physical movement index (PMI) for some selected socio-economic and demographic settings of women.

**Table 2: Mean Values of Empowerment and Autonomy Indices by Some Demographic and Socio-economic Variables**

Variables	Mean of EDM I	Mean of HDMI	Mean of PMI
<b>Respondent's age</b>			
<20	0.556 (0.180)	0.597 (0.180)	0.295 (0.190)
20-35	0.725 (0.310)	0.734 (0.320)	0.456 (0.340)
36+	0.790 (0.430)	0.758 (0.370)	0.576 (0.470)
<b>Husband's age</b>			
<20	0.533 (0.270)	0.634 (0.090)	0.287 (0.170)
20-35	0.672 (0.220)	0.678 (0.260)	0.372 (0.260)
36+	0.740 (0.300)	0.757 (0.360)	0.508 (0.390)
<b>Age difference between spouses</b>			
<0	0.633 (0.570)	0.633 (0.420)	0.567 (0.500)
0	0.952 (0.520)	0.816 (0.370)	0.550 (0.420)
1-5	0.714 (0.240)	0.724 (0.320)	0.446 (0.330)
6-10	0.708 (0.260)	0.712 (0.310)	0.442 (0.320)
11-20	0.721 (0.280)	0.734 (0.310)	0.448 (0.330)
21+	0.748 (0.340)	0.711 (0.380)	0.514 (0.420)
<b>Age at first marriage</b>			
<15	0.731 (0.360)	0.717 (0.330)	0.488 (0.390)
15-16	0.742 (0.310)	0.725 (0.310)	0.457 (0.340)
17-19	0.704 (0.330)	0.731 (0.300)	0.433 (0.310)

20+	0.817 (0.360)	0.720 (0.280)	0.478 (0.350)
<b>Respondent's education</b>			
Illiterate	0.734 (0.370)	0.722 (0.350)	0.541 (0.450)
Primary	0.750 (0.320)	0.724 (0.320)	0.463 (0.350)
Secondary	0.681 (0.300)	0.711 (0.280)	0.398 (0.280)
Higher	0.843 (0.330)	0.748 (0.270)	0.476 (0.340)
<b>Husband's education</b>			
Illiterate	0.743 (0.370)	0.719 (0.350)	0.526 (0.430)
Primary	0.701 (0.290)	0.719 (0.320)	0.455 (0.350)
Secondary	0.733 (0.370)	0.720 (0.290)	0.435 (0.320)
Higher	0.811 (0.340)	0.733 (0.280)	0.445 (0.310)
<b>Place of residence</b>			
Rural	0.712 (0.310)	0.704 (0.310)	0.449 (0.340)
Urban	0.773 (0.400)	0.750 (0.320)	0.493 (0.380)
<b>Religion</b>			
Non-Muslim	0.705 (0.240)	0.726 (0.280)	0.488 (0.360)
Muslim	0.741 (0.360)	0.721 (0.320)	0.467 (0.360)
<b>Media exposure</b>			
Yes	0.752 (0.340)	0.725 (0.310)	0.458 (0.430)
No	0.703 (0.350)	0.712 (0.330)	0.524 (0.340)
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.737 (0.340)</b>	<b>0.722 (0.320)</b>	<b>0.470 (0.360)</b>

**Note:** Mean values of autonomy indices are shown in parenthesis.

Age is a factor of life cycle that affects a woman's status in the family. A Bangladeshi traditional concept is that daughter in law may be responsible for the household work but mother in law has the authority to take the decisions about the family matters. Similar to this, the result of this study shows both empowerment and autonomy, in all three dimensions, are higher for the older respondents and their husbands but the autonomy level of women is much lower than the empowerment level. Big spousal age difference is common in Bangladesh and the result here shows interesting variations. The women of same age as their husbands have the highest and women senior to their husbands have the lowest empowerment in both economic decision making and household decision making but an inverse result is seen for autonomy of women and the women senior to their husbands have the highest level of autonomy in all three dimensions. Age at first marriage is a very useful demographic variable. The formation of first marriage brings important changes in a women's family situation and in her future expectations and opportunities. Singh and Samara (1996) have noted that a women's age at first marriage may be a useful indicator of her status. Empowerment level in economic decision making is comparatively higher

for the women who got married after 20+ years of age but inconsistent results were found for other groups. Surprisingly enough, the autonomy level of women who got married in their earlier age (<15 years) have the highest level of autonomy in all three dimensions.

Educational attainment is, without doubt the most fundamental prerequisite for empowering women in all spheres of society. Husband's education is also important to understand the needs of wife and involve wife in decision making and to give freedom of choices along with movement. Furthermore, education is a powerful instrument for acquiring new values and, consequently, for modifying ones relationship with other human beings and the environment. This study shows that higher educated women have the highest level of empowerment in economic decision making and household decision making but illiterate women have the highest empowerment in physical movement. On the other hand, illiterate women have the highest autonomy in all three dimensions and even the autonomy level of women in household decision making decreases with the increase of educational level. Husband's education shows almost the same result for both empowerment and autonomy of women. This suggests that education, in a patriarchal society like Bangladesh, does not always improve women empowerment regarding physical movement (Haque, Tareque and Mostofa, 2010) as well as the overall empowerment or autonomy of women.

As expected, the result shows more empowerment and more autonomy for urban women than that of rural women. Interestingly, Muslim women are more autonomous than non-Muslim women in economic decision making and in household decision making while for physical movement both Muslim and non-Muslim women have the same level of autonomy. On the other hand, non-Muslim women are more empowered in household decision making and in physical movement but not in economic decision making.

Exposure to media is an index on exposure to mass media and was formed using three questions asked regarding their exposure to three media (print, audio, and visual). Media is the medium through which a woman could obtain knowledge/awareness/information outside the school curriculum. This study shows wide variation for level of empowerment and level of autonomy. The women who have exposure to media are more empowered but less autonomous in economic decision making and household decision making. Again the women having exposure to media are more autonomous but less empowered in physical movement than women who did not have exposure to media. This supports the thinking that the increase in empowerment of women does not always increase the autonomy of women.

### Factors Affecting Women Empowerment and Women Autonomy

Multiple linear regression analysis has been employed to examine the effect of different socio-demographic variables on women empowerment and on their autonomy in different dimensions. The results of this study show interesting variations in the impact of different variables on women empowerment and on women autonomy. It is found that women's age and place of residence have positive significant effect on women empowerment and also on women autonomy in all three dimensions i.e. both women empowerment and women autonomy increases with the increase of women's age and urban women are more empowered and autonomous than that of rural women. Women's education, a leading variable, shows negative effect on women autonomy in all three dimensions but positive significant effect on women empowerment in household decision making. This means that education in our patriarchal conservative society does not necessarily improve women autonomy although it empowers women. Husband's education depicts almost same result as women's education. Although age at marriage of women significantly increases women empowerment in economic dimension but it shows insignificantly negative effect on women autonomy in all three dimensions. Religion in Bangladesh is an important variable that has significant effect on both empowerment and autonomy in case of economic decision making. Interestingly enough, Muslim women are significantly more autonomous in all three dimensions than that of non-Muslim women. Media exposure has significantly positive effect on women empowerment but insignificant effect on women autonomy in economic decision making.

**Table 3: Multiple Linear Regression of Different Empowerment and Autonomy Indices by Some Selected Socio-demographic Variables**

Variables	Coefficients of empowerment and autonomy indices					
	EDMI		HDMI		PMI	
	EI	AI	EI	AI	EI	AI
Constant	0.3520***	-0.0693	0.5710***	0.1490***	0.1890***	0.1100***
Respondent's age	0.0068***	0.0089***	0.0057***	0.0068***	0.0096***	0.0095***
Age at marriage	0.00451*	-0.0072	-0.0031**	-0.0040***	0.0094	-0.0005
Respondent's education	0.0021	-0.0036	0.0041***	-0.0022*	-0.0040***	-0.0069***
Husband's education	-0.0014	0.0016	-0.0018**	-0.0019***	-0.0015**	-0.0010
Place of residence						
Rural®						
Urban	0.0431***	0.0891***	0.0418***	0.0216***	0.0519***	0.0483***
Religion						
Non-Muslim®						

Muslim	0.0503**	0.1200***	-0.0015	0.0404***	-0.0046	0.0090
<b>Media exposure</b>						
No®						
Yes	0.0543***	0.0033	0.0125	0.0069	-0.0190*	-0.0261**

**Notes:** 'EI' refers to empowerment index,  
 'AI' refers to autonomy index,  
 '®' refers to reference group  
 Significant level: \*\*\*, \*\* and \* indicate  $p < 0.001$ ,  $p < 0.05$  and  $p < 0.10$  respectively.

### Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The level of women empowerment in economic decision making and household decision making is satisfactory but the empowerment in physical movement is very low and the autonomy level of women for all three dimensions in Bangladesh is the least. Although this country has been governed by two women leaders for almost two decades but traditionally there prevails negative social view about women autonomy in the household level, even women themselves think autonomy is bad and sometimes it is a shameful matter for male members if a family is driven by women. Therefore, unfortunately the situation of women remains unchanged.

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# Socio-economic Characteristics and English Language Achievement in Rural Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** *This paper reports data from the author's PhD research which examined, among other issues, relationships between secondary school students' family socio-economic characteristics and their academic achievement in English in a rural sub-district in Bangladesh. The data show that the rural students had low levels of academic achievement in English as measured by their scores on a proficiency test as well as their grades in English in the school-leaving examination. Within this overall low level of achievement, there were patterned relationships between the students' family income and parental education and their academic achievement in English. Students who had higher levels of parental education and family income were more likely to obtain higher scores on the proficiency test as well as higher grades in English in the Secondary School Certificate examination. The paper discusses these findings and suggests their implications for theory, practice and policy of L2 English teaching and learning in developing societies in general and Bangladesh in particular.*

## Introduction

Discourses of the benefits of English, for instance, English symbolising 'Aladdin's lamp' or providing access to 'international opportunity' abound the literature (Crystal 1997; Gargesh 2006; Kachru 1990; McKay and Bokhorst-Heng 2008; Pegrum 2004). It is debatable whether English proficiency by itself qualifies one to invoke 'the magical giant' that will do whatever one wishes, or provides one with the means to access global opportunities, but there is no denying that those who are English-proficient have decisive advantage over those who are not, assuming the former and the latter are otherwise comparable. However, what these discourses of English do not point out are the requirements for English learning in the form of investment – material, social and cultural – from public and private sources, and who are able to mobilise these resources and who are not, and whether there are relationships between resource investment and English learning achievement. Said differently, questions such as which groups of learners succeed in learning the valued language and who do not, and, as a consequence, who are entitled to the benefits of English and who are left out are missing in these discourses.

During British colonial rule, access to English and English proficiency achievement in the empire was associated with social elitism (see Rassool 2007). British rule introduced English and English education in India to run the colonial machinery as well as to comply with the growing demand of Western education. However, introducing English on a large scale was neither practical nor in the interest of the colonial project (Pennycook 1994). Therefore, the provision of English education was restricted (Pennycook 2004a), and only the social elites had access to its learning. The global profile of English has changed significantly since the colonial days. English has spread

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almost all over the world at present. It has entrenched more in the former colonies now than it was during British rule. Increasingly, state policies in developing countries have introduced more English in the school curriculum, and the universalisation of primary education has ensured children's access to early instruction in English. One would therefore expect that these desirable educational developments should have significantly weakened the nexus of English to social elitism forged during colonial rule. Has it been the case in reality? Has the global spread and popularity of English ruled out the traditional elite advantage in English learning?

Addressing these questions empirically is challenging in our current state of knowledge because there has been little research on the comparative achievements of English as a second/foreign language (L2/FL) by students belonging to different social standings. This paucity of research in L2 education is unacceptable, particularly when compared with research in sociology of education which identifies, among other issues, the social correlates of academic achievement (Sadovnik 2007). In fact, socio-economic status (SES) characteristics, which are investigated to explicate students' scholastic achievement or underachievement, constitute the most common variable in sociology of education (Sirin 2005). Operationalisations of academic achievement adopted in this body of educational research usually refer to standardised test scores or school grades in mathematics, science, reading and verbal skills in the first language. English as an L2/FL is yet to be fully utilised as a potential outcome variable, particularly in countries where the language is an essential component of the national curriculum. Based on data from the author's PhD research in rural Bangladesh (Author 2009), this article addresses this gap in research. Specifically, it investigates relationships between students' family socio-economic issues and their English proficiency achievement as measured by English language test scores and grades in the national school-leaving examination.

The paper is organised as follows. The next section briefly outlines some theoretical and empirical developments which have inspired the study. This is followed by a review of research that has investigated relationships between SES and academic achievement in English as an L2/FL. The section that follows introduces the study and outlines its context and methodology. The next section presents data and their analyses at three levels – univariate, bivariate and multivariate. The findings are then discussed and the limitations of the work outlined before drawing out their implications and suggestions for further research in the concluding section.

### **Motivation for the Research**

This work was motivated by research in sociology of education which, as previously noted, explores relationships between students' socio-economic backgrounds and their academic achievement. Given the growing importance of English for individuals and societies in our



globalising world, it is necessary to understand whether academic achievement in English is also mediated by socio-economic variables. This empirical evidence can inform L2 learning theory, pedagogy and policy. As the brief review of work in the next section suggests, little research has been conducted in this regard.

Secondly, inspiration for the research also came from critical approaches to applied linguistics and language education (Pennycook 2001, 2004b; Tollefson 1991, 2000, 2002). Pennycook's critical applied linguistics calls for understanding, among other issues, social inequalities in L2 learning in terms of race, ethnicity, gender and social class. Similarly, Tollefson argues for critical, social perspectives which will allow us to understand different social and institutional constraints which inform language choice and language teaching and learning experiences and outcomes in different social contexts.

Finally, this work was informed by the growing importance of the contested terrain of *social* in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). It represents an attempt at revitalising the call for focusing on the social dimension of second language learning. Although the linguistics- and cognitive psychology-dominated SLA has given some space to the social in recent decades, the latter is still understood in a limited sense, for instance, the immediate context of L2 use or communication (Akbari 2008). The social has not extended to include socio-economic and other contextual forces which influence L2 learners' learning potential, opportunities and outcomes (Author 2009).

### **Research on Socio-economic Status and English Achievement**

As previously pointed out, although there has been substantial research on SES and academic achievement, there has been little work on the relationships between SES and English as an L2/FL achievement. The few studies that explored such relationships have produced inconclusive findings. For instance, Cherian's (1991) research in South Africa substantiated the 'well-established' relationship between parental income and academic achievement in developed as well as developing countries. Cherian collected parental income data by means of a questionnaire survey of 1,021 seventh grade students in the sub-national context of Transkei. Academic achievement was the criterion measure of the aggregated grades in seven subjects including English, Xhosa, mathematics, history, science, geography and agricultural science. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that for low SES students there were positive relationships between parental incomes and academic achievement for both male and female students.

Liando's (2007) doctoral study of EFL achievement considered high school and university students' social backgrounds together with attitudinal and motivational factors. Students' social

cultural backgrounds, which constituted her conceptual framework, included the components of social orientation, parental/family influence and family SES. However, SES was measured in terms of parental occupation and income, without referring to parental education and other family educational resources which play a crucial role in differential academic achievement (see Feinstein et al. 2008; Pittaway 2004). Regarding the effects of SES on EFL achievement, the study concluded:

[...] the correlation between SES and academic achievement was consistently non-significant across the groups. Even when the data from the questionnaire were verified through the interviews, almost all respondents (students and teachers) believed that SES was not related to students' academic achievement. This finding was unexpected because participants in this study came from different socio-economic backgrounds, yet had similar opinions in this matter. (Liando 2007, 182)

Although the students were from different social backgrounds, the sample did not include socio-economically disadvantaged students. In other words, all students had access to a certain level of family resources and learning opportunities, as one of her students typically observed:

In my opinion, parents' social status does not affect directly towards their children's motivation to study English because, in this case, the main subject is the child. In this era, everyone has the same opportunity towards the use of English, in particular in the formal education field. (Liando 2007, 166)

These observations are reminiscent of the interpretations in a British-German study, which stated that in an environment that fosters a belief that "opportunities are open to all", [...] people blame themselves for their failures in education and the labour market, [not external forces]. (Evans 2007, 90)

SES, which comprised parental occupation and income in the Liando study, was not an issue for the students. However, the students underscored the role of parental encouragement and family influence in their motivation and academic achievement. In other words, her participants emphasised parental education and parental encouragement more than parental occupation and income, although parental education was not included in her operationalisation of SES.

In Mexico, on the other hand, González, Lima and Castillo (2004), as reported by Davies (2009), showed relationships between students' socio-economic status, institutions of higher education (public versus private) that they selected for study and their levels of English proficiency. The researchers drew a picture of the contrasts between students' English proficiency at private and public institutions, as reported in Table 1.

**Table 1: Distributions of Students by Levels of Proficiency at the Entry Level at Mexican Public and Private Universities (based on data in Davies 2009, 5-6).**

Proficiency levels	Public university (n = 1500)	Private university (n = 1400)
Upper intermediate+	7%	41%
Lower intermediate/intermediate	15%	43%
Beginner/Elementary	78%	16%

As Table 1 shows, whereas only 22% of students in the public university had lower to upper intermediate levels of English proficiency at the entry level, this figure was 84% for students in the private university. Compared to a mere 7% of students who were assigned to upper intermediate level at the public institution, there was 41% of students with upper intermediate level of proficiency who were not required to take further English courses because they had satisfied English proficiency requirements. Finally, while only 16% of students was assigned to elementary level at the private university, this figure was 78% for the public university students. The contrasts between the socio-economic statuses of students in these two types of institutions, although further details on SES indicators were not provided, and their levels of English proficiency are indeed striking. As Davies noted:

That contrast indicates how English is more quickly and effectively acquired by the upper socio-economic levels of the Mexican population [who mostly attend private schools at the pre-university level], and correspondingly more slowly in the much larger, lower socio-economic levels of the population, e.g., in the public university (not to mention the larger segment of population which does not advance to upper secondary school, let alone university). (2009, 6)

The conclusion that Davies drew presented a grim failure of Mexican ELT where the limited attainable success was to be attributed to socio-economic factors:

Mexican public ELT is clearly a general failure, affecting most of those Mexicans who cannot afford good private education and are not lucky enough to attend one of the best state schools or to be taught by some of their best English teachers. (7)

The few studies reviewed in this section suggest inconsistent relationships between SES and English achievement due to researchers' methodological preferences as well as limitations. Cherian (1991) did not focus exclusively on English achievement; Liando's (2007) dependent variable was EFL achievement, but parental education was missing from her operationalisation of SES; while the Mexican study did not include details on SES characteristics. Moreover, the paucity of research suggests that much more research needs to be carried out in this area. It is

also imperative that studies dealing SES-English achievement relationships include detailed methodological procedures in operationalising the complex constructs of SES and English achievement. Although the data reported in this study have their own limitations, their collection and analyses were guided by methodological transparency and rigour.

## **Context and Methodology**

### *Context*

The main study (Author 2009) on which the present article draws was set in a rural sub-district called Nadiranga, a pseudonym, which is located in the northern region of Bangladesh. This sub-district is one of the poorest in the country (Rahman et al. 2005) where the literacy rate is about 33% (compared to the national literacy rate of 45%) and where the majority of the local residents live below the poverty line (see Author 2009, in press for more details). The larger study was set in this peripheral context in view of two objectives. First, taking Nadiranga as a typical case, the study aimed to highlight the dynamics of English teaching and learning in rural Bangladesh. Second, it aimed to generate empirical evidence for the urban-rural divide in English achievement and to suggest its implications for centralised English language policy and English learning management which are generally guided by discourses of egalitarianism and social equity (see Author forthcoming).

### *Methodology*

The larger study used a mixed-methods research design to explore relationships between aspects of secondary school students' family capital (economic, cultural and social) and *habitus* and their English learning achievement. The present article is based on the quantitative data of the main study. The latter included a range of independent variables related to aspects of economic, cultural and social capital and habitus. This paper selects only a few of these variables that constitute economic (parental occupation and income) and cultural capital (parental education). The quantitative data were generated by means of a questionnaire survey and an English proficiency test for 10<sup>th</sup> grade students which were locally produced by an English Teaching Task Force commissioned by the Ministry of Education. In addition, the students' grades in English in the 2007 national school-leaving examination 2007 called Secondary School Certificate (SSC) were collected from the schools. These two measures of English proficiency – test scores and grades in English – are correlated with measures of parental occupation, income and education data.

A total of 228 10<sup>th</sup> grade students (118 girls and 110 boys) from eight secondary schools in Nadiranga completed the questionnaire and took the English test. Two of the schools were for girls, one for boys and the other five had both boys and girls in their student populations. The

sample included schools from the small rural town in Nadiranga as well as from remote areas within the sub-district. Further details on questionnaire design and research procedures can be found in Author (2009).

### **Data and Findings**

The data of the study were analysed at three levels – univariate, bivariate and multivariate. These three levels of analyses are discussed in the following pages.

#### ***Univariate (Descriptive) Analyses***

##### *Parental occupations, income and educational expenses*

The constituents of family economic capital included 1) parental occupation, 2) parental income, and 3) education expenses per student per month. The upper section of Table 2 shows parental occupations of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade student sample. As can be seen, while fathers were involved in all the occupational categories listed, mothers were overwhelmingly engaged in home-making (91%). This is not surprising in a rural Bangladeshi context, where women contribute to the family mainly by working from within. Since an overwhelming majority of mothers were engaged in home-making, mother's occupation does not provide variability to influence results and was not considered further in the statistical analysis.

Farming was the main occupation of the fathers, reported by about one-third of the study participants. It was followed by business, which employed about 22% of the total sample's parents. Government and non-government services were represented by 13% and 14% of fathers respectively. These two sub-categories were merged as 'salaried service' to create a sizable data segment in the category, which can generate more meaningful data analysis and findings. So there were four categories of occupation for further analysis: salaried service (27%), business (22%), farming (33%) and manual and other (18%).

**Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Different Aspects of Economic Capital (n = 228).**

Parental occupation	Percentages	
	Father	Mother
Govt. service	13.2	1.3
Non-govt. service	14.0	5.3
Business	21.9	0.4
Farming	32.5	0.9
Manual work	9.2	1.3
Home-making	--	90.8
Other	9.2	00

<b>Parental income per month</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Tk. <2000	46.5
Tk. 2001–5000	30.7
Tk. 5001–15,000	19.7
Tk. 15,001–30,000	2.2
Tk. 30,001 or above	0.9
<b>Educational expenses per month</b>	
Tk. < 500	66.7
Tk. 501–1,500	28.1
Tk. 1,501–3,000	4.8
Tk. 3,001–4,500	00
Tk. 4,501 or above	0.4

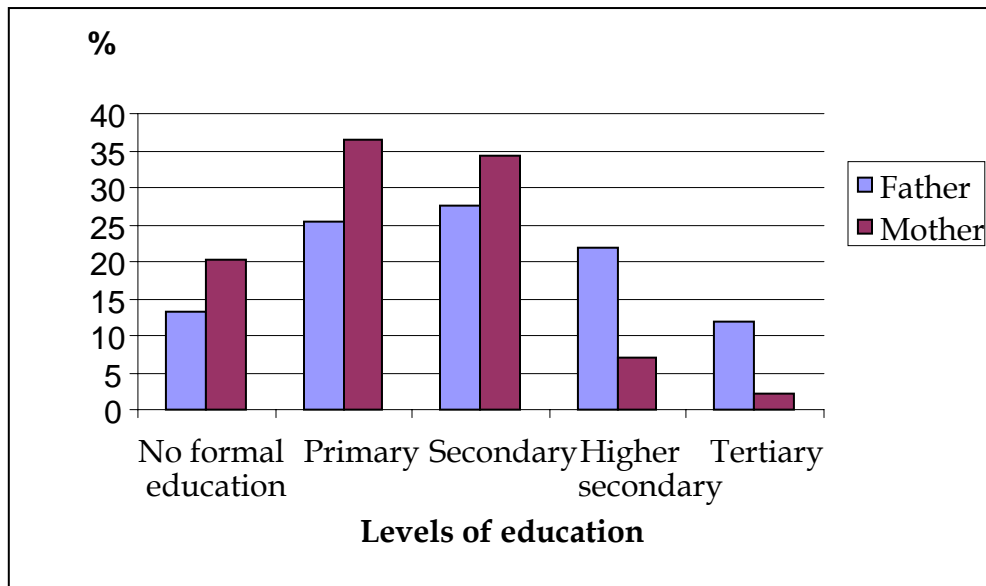
The second and third sections of Table 2 report data on parental income and family expenditure on students' education per month. Given the socio-economic conditions of the sub-district, it was to be expected that most families belonged to low levels of income. Approximately 47% of the families had an income of Tk. < 2000 per month (1 \$ = 70 taka approximately). This is followed by 31% of families on the second income level (Tk. 2001-5000) and 20% of the families on the third level (Tk. 5001-15000). The fourth and the fifth income levels, the highest two, had negligible representation in the data (only about 2% and 1% respectively). Therefore, these two levels were merged with the adjacent third income level, and three levels of income were created for more meaningful statistical analysis with considerable percentages in each category: a) Tk. < 2000 (47%), b) Tk. 2001–5000 (31%), and c) Tk. 5001 and above (23%).

In line with family income, the amount of money that the families spent on students' education was also low. Two-thirds of students (67%) reported that their families spent less than Tk. 500 per month on their education. This was followed by 28% of students whose families belonged to the second lowest expense level (Tk. 501-1500). Expense level 3 had a modest representation (4.8%). The mean difference in the proficiency test scores between expense level 2 and 3 was not significant. No students fell into expense level 4, while level 5 had negligible representation. For further analysis of the data, the levels of expenses were rearranged to obtain only two categories: 1) Tk. < 500 (67%), and 2) Tk. 500 or above (33%).

#### *Parental education*

As Figure 1 shows, most parents of the student participants had primary or secondary levels of education, and the percentage of mothers with such education (67%) was higher than that of

fathers (53%). However, more mothers were without formal education than fathers (20% versus 13%). Similarly, mothers had more modest representation in the higher secondary (7%) or tertiary education (2%) than fathers (22% higher secondary; 11.8% tertiary). In further analysis of the parental education data the highest categories (higher secondary and tertiary for fathers; secondary and above for mothers) were merged to form the new categories of 'higher secondary and above' for fathers and 'secondary and above' for mothers. The reason for the merging, as previously noted, was to create a sizable data segment in each category which is more appropriate for meaningful analysis.



**Figure 1: Levels of Parental Education of the Student Sample.**

*English Proficiency Scores*

The present study included two measures of English achievement: students' scores on a 60-point English test, and their scores in English in the SSC examination, 2007. The SSC English scores were available only as letter grades, which were converted into number grades (e.g., A = 4) following the conversion system used in the SSC examination.\* The English test scores, on the other hand, were raw scores, which were also converted into comparable numeric categories following the same grading system, † providing a comparable metric for the two sets of scores (see Figure 2). Chi-square tests were carried out to examine the relationship between the two

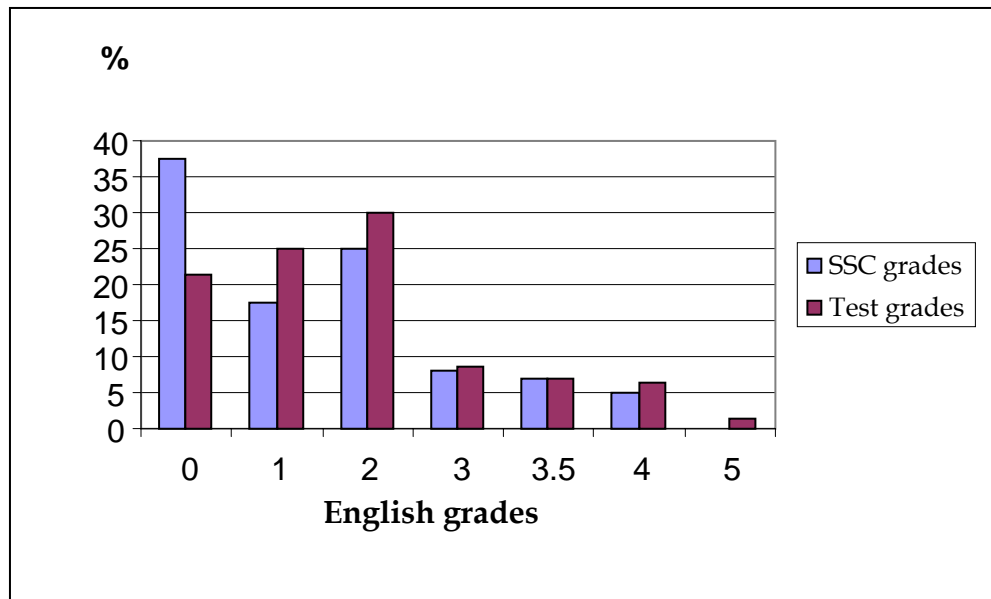
\* The grading system used in the SSC examination is: 80% and above = A+ (5); 70% to 79% = A (4); 60% to 69% = A- (3.5); 50% to 59% = B (3); 40% to 49% = C (2); 33% to 39% = D (1); 0% to 32% = F (0).

† Although the raw test scores were converted into grades for purposes of comparison with SSC grades, raw scores were used for the bivariate analysis.

measures of English achievement. English test grades and SSC grades were statistically significantly associated (Chi-square =101.607, df = 9,  $p < 0.0001$ ).

Although 228 students took the proficiency test, only 200 were able to take the SSC examination in 2007. The remaining 28 students were not allowed to sit the SSC examination because of their poor performance in the school-based SSC-qualifying test.

The data substantiated the overall low level of English achievement among students in the rural sub-district. About 79% of students either failed English in the SSC examination or earned the two lowest grades (C and D). Only a small portion of students (19%) earned the grades of B, A- or A, and none of them obtained A+, the highest grade. Their grades on the proficiency test had comparable distributions. On average, the students were able to answer 40% of the test items correctly.



**Figure 2: Comparison of SSC English grades and English test grades**

### **Bivariate Analysis**

#### *Parental occupations, income, educational expenses and English achievement*

One-way ANOVAs were conducted on students' scores on the English test (raw scores) using fathers' occupations as the break down variable. The results showed significant differences ( $p < 0.001$ ) in the mean scores of students grouped according to the occupation categories. Post hoc tests specified the following differences: students whose fathers were in salaried service outperformed their counterparts in the business, farming and manual and other categories, and



the differences were significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level. The last three categories were hierarchically ordered in terms of mean proficiency scores (business was followed by farming, which was in turn followed by manual and other), but none of the differences were statistically significant.

When students' SSC English grades, the other outcome variable, were examined, a one-way ANOVA produced similar results. Differences in the mean scores of different occupational categories were statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). However, post hoc results showed that the mean score for the salaried service category differed significantly from that of farming and manual and other, but not from that of business.

Like fathers' occupations, parental income also showed significant differences in students' scores on the proficiency test ( $p < 0.0001$ ) as well as in their SSC English grades ( $p < 0.001$ ). The mean proficiency scores of students belonging to income levels 1 (Tk. <2000) and 2 (Tk. 2001-5000) differed significantly from that of level 3 (Tk. 5001 or above). As expected, level 2 also had a higher proficiency score mean than that of level 1, which, however, was not statistically significant.

In terms of educational expenses, which constituted a further aspect of economic capital, the mean difference in the proficiency scores between the two groups (expense level 1 = Tk. <500 and 2 = Tk. > 500) was 5.2, which was statistically significant ( $t = 3.968$ ,  $df = 226$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ). The other outcome variable (SSC English grades) produced similar results ( $t = 3.836$ ,  $df = 198$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ). It was observed that the higher the level of expenses on education, the better the mean in the proficiency test and the SSC English.

#### *Parental Education and English Achievement*

Analyses showed that the higher the level of education of the father and/or the mother, the higher the mean of students' proficiency scores, or the higher the SSC English grade. In the case of the father's education, the mean score of students whose fathers had a higher secondary or above level of education was significantly higher than the mean scores of students from all other levels of education, such as secondary, primary and no formal education ( $F = 7.391$ ,  $df = 3, 224$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ). Likewise, students whose mothers had secondary or above level of education had a mean score which was significantly higher than the mean scores of students whose mothers had only primary or no formal education ( $F = 8.763$ ,  $df = 2, 225$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). However, as Table 3 shows, the mean differences between no formal and primary level in the case of mothers, and no formal, primary and secondary in the case of fathers, were not significant, although the differences increased consistently with the rise in the level of parental education. The analyses showed that only the highest levels of parental education (i.e., higher secondary or above for

fathers, and secondary or above for mothers) were significantly associated with the students' academic achievement in English.

When the students' English grades in the SSC examination were used as the outcome variable, a one-way ANOVA produced similar results. That is, the highest levels of parental education had significantly higher means than the other levels of education ( $F = 6.363$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $196$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , for father's education, and  $F = 7.033$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $197$ ,  $p < 0.001$  for mother's education).

**Table 3: Parental education and measures of English achievement.**

Levels of education	Proficiency test scores			SSC English grades		
	N	Mean	Std dev.	N	Mean	Std dev.
<b>Father</b>						
No formal education	30	21.30	3.640	27	0.722	1.003
Primary	58	24.03	5.834	48	1.062	1.132
Secondary	63	24.38	6.857	56	1.348	1.217
Higher second. or above	77	28.32	10.379	69	1.826	1.447
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>25.22</b>	<b>8.062</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>1.360</b>	<b>1.308</b>
<b>Mother</b>						
No formal education	46	23.43	5.568	42	0.857	1.111
Primary	83	23.27	6.129	72	1.229	1.147
Secondary or above	99	27.69	9.696	86	1.715	1.429
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>25.22</b>	<b>8.062</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>1.360</b>	<b>1.308</b>

Father:  $F = 7.391$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $225$ ,  $p < 0.0001$  (proficiency test);  $F = 6.363$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $197$ ,  $p < 0.001$  (SSC)

Mother:  $F = 8.763$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $225$ ,  $p < 0.001$  (proficiency test);  $F = 7.033$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $197$ ,  $p < 0.001$  (SSC)

### **Multivariate Analyses**

The data were also analysed using multivariate logistic regressions to investigate factors (i.e., aspects of economic, cultural and social capital and habitus) that were independently associated with students' SSC English grades and their grades in the proficiency test. Unlike bivariate analyses, multivariate techniques allow us to understand relationships between specific predictor variables and outcome variables after adjustments for the effects of other factors that exist in a particular context.

Because of the interrelationships between the independent variables (for instance, parental income was significantly correlated with parental education and income was correlated with

education expenses), the main study conducted two pairs of regression models (see Author 2009). This section will report only the relationships of parental income and father's education with the two measures of English proficiency previously mentioned.

Multivariate analyses revealed that SSC English grades were positively associated with parental income. The students whose families belonged to the highest level of income (level 3, Tk. 5001 or above per month) were 2.25 times more likely to obtain higher grades in SSC English than those whose parents' monthly income was less than Tk. 2000 (income level 1). Similarly, students whose parental income was at level 3 were over 2.5 times more likely to obtain a higher grade in the test than those whose parents had monthly income at level 1. Students belonging to income level 2 were also more likely to have higher grades than those at level 1, although the probability was not statistically significant.

Analyses also showed that the higher the level of students' fathers' education, the more likely they were to obtain higher grades in the SSC examination. Students whose fathers had a secondary education were 2.6 times more likely to earn a higher grade than those whose fathers had no formal education. Likewise, students whose fathers had a higher secondary or above levels of education were 4 times more likely to earn a higher SSC grade in English than their counterparts whose fathers had no formal education. When the other measure of English proficiency (i.e., the students' grades in the proficiency test) was taken into account, a positive association between father's education and English achievement was found. For instance, students whose fathers had higher secondary or above levels of education, had approximately 2.2 times more chance of securing a higher grade in the proficiency test than those whose fathers did not have formal education (see Author 2009 for details).

## **Discussion**

### *Parental Occupations, Income and English Proficiency*

Bivariate analyses showed that parental occupation, family income and educational expenditure had significant associations with measures of English achievement. Students whose fathers were in salaried employment, whether in the public or the private sectors, outperformed students whose fathers were in other occupations such as business, farming and manual work. Variations in the students' English achievement in terms of whether their fathers were in salaried service or in other occupations were expected. Parents who were in salaried employment would have higher levels of education than those in other jobs. Moreover, being so employed was a guarantee of a regular monthly income in a generally disadvantaged region such as Nadiranga. Furthermore, this occupational option allowed people to socialise with other educated people at work and to cultivate values, attitudes and behaviours which attach higher value to children's

education and academic achievement. Lareau's (2007) ethnographic study of childrearing in middle, working class and poor families in the US – both White and Black – showed that parents' occupations 'mattered' because their work influenced their childrearing beliefs and practices.

Family income and educational expenses – the two other aspects of economic capital – were found to advantage students who were from families with higher levels of income and educational expenditure. Multivariate analyses revealed that an increase in the level of income marked a corresponding increase in the mean scores on the proficiency test, or that the students were more likely to obtain higher grades in SSC English. However, it is the highest level of parental income that was significantly associated with English achievement.

Why was economic capital associated with the measures of English achievement? DuBois (2001) explained that:

[F]amily income could include an inability to provide desirable educational support materials at home, thus restricting the opportunities of youth to engage in activities that are instrumental to developing confidence and positive perceptions of themselves as academic learners. (162)

Based on his research in the US, DuBois argued that inadequate family income affects the provision of educational support materials at home, which, in turn, affects learners' perceptions of themselves because they are inhibited from participating in self-development activities. His explanation applies to the present context as well. First, it is economic capital that enables parents to purchase books and education supplies for their children, and, more importantly, arrange private tutoring in English (PT-E) for them (see Author et al. 2009). Not having access to adequate capital has adverse consequences: Konka, one of the 14 students who were interviewed in the qualitative phase of the parent study, could not sit all the papers in the SSC-qualifying test because her parents were unable to pay the required fees for the test. Consequently, she was barred from taking the SSC examination in 2007 (see Author 2009). More crucially, low levels of family capital prohibited students from participating in PT-E. Analyses of student interview data in Author et al. (2009) showed that PT-E participation was considered essential for English learning achievement. Finally, family economic factors influenced students' self-confidence. For instance, Monir and Rajib, two other students who were interviewed in the main study, explained how not being able to meet their educational needs affected their determination and left them frustrated. In sum, family economic factors affected students' academic achievement in English by restricting their access to necessary logistics (books and other supplies), learning opportunities (PT-E) and development of their self (confidence and motivation).

The association between economic capital and English achievement in the present research further strengthens the relationship between parental income and academic achievement reported by Cherian (1991). However, the present findings are different from those in Liando (2007) previously reviewed.

Ripple and Luthar (2000) worked with disadvantaged students in the US in order to explicate their academic achievement (although not in English). They observed that because their participants were from comparable social backgrounds, SES had no significant association with grade achievement and other behavioural outcomes:

Although low SES is strongly predictive of poor academic outcomes across children from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, it is not linked to outcomes in this group of students because all of these children were from relatively socioeconomically disadvantaged families. Because it did not differentiate between participants, SES was dropped from further analyses. (Ripple and Luthar 2000, 285-286)

While the Indonesian study (Liando 2007) did not include participants from the lower class or disadvantaged backgrounds, the US study included only disadvantaged students. By contrast, the present study was set in a predominantly disadvantaged location. However, its student participants differed from one another, although not widely, in terms of family capital and parental characteristics. Therefore, family economic capital had differential effects on the academic outcomes of the students.

#### *Parental Education and English Achievement*

Bivariate analyses revealed that students whose parents had the highest level of education outperformed students with lower levels of parental education. Multivariate analyses included only father's education as a predictor. The analyses showed that students from the highest level of father's education were around 3 times (on average) more likely to obtain higher scores/grades in English in the proficiency test as well as in SSC English than the students whose fathers had no formal education.

The association between father's education and English achievement substantiates the relationship between parental education and academic achievement established in the literature (Biddle 2001; Considine and Zappalà 2002; Li 2007; Sullivan 2000, 2001). The qualitative data generated by the parent study corroborated the role of parental education in schooling and academic outcomes (see Author 2009). For instance, many of the students from low and below average family capital backgrounds noted that their parents were not educated enough to express what grades they expected of their children in the SSC examination because they were not familiar with the terminology used in measuring educational achievement. Moreover, although all parents, irrespective of their levels of education, did indeed encourage their children, those

with no formal education or only low levels of education were unable to make informed decisions about the academic and career expectations of their children. DuBois (2001) explained how parental education influenced children's self-concepts and academic goals:

[P]arents lacking in educational attainment may be significantly less likely to engage in behaviours and practices that are important for cultivating self-resources for learning among youth, including both favourable perceptions of oneself as a student and a tendency to set challenging goals or standards for what constitutes success in the academic realm. (161)

Li (2007) provided more detailed explanations, by dividing parents into two categories based on their levels of education and their involvement in their children's education:

In sum, the academic parents with high levels of educational attainment were able to provide quality support for and involvement with their children through direct reinforcement of improved academic performance, or general academic guidance, setting high expectations for school performance, verbal encouragement to interactions regarding learning English. (Li 2007, 292-293)

These explanations apply to the differential English achievements of the students based on differences in their parents' levels of education in the present context.

### **Limitations of the Research**

The findings of the study as reported and discussed in the previous sections, should, however, be interpreted in the light of its limitations. The sample for the questionnaire survey was not a representative sample. However, this was a deliberate choice in terms of empirical investigation and methodology. The goal of the larger study was to explore the teaching and learning of English and academic achievement in a rural, peripheral area in relation to students' family educational resources. The study exemplified case study research in that it explored relationships between a range of learner-internal and -external factors and the students' English achievement within a geographically bounded location. Although the findings may not be generally applicable to the whole country, they should have application to other areas of rural Bangladesh, because the socio-economic situations prevailing in other rural sub-districts are by and large similar to those in Nadiranga.

Secondly, drawing a sample from a largely disadvantaged and socio-economically relatively homogeneous region also meant that the findings did not show wide differences between the respondents in terms of their family capital situations and consequently, differences in their English achievement (see Ripple and Luthar 2000). However, although the differences in the students' achievement were not always wide, and there were weak to modest, though still significant, associations between different variables, the fact that there *were* differences and that the differences were significant mean that the students' family capital factors did influence their levels of academic achievement. On the other hand, the advantage of focusing on a largely

disadvantaged community is that we can understand the aggregate performance of the students from the region. As shown in Figure 2, the vast majority of students either failed English (37%) or ended up with very low grades (42%, C and D) in the SSC examination. The students' collective performance data showed that there were shortcomings in the teaching and learning of English in the region, and only a small number of students were able to overcome the limitations of these unfavourable circumstances by means of their family investment in education and/or their determination and hard work.

## **Implications and Further Research**

### *Implications*

The findings of the present study, with all its limitations, have implications for the policy and practice of L2 English teaching in Bangladesh and other developing societies. In the case of Bangladesh in particular where the study was located, the results suggest that:

- 1) the poor English achievement of students in rural Bangladesh means that English teaching has consumed national resources and has occupied a large portion of curricular space, but has not produced desirable outcomes;
- 2) the outcomes of English teaching have undermined the government objectives of developing human capital (Author and 2008); and
- 3) the principles of social justice underlying the introduction of English for all students have been undermined because there were differences in the academic achievement of the students in terms of their family backgrounds. If English proficiency is a significant factor in accessing social benefits, many of the students participating in the present study would be denied access to those benefits because of their low levels of English achievement.

In terms of L2 teaching practice, the present study suggests that the poor English achievement of students has something to do with their family economic and cultural resources. The family contribution is crucial, particularly in the context of: a) the poor quality of school English teaching, and b) the absence of outside-school learning opportunities in the rural community. These two factors led students to rely on PT-E which requires substantial family resource investment. In order to bring about positive changes in the existing levels of learner English in rural areas, and to reduce the influence of the family on their academic outcomes, there is no alternative to improving the quality of English teaching at school. For this to happen, it is essential to increase opportunities for the professional development of school English teachers.

Moreover, the findings imply that academic underachievement of disadvantaged students is not only an educational problem, but also a social and economic one. Schools are not in a position to directly address socio-economic issues. Nevertheless, they should embrace the question of

inequality in English learning outcomes and devise mechanisms for the reduction of inequalities within their limited resources and capacities. More feasibly, schools can arrange formal and informal activities that can contribute to the students' positive self-perceptions, and encourage them to develop higher but realistic expectations in terms of future education and career, and motivate them to work hard despite the adverse circumstances. Introducing academic counselling in rural schools could be useful for giving students appropriate expectations, hope and motivation. The study has implications for theory and research in SLA. To these Bangladeshi learners, English learning involved much more than the question of attitudes toward and/or motivation for the language (Gardner and Lambert 1972), or the question of the opportunity to communicate with others (Norton 2000; Norton Peirce 1995). These learners were occupied with more basic questions of economic, cultural and social resources, and the issues of affordability and access, and how these issues influenced their English learning outcomes. A cognitivist perspective on SLA may view these socio-economic issues as simply unrelated to developing learners' L2 system. However, it can be argued that a comprehensive understanding of the SLA processes, particularly in developing societies, would require accommodating these issues in research and theory-building.

Finally, the findings of the study would recommend a critical assessment of the ubiquitous discourses of the benefits of English which often provide justification for introducing more and earlier English in the school curriculum in the developing world. Although the findings of the study may not be generalised, they provide indication that the old nexus between English and social elitism may not have weakened even in the context of wider spread and popularity of English in the world.

### **Further Research**

Admittedly, the present study represents a modest attempt at exploring the relationships between L2 learners' social world and their English learning experiences and outcomes. Larger scale studies involving nationally representative samples from Bangladesh and other developing countries are required to construct more substantial and reliable empirical evidence. At the same time, future research may also focus on the following issues:

- 1) The present study used English achievement in general as the outcome variable. This may or may not be related to the students' ability to use the language for functional purposes (Author 2008). Studies are required to investigate students' communicative ability in relation to their social backgrounds;
- 2) Research is required to investigate the role of school factors and explain how they relate to learner-internal and -external factors. Larger-scale studies involving all these factors



- have the potential to design a comprehensive model of academic achievement in English in rural contexts involving school and home factors; and
- 3) Research that focuses on urban-rural comparative samples will be useful in authenticating the findings as well as the methodological tools explored in the study.

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## Parental Socio-Economic Status as Correlate of Child Labour in Ile-Ife, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This study investigated the relationship between parental socio-economic status and child labour practices in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The study employed survey method to gather data from 200 parents which constituted the study population. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test statistics were used for the data analyses. The outcome of the study showed that a significant relationship exist between parental socio-economic status and child labour (Parents of low income status showed significant high tendencies toward child labour practices than their high income counterparts). The study has implications for policy makers both in the educational and the economic sectors.*

### Introduction

Child labour is one of the greatest social ills facing Nigeria today, and Africa in general. Various researchers have paid not a little attention to the problem in their researches (Okeihialm, 1984; Omokhodion, Omokhodion & Odusote, 2005; Togunde & Richardson, 2006; Osiruemu, 2007; Togunde & Carter, 2008; Olawale, 2009). The general findings of these researchers revolve around the fact that child labour is prevalent in Nigeria, and that drastic measures will be required to curb its ugly trend. Child labour exposes children to series of dangers. Togunde & Carter (2008) examined some of the consequences of child labour on working children. These include malnourishment which makes them susceptible to diseases, musculo-skeletal disorders from heavy labour, physical and sexual abuse, educational problem due to absence from and lateness to school. Many factors have been studied and found to be responsible for child labour practices. For example, Togunde and Carter (2008) attributed the phenomenon to several factors like globalization, population growth, socialization and violence within the family structure.

Other studies of interest on the phenomenon of child labour in the African context include that of Osiruemu (2007) who considered the nature and implications of poverty of parents on child labour in Benin City, Nigeria. The outcome of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between poverty of parents and child labour. The analysis of data on the occupation of parents in the said study shows their concentration in low paying jobs. The study of Togunde & Carter (2008) earlier reviewed was in support of the fact that parents engaged their children in child labour in order to augment family income. They also found that the parent of child labourers tend to have low educational, occupational, and income attainments. Corroborating these findings

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was another study earlier conducted by Togunde & Richardson (2006) on household size and composition as correlates of child labour in urban Nigeria, various household sizes and composition were examined as implicating factors in child labour. The study concludes that most working children come from households with low parental socio-economic status. Other demographic variables like parental educational achievement and number of children were found to influence child labour practices. In his study of parental socio-economic status as correlates of child abuse and neglect in Ibadan, Nigeria, Olawale (2009) reported a significant difference in the abuse and neglect of students from lower socio-economic background than those from higher socio-economic background. He also reported a significant difference in child abuse and neglect among parents of low educational status than parents of high educational status.

Child labour in Africa may indeed not be an index of poverty or underdevelopment. In the eye of an African traditional person, what in the west is called child labour is to him an opportunity to introduce the child into occupational training early in life. This may have compounded the issue of child labour and restrict researchers from attributing its escalation strictly to exploitation as the reason that motivates parents to subdue their children to child labour. Traditional parents often believe that the earlier such training commences, the better for the child, hence parents introduce their children to their (parent's) chosen careers early in life. For this reason, it will not be an unusual sight to see a five year old drummer, shoe maker or cloth-weaver, depending on the parents chosen profession. Meanwhile this does not reflect the perspective of the urban and the Western parents who believe in and practice the contrary. This has therefore made the issue of child labour rather a global phenomenon whose notoriety has attracted the attention of important world bodies as the UNICEF and the ILO.

Because of the negative developmental effect of child labour and its obvious prevalence in Nigeria, the Federal Government in 2003 enacted a "Child Right Act" which was designed to regulate, streamline and monitor the requisite rights and privileges accruable to the child from parents, community-based social obligations and government social responsibilities (Rights of the Child in Nigeria, 2005). In 2000, the ILO estimated that 23.9 percent of children ages 10 to 14 years in Nigeria were working (United States Department of Labour, 2002). Also in 2006, UNICEF reports that about 15 million children under the age of 14 are working across Nigeria. This shows that child labour is real in Nigeria. Indices of child labour in Nigeria include street vending, street begging, shoe shining, car washing, bus conducting, phone call hawking, domestic servants and child prostituting. The most frequently observed phenomena of all these indices in Ile-Ife are bus conducting, selling of sachet waters, and mobile phone call hawking. Apart from the fact that Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country for trafficked children, there exists intra-national trafficking in Nigeria. Children and youths from states like Edo, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and

Cross Rivers are trafficked to other states within the country as labourers. Recent developments have shown that Nigerian youths are now been trained abroad for terrorist attacks while early child marriages are also rampant. This is evident in the botched attempt by the Nigerian Umar Abdulmultallab at bombing an airliner from Amsterdam to Detroit (United States) on Christmas day of 2009 (Olaniyonu, 2009). A Nigerian serving senator and former governor was also reported to have contracted a marriage to an Egyptian minor of 13 years old (Ogunbayo, 2010). A wide range of actions are now being put in place both locally and internationally to stem a further development of child labour, abuse and trafficking. These actions include law enactment directed at curbing child labour practices, investigation and prosecution of offenders, prevention of the act of child labour, protection of and assistance to victims of child labour. Because of the negative developmental effect of child labour and its obvious prevalence in Nigeria, Universal Basic Education (UBE) was introduced by the Nigerian government in 1999. Among the objectives of the scheme was the need to promote access to education, reduce the incidence of school drop-outs, provide alternative education to drop-outs, and ensure the acquisition of occupational skills in school and effectively, nurture the child's mind towards taking on communal role. There are other programmes initiated by the Nigerian government like NAPTIP (National Programmes against Trafficking in Persons) which are also aimed at curbing the ugly trend of child labour. As recently as 2002, the United States Department of Labour (2002) reported that governmental agencies will be implementing a USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC (United States Department of Labour funded International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour) national program to eliminate child labour, and participates in a USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC regional project to combat the trafficking of children. Also the International Labour Organization (ILO) internationalized the campaign against Child Labour, with the adoption of Convention 182 on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in 1999 (Komolafe, 2008). Other world bodies like UNICEF are not left behind in the fight against child labour, and Nigeria had since ratified many of these international instruments that generally affect the rights of the child.

Given the above background, one is encouraged to look at the Ile-Ife environment which, because of its semi-urban settlement pattern, is expected to yield data that may shed more light on the subject matter. The following hypotheses will be tested in the study.

1. There will be no significant relationship between parental socio-economic status and child labour practices.
2. There will be no significant difference between the attitudes of parents of low income status (socio-economic) and high income status (socio-economic) to child labour practices.

## Methodology

This study used correlational designs to analyze the data collected from 200 parents in Ile-Ife, South-Western Nigeria. The participants were purposively selected within and around the town. The instrument used was the child labour questionnaire developed and validated by the researchers. A pilot study conducted to test the reliability of the questionnaire yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78. The instrument recorded a concurrent validity of 0.57 with parental bonding scale developed by Parker, Tupling & Brown (1979), considered adequate for validity rating. Parental bonding scale is a 25-item instrument designed to measure parental behaviours and attitudes toward the child. For the purpose of the study, socioeconomic status was measured using the annual income of parents and their educational attainments. Parents with \$5,000 per annum is regarded as high economic status parents, \$2,000- \$5,000 as medium socio-economic parents and less than \$2,000 as low socio-economic parents. These figures were chosen having put into consideration the wage distribution within the Nigerian context. The data generated were tested using percentages analysis for the demographic variables and correlational statistics and t-test statistics for the hypotheses.

## Results

**Table 1: Socio-Economic and Personal Information of the Respondents.**

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	100	50
	Female	100	50
	Total	200	100
<b>Annual family income</b>	Less than \$2000 per annum	74	37
	\$2000 – \$5000 per annum	70	35
	More than \$5000 per annum	56	28
	Total	200	100
<b>Educational Status</b>	Primary	34	17
	Secondary	46	23

	NCE/ND	37	18.5
	HND/BSC	55	27.5
	Postgraduate	28	14
	Total	200	100
<b>Occupational Status</b>	Self-employed	102	51
	Paid employment	92	46
	Unemployed	6	3
	Total	200	100

Table 1 above shows the demographic characteristics of the participants. There were equal numbers of male and female participants in the study (50% each). The annual family income shows that 37% of the respondents earn less than \$2000 per annum, 35% of the respondents earn \$2000 to \$5000 per annum while only 28% earns above \$5000 per annum. Considering the educational status, 17% of the respondents had primary education, 23% had secondary education, 18.5 had NCE/ND certificates, 14% had HND/BSC certificate while 14% had postgraduate qualifications. Also in terms of occupational status, 51% were self-employed, 46% were into paid employment and 3% were unemployed.

**Table 2: Participants' Responses to Questionnaire Items**

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Strongly agree
Child labour is a normal and welcome practice	58 (29%)	69 (34.5%)	27 (13.5%)	32 (16%)	14 (7%)
Our culture encourages child labour	14 (7%)	33 (16.5%)	47 (23.5)	67 (33.5%)	39 (11.5%)
Child labour helps the child to be smart	26 (13%)	68 (34%)	43 (21.5%)	48 (24.5%)	14 (7%)
The economic reality of today encourages child labour	5 (2.5%)	9 (4.5%)	10 (5%)	68 (34%)	108 (54%)

Child labour is means of training the child for future challenges.	31 (15.5%)	90 (45%)	47 (23.5%)	28 (14%)	4 (2%)
Foster parents indulges more in child labour	12 (6%)	32 (16%)	34 (17%)	69 (34.5%)	53 (26.5%)
A working child makes a responsible adult	15 (7.5%)	73 (36.5%)	46 (23%)	61 (30.5%)	5 (2.5%)
Poor parents engage more in child labour.	3 (1.5%)	23 (11.5%)	27 (13.5%)	87 (43.5%)	60 (30%)
Child labour is part and parcel of our culture	2 (1%)	38 (19%)	87 (43.5%)	54 (27%)	19 (9.5%)
A child that works grows up to be wise	8 (4%)	64 (32%)	49 (24.5%)	68 (34%)	11 (5.5%)
Child labour will make a child to be street wise	6 (3%)	38 (19%)	55 (27.5%)	78 (39%)	23 (11.5%)
Child labour exposes a child to a lot of dangers	2 (1%)	23 (11.5)	19 (9.5%)	70 (35%)	86 (43%)
Child labour will impede a child's education	1 (.5%)	20 (10%)	25 (12.5%)	71 (35.5%)	83 (41.5%)
Well-to-do parents indulge more in child labour	81 (40.5%)	68 (34%)	39 (19.5%)	10 (5%)	2 (1%)

The table 2 above presents the summary of participants' responses to the question items. It would be observed that 88% of the respondents agree with the statement that socio-economic status encourages child labour. Majority (61%) of the respondents also support the question that foster parents engage more in child labour. Only 1% of the respondents agree with the question that well-to-do parents engage in child labour.

Two hypotheses were tested in this study. The summary of the analyses are presented in tables 3 & 4 below;

**Hypothesis 1:** There will be no significant relationship between parental socio-economic status and child labour practices.



**Table 3: Relationships between Socio-Economic Status and Child Labour Practice.**

**Correlations**

		LABOUR	family income	highest education attained
<b>LABOUR</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	-.321**	-.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	200	200	200
<b>annual family income</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.321**	1	.277**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	200	200	200
<b>highest education attained</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.445**	.277**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	200	200	200

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the above table, it could be observed that a significant relationship exists between child labour and measure of socio-economic status. The correlation between child labour and annual income was significant,  $r(198) = -.32, p < .001$  just as the relationship between child labour and educational status was significant  $r(198) = -.445, p < .001$

**Hypothesis 2** states that there will be no significant difference between attitude of low income parents and high income parents toward child labour practices.

**Table 4: t-test showing the significant difference between attitudes of parents toward child labour practice**

Variable	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	P
<b>Low socioeconomic status</b>	74	48.23	6.92	128	4.61	<0.05
<b>High socioeconomic status</b>	56	42.23	7.86			

Comparing the mean scores of respondents in the above table shows that parents of low socioeconomic status have higher mean scores in child labour ( $M = 48.23$ ,  $SD = 6.92$ ) than parents of high socioeconomic status ( $M = 42.23$ ,  $SD = 7.87$ ). Further analysis of the result using t-test found a significant difference between parents of low socioeconomic status and high socioeconomic status in their child labour practice,  $t(198) = 4.61$ ,  $p < .001$

### **Discussion of Findings**

This study has provided a significant insight into the link between parental socio-economic status and child labour. These findings are relevantly contradistinctive to the findings of Osiruemu (2007) which also found a significant relationship between poverty of parents and child labour. Such an outcome as this is not unlikely in a socio-economic environment with high negative economic indices. Child labour is therefore exploited as a means of making the child augment the family income by contributing in their own little way to the economic survival of the family. The findings also support the study of Olawale (2009) which found a significant relationship between parental socio-economic status and child abuse. There are several possible reasons for such an outcome like this. The customary penchant of the rich and wealthy to give good education to their children because of their access to wealth speaks true of what obtains in Nigeria. Most poor children and youths necessarily have to engage themselves in one form of labour or the other in order to fulfil the financial demands of schooling. It is no news in Nigeria that many children combine job with schooling while those in the villages may need to return to farm each day immediately after school. The rich in Nigeria like those in the other lands often do not need to engage their children in labour practices; they rather engage the children of the less privileged ones to serve them.

The result obtained when the attitudes of low income parents and high income parents to child labour was compared shows that there is a significant difference in child labour practices to the advantage of high income parents who indulge less in the practice. Togunde and Carter (2008) and Obidigbo (1999) did make similar discoveries in the various studies they conducted even as far back as 10 years ago, the socio-economic indices that contributed to the outcome of their studies appear still potently prevalent today. One would indeed be justified to conclude that the trend of the socio-economic malaise continues to be more pervasive. These indices include unemployment, corruption in government establishments, turbulent political practices, poor public education fundings, frequent worker strikes and loss of jobs as was warranted by the recently global economic meltdown that spread across world economies starting from the West.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

This study concludes by asserting that poverty is a major cause of child labour, abuse and neglect in Nigeria. Therefore, the clarion call is directed at the government to intensify efforts on revalidating Universal Basic Education in a manner that will enable children of low income parents have access to formal education at a critical formative stage of education delivery. This should come with full tuition-free both at the primary and secondary school levels. The economic situation of the country also needs to be revamped so as to enhance the standard of living of the citizenry and a law should be enacted mandating all school-age children not to be found hawking during school hours. Also the Federal Government should, as a matter of urgency, ensure that the child right law is made operational and effective in all states of the federation, while attempts should be made to redistribute the national wealth such that a greater percentage is directed at taking care of citizen's welfare. Governmental and non-governmental organizations should also endeavour to create care centres for the children of the destitute and the less privileged. Finally government and corporate bodies should create more jobs which will alleviate poverty, and the National Assembly must ensure that a social security bill is passed into law.

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# Managing Bullying Problems in Nigerian Secondary Schools: Some Interventions for Implementation

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**Abstract:** Bullying problem has remained pervasive and a going concern for all stakeholders of education who desire to make school climate a safe haven. This paper is moved by this desire, by bringing into context the meaning of bullying and prevalence of bullying around the globe. The paper further brings into perspective bullying situation in Nigeria and prescribes intervention for bullying prevention in schools. These include; provision of helping services for schools; sensitization and capacity building of stakeholders in bullying detection and prevention; implementation of bully buster programme; and improvement of students' level of compassion and empathy through empathy training.

## Introduction

A school is an institution designed for the teaching of students enrolled in it. The main purpose of the school is to develop the student through knowledge acquisition so that he/she may become a social being. By this, the student is expected to learn how to relate with fellow students, teachers and significant others in the school on the one hand, live in a harmonious way (by blending with societal values) in the society on the other hand. The school is also expected to be a place where students should feel safe and secure, and where they can count on being treated with respect. The reality, however, is that only few students or pupils can harmoniously blend with their school mates without experiencing violence in the school (Fajoju, 2009).

Although the school had always remained one of the safest places, next to the home in a child's life, one wonders if this still holds sway in our present society given the ever increasing spate of violence in our schools. Violence in schools is an issue that has become more prominent in the last few years, as news articles about violent deeds within the school setting is now on the increase. Despite the increasing rate of violence in schools, the society still expects that the school should be a safe place for students. Thus, in order to maintain a peaceful and safe school environment, stakeholders in education have tended to concern themselves with the problem of violence in our schools.

Violence as defined by the World Health Organisation (2002, as cited in Federal Ministry of Education, 2007), is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against

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oneself, another person, or against a group of community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation. In this definition, there is a very strong correlation between intentionality and committing of an act itself, irrespective of the outcome it produces. This definition also excludes any unintentional incident, such as road traffic injuries and burns (Federal Ministry of Education, 2007). Violence broadly speaking includes any condition or act that creates a climate in which the individual feels fear or intimidation in addition to being victims of assault, theft or vandalism. This, as a matter of fact, is becoming a growing problem in our schools.

School violence wears many faces. It includes gang activity, locker theft, bullying and intimidation, gun use, assault, just about anything that produces a victim. Specifically, students these days physically, mentally or verbally abuse one another. Thus, the use of guns, knives and other dangerous weapons and other abuses – physical or psychological is now more common than ever in Nigerian school system (Aluede, 2006; Fajoku, 2009; Federal Ministry of Education, 2007). Therefore, the main interest of this paper is to concisely put in perspective the meaning of school violence in the context of bullying, the prevalence of bullying across the globe; situational analysis of bullying in Nigerian schools and finally provide some strategies for adoption in the management of bullying problems in Nigerian secondary schools.

### **Meaning of Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying is a pervasive problem in schools that affects a lot of students. In recent times, it is becoming a bigger crisis with vicious consequences. Bullying is not just a child's play, but a terrifying experience many school children face everyday (Aluede, 2006; Beran, 2005; Craig, 1998; Thornbery, 2010). As Beran (2005) further noted, in spite of school officials, teachers, parents and students exerting great efforts to make schools friendlier and safer places, a reduction of bullying is not always evident, as threats of attacks in schools often leading to breakdown of rules and orders are often the case in many Nigerian schools.

What then is bullying? Defining bullying has been a very difficult task, as no single definition can cover all aspects of bullying. Notwithstanding, bullying is a form of aggression, a particular kind of violence to which students are exposed. It is a form of social interaction in which a more dominant individual (the bully) exhibits aggressive behaviour intended to cause distress to the less dominant individual (the victim). In some studies, bullying has been conceptualized as acting in any way that threatens or hurts someone less powerful.

Bullying does not occur when there is conflict between people of equal or similar power. This distinction is important because of the effects of being repeatedly attacked or threatened by a

more powerful person or group are likely to differ from the effects of being threatened or attacked by someone of equal power. In the former case, one is apt to feel more helpless (Fajoju, 2009).

Much of what we understand today about bullying is a result of Dan Olweus's work beginning in the 1970s in Scandinavia. Although his definition of bullying has been debated, the vast majority of the published studies use the bully/ victim survey developed by Olweus as a measure of bullying (Aluede, 2006; Bedell and Horne, 2005; Beran, 2005). Dan Olweus, a pioneer in the systematic study of bullying, identifies common elements of this behaviour, such as deliberate aggressiveness and marked inequality in terms of power. Tactics employed in this act include harsh teasing, constant criticisms, insults, gossips and unreasonable demands.

Bullying, a subcategory of aggressive behaviour, is encountered regularly by children and adolescents in the context of schools world wide. Although, bullying is a common experience for students around the world, it is a complex social problem that can have severe negative consequences for both bullies and victims (Hymel, Rocke-Henderson & Bananno, 2005), especially as bullying has the potential to cause either physical or psychological harm to the victim (Bosworth, Espelage & Simon, 1999).

Researches (i.e. Aluede, 2006; Aluede, Fajoju, Omoike & Afen-Akpaidda, 2008; Beran, 2009; Thornberg, 2010) have described association between bullying by peers and a number of different dimensions of internal distress and social problems, especially as a single student who bullies can have very far reaching effects on the school thus creating a climate of fear and intimidation not only in his/her victims, but also on bystanders. Therefore, students affected by bullying will be at higher risk of developing depression, anxiety, loneliness, mistrust of others, low self-esteem, poor social adjustment, poor academic achievement and poor health as compared to others (Thornberg, 2010).

There are different types of bullying and bullying behaviour. However, most common definitions of bullying show three things in common: that is, bullying is a repeated action that occurs over a prolonged period of time; there is an imbalance of power; and the verbal, psychological, and/or physical negative actions of bullying are unprovoked. Manifestations include threatening to injure another person for no apparent reason, requesting tasks to be performed that are undesirable to the other individual, and threatening negative consequences to individuals, if their requests are not met by the victims. Additionally, the bully may intimidate the victim by initiating acts such as name-calling, teasing, pushing or shoving and using physical dominance for intimidation (Aluede & Fajoju, in press; Fajoju, 2009).

### **Prevalence of Bullying in School**

According to Federal Ministry of Education (2007), since the last decade, several cases of violence against children such as torture, kidnapping, shooting, sexual harassment, rape, corporal punishment and so on have been reported in various newspapers, magazines and television stations all over the world. However, there is lack of documentation of most of the violent acts. This lack of documentation and increasing violence rate against children were part of the reasons for the global in-depth study of violence against children by the UN Secretary-General as directed by the General Assembly Resolution 57/90 of 2002 to provide a global picture.

Specifically, bullying as a sub-set of school violence among school-age children occurs in many schools across the globe (McEachern, Kenny, Blake & Aluede, 2005). Despite lack of documentation of incidents of bullying across the globe, studies conducted in various countries have indicated that a growing percentage of student population is being bullied everyday across the globe and that the rates of bullying vary from country to country (Duncan, 1999).

In Canada, self-report data indicate that 8% to 9% of elementary school children are bullied frequently (i.e., once or more a week) and about 2 to 5% of students bully others frequently. In addition, among adolescents, at the secondary school level, rates are somewhat higher, with 10 to 11% of students reporting that they are frequently victimized by peers, and another 8 to 11% reporting that they frequently bully others (Hymel, Rocke-Henderson & Bananno, 2005).

In the United States of America, bullying behaviour occurs in many American schools and is perhaps one of the most under-reported safety problems (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). However, American schools harbour approximately 2.1 million bullies and 2.7 million are their victims (Fried, 1997). Specifically, Bosworth et al's (1999 as cited in Kenny et al, 2005) study found that 81% of their sample reported at least one act of bullying behaviour during the last month. Another study found that 82% of the respondents were bullied at some period in their academic lives. In addition, several studies from different parts of the US have reported 10-29 percent of the students surveyed were either bullied or victims (Kenny et al, 2005).

In the United Kingdom, bullying behaviour is also a pervasive problem. For instance, Whitney and Smith's (1993, as cited in McEachern, Kenny, Blake & Aluede, 2005) study of 6,758 students in 24 schools in all areas of the city of Sheffield, UK revealed that 27% of the elementary and middle schools sampled reported being bullied sometimes during the term. In a similar vein, Rivers and Smith's (1994, as cited in McEachern et al, 2005) study of 7000 elementary and secondary school students in the UK revealed that 29% of boys and 24% of girls in the elementary schools

experienced some form of physical bullying. The study further revealed that approximately 41% of boys and 39% of girls experienced verbal bullying.

In the Scandinavian countries, research indicates that approximately 10% of children are frequently victims of bullying. Specifically, in Norway, 14% of the children are either bullies or victims. In Denmark, though little systematic research on bullying has been conducted, one significant study published in that country revealed that in comparison to 24 other countries, Denmark scored high (top three) on bullying behaviour and in the top half for students who reported being bullied (Dochohm, 1999, as cited in McEachern, et al, 2005).

In Africa, the pioneering works of Prof. Fred Zindi of Zimbabwe is particularly instructive. Zindi (1994) revealed in his study of bullying at boarding school in Zimbabwe that 16% of the sampled students were bullied now and then, and 18% were bullied weekly or more often.

### **Situational Analysis of Bullying Problem in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, even though cases of bullying had been reported in many schools, this deviant act is not always given any desirable attention. Furthermore, there are no available statistical facts to show the actual number of students that are bullied or victims in Nigerian schools. This lack of statistical facts and absence of well documented evidence have made it difficult for us to appreciate the prevalence of bullying behaviour in Nigeria (Aluede & Fajoju, in press; Umoh, 2000).

Despite the absence of documented evidence of the prevalent rate of bullying in Nigeria, Egbochuku's (2007) study on some Nigerian students in Benin City revealed that almost four in every five participants (78%) reported being bullied and 85% of the children admitted to bullying others at least once. Using moderate criteria, the study further indicated that more than half of the students (62%) were bullied and 30% bullied others. Similarly, Aluede and Fajoju's (in press) study on secondary school students in Benin metropolis of Nigeria revealed that majority of the respondents (62.4%) have been victims of bullying, while 29.6% of the respondents indicated that they have bullied others within the academic session.

In a somewhat first ever nation-wide situational analysis survey of school violence in Nigeria conducted by the Federal Ministry of Education (2007), it was revealed that physical violence and psychological violence accounted for 85% and 50% respectively of the bulk of violence against children in schools. Across school location, physical violence was more prevalent in the rural (90%) than in the urban areas (80%). Across region, physical violence in schools is higher in the southern Nigeria (90%) than in the Northern region (79%). So is the case of psychological violence, which is 61% in Southern Nigeria and only 38.7% in Northern Nigeria. Furthermore,



across gender, physical and psychological violence are almost evenly distributed among males and females in Nigerian schools.

### **Strategic Interventions for the Management of Bullying Problems**

From the situational analysis of school violence in Nigerian schools, it is obvious that our Nigerian school system is littered with every growing evidence of physical violence. Despite the growing incidents, Federal Ministry of Education (2007), reports that its eradication or reduction remains an issue of great concern; largely because of the fact that reporting of incidents of violence in Nigerian schools is generally low. The reason for this is that students generally feel nothing will be done by school authorities if ever they report incidents of physical violence.

As school administrators and significant others struggle with ways to prevent acts of violence from occurring within their schools, they increasingly turn to school counsellors and other helping professionals, especially school psychologists in the school for leadership and help with establishing policies regarding safety (Fryxell & Smith, 2000). Indeed, school counsellors and psychologists are primarily agents of change and prevention within the school system (Eduwen, 2010). Therefore, school counsellors and psychologists have a duty to strengthen their intervention skills especially those strategies that would help deal with bullying problems in schools. Therefore, school counsellors and psychologists should consider adopting the strategies outlined therein for effective management of bullying problems in Nigerian schools

Kenny et al (2005) observed that since bullies tend to show little empathy for their target, school counsellors and psychologists will need to provide interventions to improve students' level of compassion and empathy. These may include activities that foster sensitivity for the feelings of others. Role reversal techniques where students' role play situations in which they place themselves in the position of others may help increase empathetic understanding. In addition, training school children early in life to be empathic can help prevent them from turning into bullies (Aluede, 2006). Therefore, school counsellors and psychologists can be of great assistance to both bullies and victims by teaching them a new style of education called "empathy training". This teaches students as young as five years old to understand the feelings of others and to treat people with kindness. Expectedly, those who go through this empathy training, when compared with those who have not, are more likely to be less aggressive.

Another intervention strategy that has been found to be helpful in bullying management in the literature is developing and distributing a written anti-bullying policy to everyone in the school community and also consistently applying the policy (Peterson, 2005). Peterson (2005) suggested mapping a school's "hot spots" for bullying incidents so that supervision can be

concentrated in designated areas; having students and parents sign contracts at the beginning of the school year acknowledging that they understand it is unacceptable to ridicule, taunt, or attempt to hurt other students; and teach respect and non- violence beginning in primary schools. Additionally, teaching bullies positive behaviour through modelling, coaching, prompting, praise, social skills, conflict management, anger management, character education, signing anti- teasing or anti- bullying pledges, will no doubt reduce bullying incidents in schools

A bully prevention programme that has been empirically supported and found to be helpful to teachers, school counsellors and psychologists, school administrators and parents who desire to address the increase in bullying occurring in the schools has been the adoption of the "Bully Buster". This is a psycho- educational intervention for reducing bullying developed by Newman, Horne and Bartolomucci (2000). The goals of the intervention are: to increase teachers' knowledge and use of bullying intervention skills; to increase teachers' personal self- efficacy and self- efficacy related to working with specific types of children; and to reduce the amount of bullying and victimization in the classroom. The Bully Buster programme, according to Bedell and Horne (2005), is generally implemented in the form of a staff development training workshop which is typically held over a course of three weeks for two hours per meeting. The contents of the programme include information pertaining to bullying and victimization, recommended intervention, prevention strategies, stress management techniques and classroom activities. The training programme is a composite of seven consecutive modules, each focusing on specific goals: (a). Increasing awareness of bullying; (b). Recognizing the bully; (c). Recognizing the victim; (d). Taking charge (interventions for bullying behaviours); (e). Assisting victims (recommendations and interventions); (f). Understanding the roles of prevention; and (g). Developing relaxation and coping skills.

Even though intervention strategies are designed and implemented to address bullying, it is essential to recognize that students can be discreet in devising ways to disguise bullying in order to escape identification. As such, some form of surveillance may be necessary to detect acts of bullying that occur outside the general area of the classroom (Peterson, 2005). Therefore, increasing public awareness and knowledge about bullying behaviour problem can be a sure way to reduce bullying. This can be achieved through: (a). active involvement of teachers and parents in prevention programme; (b). vigilance by school personnel for incidents of bullying; (c). The development of firm sanctions and consequences for students who engage in bullying; and (d).teaching assertiveness skills to the bullied victims (Aluede, 2006; Kenny et al, 2005; McEachern et al, 2005; McFadden, 1986; Olweus, 1991)

Bullying problem can be managed in schools if school counsellors and psychologists faithfully follow the seven strategies under the acronym "SCRAPES" provided by Fried and Fried (1996, as cited in McEachern et al, 2005). These are S- Self- esteem and social skills enrichment; C- Conflict resolution and mediation skills; R- Respect for difference, de- prejudicing exercises; A- Anger management and assertiveness training; P- Problem solving skills; E- Empathy training; and S- Sexual awareness training.

In all interventions geared towards bullying reduction, those provided in the Federal Ministry of Education's (2007) *The National Strategic Framework for Violence Free Basic Education in Nigeria* seems exceptionally and particularly instructive. They are as follows:

- Deliberate efforts at establishing/ strengthening counselling services in schools must be initiated with a view to protecting children from violence. Therefore, pre-service and in- service capacity of guidance counsellors and school psychologists must be prioritize. In addition, issues on violence, especially physical violence (bullying) against children must be incorporated into guidance and counselling curriculum
- Violence free consciousness must be promoted among students, teachers and other members of the school communities including parents. Therefore, school counsellors and psychologists should on a regular basis organize seminars on violence prevention and also cause publications to educate students and teachers on acceptable non- violent behaviours.
- School counsellors and psychologists should as a matter of priority endeavour to ensure the promotion of life skills to prevent violence against students in schools. Where appropriate, co- curricular activities in school clubs focusing on violence prevention should be encouraged.

### Conclusion

This paper summarises, from available literature on school violence, the concept of school violence viewed from the perspective of bullying behaviour in schools. Though bullying problem remains pervasive and prevalent in several cultures and throughout the world, strategic interventions as outlined in this enterprise can help to ensure a safer and friendlier school climate in Nigeria

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# Implications of the Ranking of Community Participation Strategies in Health Development by Selected Rural Communities in O-Kun Yoruba, Kogi State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This study investigated the relative ranking of community participation strategies utilized for health development among the o-kun Yoruba of Kogi State, Nigeria. Data for the study were generated mainly by means of multi-stage sampling technique through the use of structured questionnaire administered to 235 respondents randomly selected from 7 communities in the study area. Techniques of data analysis were mainly the use of Preference Based Analysis and non-parametric statistics including simple frequency distribution. Findings from the study revealed that there was no uniformity in the ranking of such strategies among the study population. And the study suggests therefore that, aside from the fact that participation does not just occur, every community seems to opt for a community participation strategy whose end they are able to see more clearly, and utilize more to advantage, among several alternatives. One major implication of this analysis is that health planners and policy makers in the health sector must appreciate the fact that whether in rural or urban settlements, health behaviour is always a rational one. This study also recommends that end-users of health programs should be sufficiently involved in the critical stages of project formulation, planning, implementation, evaluation and decision-making.*

## Introduction

Part of the principles of participation is the belief that the prospect for success in any attempt to change people's behaviour depends on two factors. One is the readiness or otherwise of the target group to change and two, the method that the latter believe will enable them to change (Young and Kingle, 1996). The most obvious interpretation one can give to this is that participation is an important principle of behaviour change. No principle of behaviour has greater recognizability than the principle of participation. Participation has resurfaced as a dominant voice in development literature globally. Participation in itself has been regarded as a process through which the local people influence and share control over development initiatives and the decision and resources which affect them. The term 'community participation' is used loosely in many nations today for different primary health care (PHC) activities which cut across the economic, learning and political spheres. The economic dimension of community participation is believed to be dominated even when community members contribute resources-materials, money, labour-to health care system.

Participation as a health strategy has been used in several countries across the world to affect disease control. For instance, the technique was employed to fight tuberculosis in many industrialized countries (Morgan 1993). Mass participation has also been used as a health

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strategy for trachoma (eye disease) control as well as malaria and water-borne diseases control in several developing countries of Africa including Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Kenya, etc. (WHO, 2000). One major reason for the prevailing difficulties in promoting community participation for disease control in some developing countries has been traced to non-involvement of the local people at the design stage of such projects. They are mainly made to participate in the utilization stage.

Community participation is a two-key process in which both community members and health workers are involved. Quite often, the community share in defining needs, carrying on specific tasks or responsibilities as well as gathering and processing information relevant to health with a view to enabling community members and health workers to learn from each other.

Participation in a greater sense, therefore, is the involvement of members of a particular community in the formulation of public policy or its implementation and its usage. That is, it is the participation of local people in the development process as a whole (Green 1986, Huff and Kline 1999). The following are the three interpretations of participation which reflect the different aspects of development;

- (i) Participation means, in its broadest sense, to mobilize people and thus increasing their willingness to respond to development programs, as well as to encourage local initiatives;
- (ii) Participation includes people's involvement in decision-making process, in implementing programs, sharing in the benefits of development programs, and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programs;
- (iii) Participation involves organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social institutions on the part of groups or movements of those hitherto excluded from such control (Pearse and Stiefel, 1979).

For the purpose of this analysis, the third interpretation of participation which defines participation in terms of the people's access to resources and rights is being adopted for this analysis. Quite often, it is forgotten that participation is more than the mere contribution of money, material or labour to a development programme by the target group. It is even more than the people getting involved in the planning, monitoring and implementation of programs, or sharing in the benefits of such programs. Beyond all these, participation is a political process which enables community members to acquire a 'say' in decision-making and they also have a measure of control over facilities' providers who are supposed to serve their needs (WHO 1984, Oakley 1989).

Participation as a process has been widely recognised and accepted as both a basic right of people and of crucial importance to the success of development efforts generally. The challenge of development in the broadest sense is to improve the quality of life. In the world's poor countries especially, a better quality of life generally calls for higher income, better education, high standard of health and nutrition, less poverty, more equality of opportunity (Green and Raeburn, 1990). Although thinking on development is believed to have shifted repeatedly during the past five decades, the method of community participation, especially, has been one of the enormous efforts or strategies devised to improve the lives of millions of disadvantaged people in the world (Oakley, 1989).

It is in the light of the above, therefore, that the link has been made between participation and programs designed to improve people's health. It is believed that since many people in the world do not have ready access to health services and must rely on local knowledge and traditional practices for health care, it is, therefore, necessary to have a fund for local experience and resources in many parts of the world, which could be mobilized to support health programs.

#### **Health Development and Grassroots Involvement in Nigeria**

The current level of involvement by the communities in health care in Nigeria is believed to be quite limited in the public health sector. It is rather only at the grassroots level of village health worker/traditional birth attendants and village district health development committee where some participation in health care exists. Administratively, at the grassroots level, the community is represented at higher levels of primary health care and secondary health care planning and management by its representatives in Local Government's Area's (LGA's) administration (Metiboba, 2005). It is also instructive to note that there are lay-members appointed to the various states' Health Management Boards. Several rural communities in Nigeria have provided for themselves some health facilities like clinics, cottage hospitals, maternity centres and basic health centres through self-help. The people's expectation has always been that such facilities provided through their own sweat be immediately equipped by government with relevant material or drugs. The fact on ground, however, reveals that there is a yearning gap between their expectation and reality.

Several studies relating to this topic have revealed that beyond the provision of labour, money and material by community members for health development in several communities in Nigeria, their involvement in community-based health projects, especially at the critical stages of project planning, decision making and evaluation is still relatively low. It is sometimes argued that their relatively low level of involvement in community-based projects can be attributed, partly, to the increasing loss of faith in government officials and their programs.

Critics in some quarters tend to justify the apparent apathy of community members in health projects in developing societies because of the abysmal failure of these programs in times past to meet people's expectations and yearnings due to mismanagement of money and materials, ethnicity and flagrant abuse of due process. On the other hand, some health providers even detest the participation of the ordinary man in health matters because health issues, they claim, involve certain technicalities and skills which are often beyond the intellectual and professional horizon of a majority of the rural dwellers (Tumwine 1989, World Bank 1994).

### **The Need for Community Participation in Developing Societies**

Several factors have been advanced for the desirability of citizen participation in health development among the rural dwellers in particular in developing societies. One of such factors is the seemingly alarming spate of rural-urban migration in most of these countries. Aside the undue pressure on the existing utilities and infrastructure, and an additional population from the rural areas to the urban centres, there is an urgent need to develop the relatively poor and scanty facilities in these rural areas. Quite often, most development programs in developing societies, especially the rural areas, do fail because of the non-involvement of the target group for which such programs are designed. Immunization programs in Northern Nigeria are a relevant case in point.

It has been estimated that families in the rural areas of most developing societies spend between 3-5 percent of their annual income on health care, and that government's funding of health has been relatively increased over the years. This increase in health allocation, however, seems not to have had a commensurate effect on mortality and morbidity in these communities. This development has been attributed partly to the non-involvement of the target population in the several health programs designed for them (Behm 1979, Palloni 1981).

Besides, in Nigeria, as well as in many African countries, the etiology of diseases has been discovered to be rooted in magico-religious factors. Some scholars have attested to the relationship between magic and medicine among the Yoruba of Nigeria (Oloyede 1985). Some others have also observed that magic and medicine are dependent on spiritual belief and inevitably connected with the supernatural and divinities or spirits. Where the concepts of disease and health are amplified by such magico-religious factors, it appears imperative therefore that health care can hardly be noticeably developed without the involvement of a vast majority of the people, at critical stages, who hold such beliefs (Awolalu 1979, Dopamu 1979).



From time immemorial perhaps, communities in Africa had organized themselves to take care of collective and individual needs. However, the question remains: why have so many attempts aimed at getting people involved and taking responsibility for community based development (CBD) failed in the last decades, especially in most of these underdeveloped countries? Prominent among the reasons being mentioned by some development experts for the failures in several participatory development efforts is the infusion of external management funds and technology controlled from distant places (World Bank, 1995).

In most parts of Tropical Africa, the concept of community participation is a kind of cultural heritage. Indeed, self-help efforts through which local communities provided several social amenities had their genesis in Africa even long before the attainment of political independence. Since no local, state or federal arm of government can meet all the demands of its people, the need for participation in development projects has therefore become highly desirable in most societies of the world in recent years.

The health status of some developing countries in the world till now is still quite worrisome. Even though life expectancy is believed to have improved in recent years in these countries, mortality rate is still relatively high. Diarrhoea and respiratory illness, exacerbated by malnutrition and several communicable diseases, still prevail in these countries. All these reduce productivity through workers' illness (WDR, 1993). The effect of this is the enormous problem in developing countries which cannot be tackled from one direction alone, making citizens participation quite an imperative.

Government's capital expenditure on health in most developing countries may have improved over the years but is still quite far from the WHO's minimum standard of 5% of total capital expenditure. In many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, between 1994 and 1998 for example, budgetary allocation to the health sector was not more than 3.5%. Available data revealed that the capital expenditure on health in Nigeria in 1994 was only (1.1%) of total capital expenditure, in 1995(1.1%), 1995(1.0%), 1997(3.5%) (Medupi, 1998). In comparison to other sectors like Defence and Industry, etc. the allocation to health has been abysmally poor. Similar scenario also obtains in budgetary allocation to health to many states and local governments in most of the developing countries such as Ghana, Togo, Republic of Benin, Liberia, etc (World Development Report, 1995).

Even though records have shown that families in these countries spend between 3-5% of their annual income on health care, and that government funding of health has relatively increased over the years, the effect of these seem not to have commensurate lowering on morbidity and

mortality in most developing countries. This partially has to do with the non-involvement of the target population in the several health programs designed for them (Behm 1979, Palloni 1981).

The role of ubiquitous socio-cultural factors in the aetiology of illness and the development of health care generally suggest that the attitude and values of the people for whom health services are designed are very crucial. It is a strongly held view for instance, among some social epidemiologists that the way in which illness is perceived by the people or evaluated tend to influence their reaction at the onset of the ill-health (Mechanic 1978, Igun 1989). One basic flaw in our society is that development studies tend to treat people as objects to be studied rather than subjects of their own development. It is the contention of modern development scholars that if we understand the role of socio-cultural factors in development issues, then it is possible to know the way in which attitudes and values are themselves formed. One will also be able to conceive individuals reflecting their own background and experience in a set of attitudes which, in effect, affect their behaviour (health behaviour inclusive).

A review of relevant literature on obstacles to participatory health development identifies some major obstacles hindering community participation in many developing countries. (Clark 1993; Jegede, 1998); these obstacles include, ignorance, emphasis on fund raising and leadership problem. Others are bureaucracy, nature of programme designed and the lack of political will.

### **Participation and Project Performance in Health**

An analysis of rural and urban development since the 1970s has found high correlation between project performance and level of participation across nations of the world (Moench 1993, Morgan, 1993). Some scholarly works have revealed that participation was an important determinant in project performance and sustainability. In Kenya in particular, a report revealed that in agriculture, participation as a development technique succeeded in improving the living standard of many farmers and promoted the adoption of new techniques (Norton and Stephens, 1994).

In the area of health, the world health organization (WHO) has been found to play an important role in the promotion of community participation. Since the 1970s, WHO has actively supported a range of activities, and has begun to examine community participation in different fields of health practices so as to define clear strategies (Niaconsult, 1993). Therefore, community participation or involvement in health has become a common feature of several studies conducted in over twenty countries including Nigeria, Liberia, and Kenya. Research is also going on in thirteen others. The implication of this is that community participation in health is now central to health promotion or development and needs to be considered by all health professionals and administrators (WHO, 2002).

Although the concept of community participation in health is increasingly becoming a common phenomenon, its level of success varies from one country to another. Sometimes, certain extraneous variables such as ideologies, type of political system, kind of leadership, etc tend to have tremendously influenced the level of success of participation. For example, in 1972, Benin was reportedly the leading innovator in providing primary health care to rural population through the involvement of the local citizens. Benin developed a unique, state-of-the-art primary health care strategy, covering the entire country, with little outside help. In spite of this, fifteen years later, however, Benin's primary health care was reportedly ranked among the poorest in Africa. One reason given for this result in Benin is that Benin had long been a Marxist state.

Leadership style sometimes provides a penetrating insight into how health workers could successfully promote participation. In Zimbabwe for example, by freely allowing the rural people to be involved in decision-making in health care services, an outbreak of measles was successfully checked among the local populace. From this explanation, it can be seen that community participation in health must be understood against a particular socio-cultural milieu.

Although participation seems to have resurfaced as a dominant voice in development literature, a closer examination at participatory practices of agencies with substantial experience in this field reveals that meaningful and broad-based participation is not easily achievable and it is not without cost or risks (Oakley and Marsden 1985). It is sometimes conceived that the benefit of participation outweighs the costs.

However, it is still quite unclear as to why despite such reported benefits of beneficiary participation, so many attempts aimed at getting people involved in community based projects tend to have failed in many underdeveloped societies in recent decades.

### **Approaches to the Analysis of Community Participation**

The richness of the participation concept from the review of the relevant literature is reflected in the variety of approaches that can be used in its analysis. One feature of the reappraisal in the health sector has been the concept of 'participation', i.e. the idea that whatever material forms the development process may take; the active participation of the local people in any activity proposed or undertaken is quite paramount. A distinction can be drawn between spontaneous, induced and compulsory participation (Pearse and Stiefel, 1979, WHO 1989; Oakley 1989).

**Spontaneous participation** is based on local initiatives which have little or no external support

and which have the capacity to be self-sustaining. **Induced participation** is said to result from external initiatives seeking support or endorsement for external plans or projects.

**Compulsory participation** however implies that people are mobilized willy-nilly to undertake activities in which they have little or no say or control.

A review of the literature on participation reveals a disagreement as to whether participation is essentially a process, a programme, a technique or a methodology. A cursory examination of the variety of interpretations suggests that there is no single form of participation that is relevant to all situations. It is also observed that different forms of participation have profoundly different consequences (Oakley and Marsden 1985).

Some scholars have argued that the emergence of community participation in health development programs has inevitably resulted in some deficiencies (Newell 1975, Donoso, 1978). These deficiencies include the following: (Morgan, 1993 Nyemetu, 1999).

- i. Failure to encourage people to think or act for themselves in an attempt to solve their health problems, thereby making them to rely upon external sources for action and solutions.
- ii. Failure to provide adequate training has made local people to be incapable of maintaining the service that had been set up. Available service could not be sustained by local resources and knowledge.
- iii. Little active community involvement in program design and implementation.
- iv. A lack of community interest in externally promoted health programs had often created conflict between health workers and the local people themselves.

### **Mobilization for Participation**

Participation, according to some authors on this subject, will not just occur except it is mobilized (Sanda, 1980). Mobilization may be self-propelled or externally propelled. Self mobilization takes place when a group, community or organization, conscious of the need to achieve a defined purpose, organizes itself to act to achieve that purpose. However, external mobilization occurs when a group or community may not be conscious of the reason to act to achieve certain objectives. Either form of mobilization could be voluntary or be as a result of the application of force (Nyemetu 1999). According to Famoriyo (1989) Mabogunje has distinguished three forms of mobilization as follows:-

- i. *Natural mobilization*: individuals within a given society realise a mental perception or indicate some tendencies or inclination or intention towards an area or objective.
- ii. *Representative mobilization*: individuals within a given society delegate the participation through 'surrogates' as it is in an electoral process.

- iii. *Operational mobilization*: individuals within a given society fully and actively participate in a specific project. It is a kind of collective action.

According to Nyemetu (1999), Strategies of mobilization for participation include the following:

- i. Raising of consciousness
- ii. Providing incentives for participation
- iii. Building of coalitions and encouraging networking amongst the relevant segments of the community which is to be mobilized.
- iv. Involvement in identifying health needs selection, financing and management of the program.
- v. Occasional subvention by the government to community health projects.

On the whole, the success of mobilization for participatory health development depends on the extent to which such mobilization has been able to enhance understanding of development issues that are sustainable both within and between interest groups, and also the level of communication reached among members of the community. It also depends on the network of committed individuals and institutions as well as re-negotiation of responsibility between interest and joint action for sustainable development (Oluwasola 1999).

### **Appraisal of Reviewed Literature**

In this section, an attempt is made to appraise the major positions of the pertinent issues of community participation in health development as reviewed in existing relevant literature on this subject. On the conceptualization of health development, this study has taken particular cognizance of the fact that development process in the health sector is more than building up health infrastructure at different levels and introducing health practices based on 'western' concept of health care. This is quite instructive because true development in the health sector can not be divorced from a general societal transformation in any country. Before we can talk of development therefore in the real sense of the term, as far as health issues are concerned in any society, one should ask: what is the level of poverty in the community? One should also know what is happening to malnutrition, communicable diseases, urban congestion and ignorance or illiteracy in the rural sector of the economy?

This study has also viewed ultimate challenge in the health sector to be an enterprise far more than just reducing mortality and morbidity and so forth, but also to include higher income, better education, and high standard of nutrition as well as ensuring greater individual freedom.

It is also germane to note that while recognizing the variables influencing health development as propounded by some authors, it is important to also note that the role of the ordinary people must not be de-emphasized. Though the input received from experts and informed individuals in health matters cannot be under-stressed, it is crucial to note also that the input of the ordinary people who may not be knowledgeable in bio-medical science and western concepts of health and diseases, should also be captured for over-all health development.

With regards to the analysis or the concept of participation in this work, the distinction between spontaneous, induced and compulsory participation may just be for a mere academic or analytical purpose. This is because, under real life situation, they may not be mutually exclusive. One form of participation can dovetail into another, for example, spontaneous participation can become induced and a compulsory participation at the initial stage may end up as a spontaneous one.

Also, the view that community participation as a political process empowers people to have a 'say' in decision-making about health, is also subject to debate. This is because, quite often, this 'empowerment' can be a cosmetic one. It is obvious that even when ordinary people are involved in the early stage of health planning in many underdeveloped countries, they are hardly carried along during project monitoring, implementation and evaluation.

Further, some of the assumptions of community participation in health activities in most developing countries may not be realised. For instance, it is not known the extent to which the ordinary people can have some control over health workers who are supposed to serve their needs. It is also quite uncertain the real extent of improvement in the quality of decision-making through the participation of the ordinary people in health actions.

Most of the strategies of mobilization for participation reviewed above are far from being exhaustive. A relevant example in this regard is that of Nyemetu. For instance, the list glaringly leaves out mobilization through commendation and appreciation. Thee role of commendation or praises and conferment of titles and special honours with regard to mobilizing community members for participation in health projects cannot be over stressed in traditional societies in Africa where the conferment of titles, giving of accolades, honours and paying tributes is highly revered.

On the various problems identified in the literature concerning obstacles to participation in health development, it is quite obvious that factors such as corruption, ignorance, leadership or even bureaucracy do not as much as economic factors negatively affect success in health participation efforts. The factors of emphasis on fund-raising cited in the literature as a major obstacle to

participation in health projects tends to underscore the view in relevant literature that health behaviour, even among pre-literate and semi-literate people is almost always an economic-rational action. Some scholars have contended that where people refused rationally positive action even when their lives were seriously in danger, something must have disturbed their rationality (Zola, 1964).

It is also quite important to stress that the manifestation of these problems or obstacles to participatory health activities varies from one culture to another and from one form of health project to another. Literature reviewed in this work also touched certain areas of health care financing. It is necessary to stress that much of what a country spends on health care as a proportion of their total national income depends on how much value they place on health care in comparison with other categories of goods and services.

However, it is instructive to note that participation does not just occur. Its success is a function of interplay of several factors including socio-cultural variables such as belief systems, customs, norms and values of end-users of community-based projects (CBPs). The strategies employed for such participation, if they do not fit into the people's cultural values, scholars have argued that the participatory scheme will fail. The health belief model underscores this assertion as it assumes that the beliefs and attitudes of people are crucial determinants of their health related actions (Rosenstock, 1966).

It is within this context that this study wants to examine those participation strategies that the rural dwellers in O-kun Yoruba of Kogi State, Nigeria tend to prioritize over and above others in participatory health development.

Specific objectives of the study include the following;

- i. To identify those participation strategies that are in use in health programs in the study area.
- ii. To determine the relative rankings of those participation strategies among the study population (O-kun Yoruba of Kogi State, Nigeria)
- iii. To highlight implication of such rankings for health development in O-kun land in particular and Nigeria generally.

### **What is Participation?**

There is no single working interpretation of the concept of participation that has been universally acceptable. A variety of interpretations exist, giving rise to different forms of practice (Oakley, 1989). The concept of participation, however, in the study is used to include the mobilization of people, thereby increasing their willingness to respond to development programs as well as encourage local initiatives (Tumwine, 1989; UN, 1971, World Bank, 1994).

For this study, participation is also conceived to include the involvement of the local people in decision-making, planning, implementation, evaluation and sharing in the benefits of such programs.

### **Community Participation Strategies**

Relevant literature on the subject under discourse had highlighted a number of strategies that are mostly patronized across nations in health participatory programs (UN, 1971; Adebayo, 1992; Alakija, 2000; Metiboba, 2005). Community participation strategies include the following;

- i. Provision of free labour for construction and maintenance of health units
- ii. Provision of accommodation, office and clinical supports
- iii. Payment of utility bills (e.g. water, electricity)
- iv. Payment of salaries
- v. Payment of drugs
- vi. Payment of selected services
- vii. Monthly fees to community associations
- viii. Ad-hoc fund raising
- ix. Formation of health co-operatives
- x. Contribution to health funds
- xi. Donations from "friends of community"

### **Study Area**

This study was conducted in 7 communities in O-kun land of Kogi State, Nigeria. The O-kun people are a sub-ethnic group within the Yoruba nationality. Located in the western senatorial district of Kogi State, O-kun group refers to a distinct socio-linguistic unit of Yoruba cultural group.

### **Materials and Methods**

Data for the study were generated mainly through multi-stage sampling technique by the use of structured questionnaire administered to 245 respondents randomly selected from 7 communities in O-kun land of Kogi State, Nigeria. Out of a total of 245 questionnaires distributed to subjects on the issue under study, 235 turned in their completed questionnaires. This forms 96 per cent of the



total. This is considered statistically significant enough to continue with the study. To determine the respondents' ranking of community participation strategies in health development programs, they (respondents) were asked to rank the various participation strategies in use in their locality on a scale of preference between 0 and 10. The individual ranking score of each participation strategy was summed up and averaged to obtain the mean-index of each participation strategy in the study area. The ranking order of each participation strategy gives identification for the independent variables ( $X_1 - X_{11}$ ) in each community. The criteria for ranking the community participation strategies (CPs) include the extent to which each of the CPs can induce the respondents (rural dwellers) to the following;

- i. Attending community rallies/meetings
- ii. Contributing money or levies to health project
- iii. Donating labour, land or materials to health projects
- iv. Utilizing health facilities
- v. Getting involved in projects planning, decision-making and implementation.

Data obtained through the questionnaire were analyzed through the techniques of univariate, Pearson Product Moment Co-efficient of Correlation and Preference-Based Analysis and discussed under the various sub-heads as related to the subject matter.

### Quality Control

The study was subjected to some quality control tests such as validity tests and pre-tests. This was carried out by lecturers in the Department of Sociology, Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria. A reliability co-efficient of 0.80 was obtained, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient.

### Results and Findings

**Table 1: Health Facilities in Selected Communities in O-kun Yoruba**

Communities	PHC	Cottage Hospital	Private Clinic/Hospital	BHC
Iyara	1	1	2	1
Ekinrin-Adde	1	1	1	—
Aiyetoro	1	1	1	1
Egbeda-Egga	1	—	1	—
Ogidi	1	—	—	—
Iyamoye	1	1	—	1
Iya-gbede	1	—	1	—

Source: Ijumu Local Government Secretariat, 2010

**Code:**  
 PHC = Primary health Care  
 BHC = Basic Health Clinic

Table 1 above is a distribution of the health facilities in the selected 7 communities under study. It is instructive to note that all the facilities were built through participation (partnership) of health workers with the communities. The analysis shows the paucity of health facilities in the study area. Even in Iyara which is the local Government headquarters, there is only 1 PHC, 1 Cottage Hospital, 2 private clinics and 1 Basic Health Clinic. Ekinrin-Adde has only 1 PHC and only 1 Cottage hospital and 1 private Clinic. Aiyetoro has 1 PHC, 1 Cottage hospital, 1 BHC and 1 private Clinic. Iya-Gbede has only 1 private hospital, 1 BHC and no cottage hospital at all. A cursory look at Table 1 above shows that most of the needed health services including pre-natal and anti-natal services are in great jeopardy. Besides, tracer diseases such as measles, malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea, pneumonia, have a high tendency to constitute serious health burden for these urbanizing communities.

One important lesson one can draw from the analysis above is that since virtually all the health facilities put in place in the communities were through public-private partnership, it is very likely that if appropriate, culturally relevant participation strategies are employed for health projects in the area, there would be positive response from the local populace.

**Table 2: The Ranking of Community Participation Strategies by Respondents**

CPS	COMMUNITIES						
	Iyara	Ekinrin-Adde	Aiyetoro	Egbeda-Egga	Ogidi	Iyamoye	Iya-Gbede
1	1(7.03)	2(6.12)	1(6.04)	1(6.08)	1(3.02)	3(4.18)	1(4.18)
2	11(2.0)	1(6.50)	11(2.04)	7(3.16)	11(1.55)	4(3.50)	2(4.15)
3	10(2.15)	8(3.10)	7(3.18)	2(6.05)	10(1.96)	5(3.46)	10(2.10)
4	8(3.14)	4(4.08)	2(5.25)	6(3.80)	8(2.05)	6(3.45)	4(4.10)
5	7(3.16)	9(2.45)	8(3.16)	11(2.08)	7(2.08)	11(2.22)	11(1.85)

6	2(6.15)	3(4.10)	3(5.05)	3(5.10)	4(3.23)	7(3.30)	3(4.13)
7	3(5.12)	5(3.18)	9(3.14)	10(2.10)	6(2.10)	1(4.20)	9(2.25)
8	4(4.20)	6(3.17)	4(5.04)	4(4.12)	5(2.13)	2(4.19)	5(3.55)
9	5(4.10)	7(3.12)	5(4.25)	5(4.10)	3(3.42)	8(3.28)	6(3.52)
10	6(3.18)	11(1.50)	6(4.12)	8(2.50)	2(4.82)	9(3.25)	7(3.50)
11	9(2.50)	10(2.20)	10(2.08)	9(2.12)	9(2.01)	10(2.85)	8(3.35)

Source: Authors' Survey, 2010

**Community Participation Strategies (CPS):**

**Code:**

No. 1 = Provision of free labour for construction and maintenance of health units

No. 2 = Provision of accommodation, office and clinical supports

No. 3 = Payment of utility bills (e.g. water, electricity)

No. 4 = Payment of salaries

No.5 = Payment of drugs

No.6 = Payment of selected services

No.7 = Monthly fees to community associations

No.8 = Ad-hoc fund raising

No.9 = Formation of health co-operatives

No.10 =Contribution to health funds

No.11 = contributions from "friends of community"

**Note:** Respondents were asked to rank the Community participation Strategies (CPS) on a scale of preference between 0 and 10. The mean preference score of each CPS was used as the criteria for ranking.

Table 2 above depicts the ranking of each CP strategy by the 7 communities under study. There is a clear picture that there is lack of uniformity in the ranking of most of the community participation strategies by different communities. The implication of this is that in terms of the participation strategy these communities wished to be involved in, there were differences in their ranking. However, there was some agreement or similarity in the ranking of 3 of the community participation strategies. These are numbers 1, 6 and 8 namely: provision of free labour for construction and maintenance of health unit, payment for selected services and Ad-hoc fund raising respectively.

It is crucial to observe from the Table that 5 of the communities (Iyara, Aiyetoro, Egbeda-Egga, Ogidi, Iya-Gbede) ranked provision of free labour for construction and maintenance of health unit 1<sup>st</sup> while the other 2 ranked it 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively. In like manner, payment for selected

services was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> by 4 communities while 3 communities rated it 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> respectively. Also, Ad-hoc fund raising was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> by Iyara, Aiyetoro and Egbeda-Egga while the 2 communities (Ogidi and Iya-Gbede) ranked it 5<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> respectively and the remaining 2 (Ekinrin-Adde and Iyamoye) ranked it 6<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> respectively.

One inference that can be drawn from this analysis is that the non-uniformity in the ranking of these CP strategies by the communities suggests that every community will want to opt for a CP strategy whose end they are able to see more clearly, and utilize more to advantage, among several alternatives. The ranking in the Table above explains, at least in part, why many in O-kun Ijumu tend to detest community-based participatory programs. It is due to the seeming emphasis on imposition of levies or fund-raising or payment for services of one kind or another.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

This study has investigated the prioritizing of community participation strategies in health development among selected rural communities in O-kun Yoruba land, Kogi State, Nigeria. The analysis highlighted the existing participation strategies in the study area, having interpreted the kind of participation as drawn from relevant literature, which is relevant to the study. With the use of structured questionnaire designed to elicit information from the respondents on their ranking of participation strategies that are in vogue in the 7 communities, and using Preference Based Analysis (PBA) as the main technique of data analysis, it was discovered that there was no uniformity in the ranking of such strategies among the study population. And the study suggests that aside the fact that participation does not just occur, every community seems to opt for a community participation strategy whose end they are able to see more clearly, and utilize more to advantage, among several alternatives.

It has also been discovered in this study that strategies which tend to place undue emphasis on imposition of levies or fund raising or payment for services of one kind or another will continue to attract less patronage from the rural populace. The implication of this study for health development is obvious. One, health planners and policy makers in the health sector must appreciate the fact that whether in rural or urban settlements, health behaviour is always a rational one. Second, it should be clearly known also that social factors, such as income, belief systems, etc. are strong determinants of participation in community-based health programs. Finally, but by means the least, the people for whom health programs are designed should not only be treated as rational beings by health workers but also should be sufficiently involved in the critical stages of project formulation, planning, implementation, evaluation and decision-making.

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## Issues, Problems and Policies in Agricultural Credit: A Review of Agricultural Credit in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *The importance of Credit to the development of agriculture cannot be overstressed. To extricate a farmer from the quagmire of poverty and boost food production, storage and supply, agricultural credit is vital. This is the propelling engine behind various government policies and programmes. However, the implementation of Agricultural credit programmes in Nigeria is hampered by many problems. These problems and other issues surrounding the role of Agricultural Credit formed the basis of discussion in this paper. The recommendations are explicit while the conclusion centred on the prospects for agricultural credit policies.*

### Introduction

Credit, has been a main focus of many Research work in Agricultural finance. To some credit is “all in all” for a farmer to produce (productive input) while others hold different opinions. Whichever way it is looked at, credit is an important instrument in the development of Agriculture. In fact, as emphasized by many researchers, the smallholder, already caught in the quagmire of the vicious cycle of poverty, requires not only labour or land but an injection of capital to extricate it from that cobweb. This argument in favour of credit in agricultural development is not the same as assigning it a position of *primus inter pares*. When a farmer is granted loan, so many other things must go with it before the loan can turn out as a productive instrument. Apart from the fact that agriculture is constrained by natural forces, farmer’s attitude with respect to the use of loan is also an important factor.

Funds for agricultural finance are met through macro and micro finance aspects. The macro finance aspect pertains to financing agriculture through government capital allocation to agriculture and mobilizing resources for agricultural development using institutional credit agencies such as the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and Nigerian Agricultural, Cooperative and rural Development Bank (NACRDB) up to rural Banking Development Programmes. While the micro-finance aspect of agriculture pertains to the individual farm, especially financing of farm management, which relate to acquisition and use of capital in the farm business using

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commercial banks. Federal Government of Nigeria being desperate to transform the nation's agriculture sector has, since the early 1970s, embarked on substantial capital investment programmes in agriculture, based on the belief and the clamour that credit is the "all in all" productive input required by farmers to transform the productive capacity. The most relevant question to ask then is: Why has the agricultural sector performed so poorly despite the huge government investment programmes in this sector?

This paper attempts a partial answer to the question through a discussion structured into the following sections. Section two discusses concepts and issues in agricultural credits. Types of agricultural credit programmes are discussed in section three. In the fourth section, problems of agricultural credit programmes in Nigeria are considered. Section five specifies sources of farm credit and elucidates their problems.

Section six is devoted to critical issues and problems in government financing of agricultural development. Section seven elucidates approaches to farm credit supply. Section eight provides well pronged recommendations while the paper ends with a concluding section.

### **Concepts and Issues in Agricultural Credit**

There are three major nodes in the financial intermediation system – saving, intermediation and borrowing. Saving is the part of income reserved for future use, that is, future production and consumption. In the absence of saving, there cannot be a build up of capital stock to increase production of goods and services. However, savings in a society does not become an investment in capital until it is borrowed and utilized. The savers generally do not know those willing to borrow to increase production. Similarly, potential borrowers also do not know where to obtain required funds from. The passage of savings from mere idle and sterile funds into borrows and productive instrument is affected by financial intermediaries. These consist of formal and informal institutions.

Financial intermediaries are an integral part of the broader concept of rural financial markets which embrace all rural institutions (the rules and regulations of the society) which affect accumulation and use of savings, the allocation of investment capital, the flow and holding of funds and indeed, the integration of rural financial markets with national and international capital markets (Okigbo, 1981). The intermediation process is a reversible flow of funds from savers to users through intermediaries. The borrower must of necessity provide evidence of a debt obligation to the intermediary for the loan. In the same process, the intermediary provides savers a range of products and opportunities for further investments. It is obvious, therefore, that financial intermediation has a key role in channelling funds to agriculture.



The Nigerian financial system is a rather complex system of markets, institutions and financial instruments and it affects all individuals and sectors of the economy. The financial system performs three main functions. It provides a (i) payments mechanism for day-to-day transactions; (ii) means to channel funds from savers to borrowers and for savers to hold different forms of assets; and (iii) mechanisms for the government to exercise control over real output and employment in the economy.

The financial system is made up of two components, the formal and the informal subsystems. The formal wing of the Nigerian financial system consists of commercial banks, finance companies, stock exchanges, government institutions, among others. The informal financial sector is made up of money lenders, the *esusus* or *ajo* and similar institutions within traditional systems and relations. With respect to agricultural development, it is the behaviour and action (or inaction) of each of the three participants (savers, intermediaries, and farmer borrowers) that create opportunities or problems for accumulation of capital in agriculture. The supply side problems are more associated with savers and intermediaries while the demand side problems are more associated with farmers. The generalized supply side problems of agricultural financing in Nigerian may be paraphrased as follows:-

a) *Inadequate Generation of Income and Savings*

The savings rate in Nigeria is low. If the gross national savings and investment remains at the level it was Between 1991 and 1995, Nigeria's gross national savings and investment ratios would be less than 20 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2010, whereas those of the Asian Tigers during the same period averaged between 60 and 70 per cent (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2004). The low levels of savings and investment in the economy translate to inadequate performance of output. For instance, the growth rates in GDP reached 8.3 per cent in 1990 but fell to 2.2 per cent in 1995. It rose again to 9.3 in 2004 and fell to 4.2 in 2007. The simple lesson being that what you do not generate you cannot consume or save.

b) *Unstable Macroeconomic Policies*

Over the years, the macroeconomic policies have failed to secure macroeconomic stability, external balance or a non-inflationary, self-reliant economy. Macroeconomic policies undertaken have always largely included monetary, fiscal, income and wage, as well as trade and exchange rate policies. Specific sectoral policies often derive from macroeconomic policies and are generally articulated in the form of programmes, projects and activities.

Touching briefly on two items of macroeconomic policies, the interest rate and exchange rate policies, both came under the influence of the liberalization policy. Interest rates were liberalized to allow market forces to influence the inflow of savings and allocation of credit. As a result of liberal interest rate policy, there were unprecedented increases in interest rates in the economy. The average nominal interest rates between 1986 and 2010 are as shown in Table.1.

**Table 1. Nominal Interest Rates, 1986 - 1992**

Interest Rates	1986	1992	2000	2008	2010
Prime Lending Rate	9.6	24.8	17.1	21.2	22.31
Maximum Lending Rate	11.5	26.5	14.9	24.5	24.7
Savings Deposit Rate	9.5	15.5	8.3	12.3	2.0
Minimum Rediscount Rate	10.0	17.5	9.8	10.2	6.25

**Source:** Central Bank of Nigeria *Annual Report and Statement of Accounts (various issues)*

Under liberalization, it was impossible to prescribe interest rates for the agricultural sector. As such, agricultural sector projects had to compete for credit at the so-called market determined interest rates. The implication is that agricultural sector may be at a disadvantage in the liberalized credit market.

#### c) *Transaction Costs*

A credit agency incurs three kinds of costs: (i) the costs borne in obtaining loanable funds, (ii) the likely loss of capital if borrowers default and (iii) the administrative costs of operating the credit agency. These costs when added together can be substantial. Unless the total interests charged are able to cover these costs, the credit agency will run its operations of making loans of the size needed by small farmers available on an individual basis and keep administrative costs at a tolerable level. However, group loans tend to reduce administrative costs substantially.

#### **Types of Agricultural Credit Programmes In Nigeria**

Credit can be obtained for agricultural purposes from formal and informal sources. The informal type of agricultural credit refers to credit from moneylenders, friends, relatives and the like. Whenever small farmers need emergency loans or small investment funds, they often resort to moneylenders. The rates charged on such loans are very high. It can reach 10 per cent a month or even one per cent a day. Borrowers are normally unable to pay back debt contracted in this manner. They end up having to give up their small land holdings, agricultural produce, and sometimes household goods and personal savings of their family. Although several farmers still rely on informal sources of credit, the focus of credit impact assessment is on the formal sector.

This is not surprising because unlike in the formal system, there are considerable built-in mechanisms in the informal system which ensures effectiveness of operations. The various credit programmes which often require assessment are within the public –sector domain.

In the formal setting of most developing countries, including Nigeria, commercial banks and other specialized agencies are charged with the responsibility of providing credit to farmers. Nigerian Agricultural, Cooperative and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB) is a typical example of a specialized bank established for the purpose of advancing agricultural credit. Through this bank, agricultural lending rates are regulated by government and at times subsidized. In addition to NACRDB, Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS) was introduced in 1977 to encourage the trading banks to increase their supply of agricultural credit through the provision of suitable loan guarantee. In 2005, Obasanjo administration evolve the 50 billion naira agricultural loans to farmers in which the state government were made to contribute counterpart fund for citizens of their state to participate. The government has also involved a number of institutions in the provisions of agricultural credit. For instance, Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs), the river Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), and so on have implemented various forms of agricultural credit programmes.

As a result of the poor financial situation of small farmers especially in terms of low income and low savings, both national and international organizations have embarked on various programmes to boost the supply of agricultural credit in several developing countries. As one of her mandate, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) ensures that credit goes to those who have been traditionally left out by credit programmes – the small farmers, landless poor and women. To identify target group for such credit programmes, ceilings are placed on land ownership and annual household income for the landless. A number of such agricultural credit programmes that have benefited from IFAD's assistance in several developing countries are discussed below

In Bangladesh, Grameen Bank embarked on such credit programmes with the sole purpose of giving the landless poor a chance to buy income-earning assets and break out of the vicious circle of "low-income, low savings and low-investment". IFAD as part of its Small Farmers Credit Project gave support to Grameen Bank to the tune of US\$ 3.4 million in 1980, by 1984 increased the amount to US\$ 23.6 million and helped the bank to achieve its five years target of setting up 500 branches. Loans are obtained by joining a group of five borrowers, who meet weekly with a Grameen Bank Officer. The groups serve as collateral for loan repayment. Initially, two members of the group are allowed to apply for a loan. The next two borrowers can apply and the fifth member depending on their repayment performance.

Furthermore, under the government's transmigration programme, cows are given as in-kind credit to Indonesian smallholders. With the financial assistance of IFAD, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the Government of Indonesia, cattle are shipped from the inner Islands to the outer Islands, where they are scarce. Cattle serve as repayment; implying that delivery and recovery of loan under the programme are both in kind. The beneficiaries are to return two calves for every cow or bull they receive within five years of the loans.

Moreover, as a way to create village funds for sustainable development in Mali, villages in Segou were asked to establish and operate a fund to be used for commercial purposes, and as security to cover debt repayment. The funds' aim is to attract village saving and direct them towards productive investments. The nature and terms of loans are decided solely by the villagers. Credit from these funds is used by villagers for a variety of purposes such as fertilizing, vegetable gardens, improving the stock of small ruminants and so on.

In an attempt to develop the fishing industry in Dominica, the Dominica Fisheries Cooperative Society (DFCS) was given loan by IFAD to refurbish their boats, buy spare parts, nets and outboard motor. The loan was also used to improve beaching sites to provide great security for small vessels. Also in Marigot, part of the loan is used to blast a reef to construct a small jetty to protect small boats from hurricane gales. Small co-operatives consisting of 6 to 60 men operate throughout the Island.

Furthermore, to curb erosion, the Governments of Kef and Siliana of Tunisia, IFAD provided seasonal, medium and long-term credit to the farmers for soil conservation and the improvement of rangeland. As part of agricultural credit programmes, the Agriculture Development Bank of Nepal with the financial assistance of IFAD, trained group organizers who encourage the formation of farmers' group and arrange loans for them. The organizers help the groups to choose their activities and act as intermediaries between them and the agencies that provide loans, extension, farm supplies necessary for production and other support services. Women motivators organize women's groups and channel loans through them to improve their economic activities. The members of the groups put aside a little money each week for the group savings scheme. These funds are deposited in the local branches of the Nepal Agricultural Development Bank, earn interest and may be borrowed by members for emergency needs.

In the 1970s, subsistence farmers in Down West of Malawi group themselves into farmers clubs to pool agricultural production inputs. These clubs were used to distribute credit in 1981 when

IFAD supported the Malawi Government project to increase agricultural yields and to provide credit facilities to the farmers of the Dowa West region.

From the foregoing, it is clear that directed credit programmes can be grouped into various categories in terms of purpose, loan duration, and mode of disbursement. In general, the programmes are focused on production activities, but several enterprises are often involved. For instance, credit programmes can be designed for crop production, livestock production and fish production. Credit can be provided for short-term, medium-term and long-term production activities (such as arable crop production, tree crop production and irrigation project). Marketing credit falls under short-term credit. With regards to mode of disbursement, credit programmes can grant loans in cash and in kind.

### **Problems of Agricultural Credit Programmes in Nigeria**

In spite of the achievements of the various agricultural credit programmes reviewed above, it is clear, as we noted earlier, that more problems of agricultural credit have evolved in the last fifteen years. As objective assessment of the credit programmes is that, while the known achievements have been modest, the problems encountered have demonstrated to policy makers and those involved in policy implementation the direction in which the various agricultural credit policies should move in future. For a better understanding of the adjustments which are necessary, the problems of the various credit programme should be briefly examined. The most obvious ones are:

- a) inadequate number of beneficiaries;
- b) interest rate problem;
- c) uneven distribution of agricultural credit;
- d) inadequate monitoring and evaluation;
- e) underdeveloped production base;
- f) weak agricultural policies;
- g) high default rate; and
- h) uncoordinated credit policies.

There is no doubt, as we noted earlier, that a good number of farmers have benefited from current credit programmes as against the pre-1970 situation. That measure of success has however to be discounted by the large number of prospective credit users who cannot be accommodated within the present credit programmes. Viewed as a whole, it may be correct to state that most farmers who employ modern techniques and show some degree of commitment can now obtain one form of credit or another. The same cannot be said of the majority of smallholders who are responsible for about 98 per cent of total agricultural production in the

country. Denied of access to credit and hence access to the use of essential inputs, the predominant smallholder subsector can hardly make any visible impact on total agricultural production. Definitely, whatever impact the current agricultural credit programmes have made, has been isolated and not comprehensive as implied in credit policy objective. The state of affairs is largely due to the continued poor status of the agricultural sector and the minimum impact made on that status by the adopted agricultural policy framework.

If the present agricultural credit programmes have managed to reach only a negligible proportion of farmers, it is debatable whether there is need for fixing interest rates on agricultural loans at much lower levels than on other types of loans. The modern farmers who have obtained the bulk of the loans for livestock and fishery projects could have done without the subsidized interest rate as long as their enterprises were visible. However, it may be thought that in the long run when most farmers have been brought into some form of credit programmes, the interest subsidy element may probably be justified. Even if it is legitimate for government to want to continue to use this policy instrument, it may be desirable to raise the lending rate so as to cover administrative and procurement costs. This may assist the public credit institutions in particular. Raising the lending rate can also be buttressed by the fact that most farmers continues to patronize private moneylenders and this may suggest that effective supply of credit is the most important issue in agricultural credit programmes for small farmers.

The problems of uneven distribution of credit are present at both levels of subsectoral allocation and various borrowers. The latter problems have been touched upon and have to do with the fact that most credit programmes have tended to discriminate against the smallholders. The other aspect of credit distribution is the large imbalance in subsectoral on distribution of credit. By and large, the livestock subsector, and especially poultry, has been favoured both in the programmes of the public and private credit institutions. The effect of this on the spatial distribution of agricultural credit has been an undue concentration of credit users in many urban locations and the neglect of the main centers of agricultural production, particularly in the middle belt of the country.

Another undesirable aspect of the agricultural credit programmes is the low level of monitoring and evaluation of implementation. As of today, most of the problems of the credit programme have not been adequately documented and this has often resulted in a superficial discussion of such problems. Most projects financed by credit are subjected to some serious analysis and evaluation which is a requirement for obtaining the credit. However, the ex-post evaluation has been very poor and, very often, default cases just surface without an adequate background of how they came about. Apparently, the credit institutions have not had the size of manpower

needed for the evaluation and monitoring exercise. The efforts of many credit institutions in shaping their agricultural credit units are nevertheless commendable, but it does not seem that the institutions have done enough justice to this problem.

The agricultural sector of the economy has witnessed some structural changes since 1970, but such changes have been isolated and insignificant in relation to the size and potential of the sector. The dual structure of production, consisting of a small modern sector and a large traditional sector, appears to have been accentuated by the developments in the economy which have generally been in favour of non-agricultural activities. Development efforts have been concentrated in non-agricultural activities like commerce, construction and services to the detriment of the agricultural sector which continued to lose its manpower to these sectors. Development efforts in the agricultural sector itself have been lopsided and of limited relevance to a systematic transformation of the sector. Unduly large projects were embarked upon without due regard to their long-run financial requirements, while many subsidy programmes were initiated and turned out to benefit middlemen rather than the farmers. In view of these developments, the base of the agricultural sector has remained largely underdeveloped. Under the circumstance, some of the agricultural credit programmes being currently executed appear to be out of context of the general level of agricultural development in the country and hence have made only little impact (Olowa, 2005).

The continued underdeveloped status of Nigerian agriculture is, as has just been suggested, due largely to the defective general economic policy framework of the country. But there have been some ineffective agricultural policies which have not lent sufficient support to the agricultural credit programmes. For instance, the development of virile agricultural cooperatives and effective extension services is vital for the success of these agricultural credit schemes. In fact, the ACGS and the NACRDB credit programmes were expected to depend to a large extent on the involvement of farmers' cooperatives through which credit would reach individual farmers. From the Second National Development Plan period, government initiated bold policies to support the cooperative system through the improvement of training facilities for cooperative personnel and credit for executing cooperative projects. The available evidence is that, actual government efforts have made only marginal impact. Total membership of cooperatives increased from about 0.5 million to 1 million at the end of 1980. This is obviously a negligible proportion of the total farming population. Educational facilities for cooperative personnel were modestly expanded, but could not adequately cope with the problem of inadequate qualified personnel to manage the existing cooperatives. The problems of inadequate finance for cooperatives have also remained intractable. What may be observed is that cooperative development policies have not been adequately backed up by effective programmes, while implementation of current programmes has

been very poor. Another serious gap which has affected the credit programmes is the weak position of many extension services throughout the country. The extension system could have been very effective in monitoring the activities of borrowers and hence provide a good feedback to the credit institutions. The extension service system has traditionally been under the control of the State Governments. But owing to lack of funds, the extension services in the states have virtually collapsed and are generally ill-equipped to perform effective intermediary roles between farmers and other agencies such as credit institutions.

Largely as a result of many loopholes in the agricultural credit system such as inadequate monitoring and evaluation, and ineffective agricultural policies which have not adequately complemented the use of agricultural credit, there has been an alarming increase in default rate. For example, at the end of 1984, under the ACGS, about 63 claims on default worth N0.4 million had been settled. There were 313 default claims outstanding valued at N10.4million out of which 41 valued at N0.4million had been recommended for settlement and 34 were regarded to be in respect of deliberate defaults. By 1980, the NACB (now NACRDB) had a total of 142 loan defaulters owing N27.4million (CBN, 1984). The data for recent years have not been made available, but it is roughly estimated that loan repayment arrears could be about 10 per cent of total approvals. The State Governments and their agencies have been the major defaulters of NACRDB loans and extensive diversion has been observed in NACRDB loans to State Governments and their agencies. Many loan schemes of the State Agricultural Credit Corporations have collapsed because of huge loan repayment arrears. The state credit schemes have long been notorious in this regard. A high rate of loan default, such as we have observed in many agricultural credit programmes, does not augur well for such programmes. It generates caution on the part of leaders and this attitude has for instance adversely affected the on-lending programme of the NACRDB. A high default rate also affects potential borrowers who may face stiffer lending conditions from the credit institutions. The credit institutions, especially the public agencies, tend to adopt survival strategies in the management of funds because of limited sources of funds. The overall effect is that targets outlined in various credit programmes cannot be met.

Finally, the extent of coordination among the various credit programmes has been small and this adversely affects the total impact of the programmes. The lack of coordination in these programmes stems from the inadequate cooperation in agricultural policy formulation and implementation by the Federal and State Governments, each of which had tended to pursue certain lines of action without the regard to what the other was doing. This has been the pattern since the Federal Government assumed some basic responsibilities for agricultural development. At the same time, the states seemed to have voluntarily abandoned their own responsibilities in



the realm of agricultural development probably due to their poor financial position. The states have attempted to benefit from the Federal credit programme of the NACRDB. But their own credit programmes, managed by their credit corporations have not been coordinated in any meaningful way with those of the NACRDB. With proper coordination of Federal and State credit policies, the NACRDB programme would probably have reached a larger number of farmers and many of the defaults by states arising from NACRDB loans might have been avoided. In the same vein, the loan programme of the commercial and merchant banks might have reached many more farmers if that programme had been properly coordinated with those of the states. For the sheer cost of administration, there was no basis for the banks to cover so many farmers in their schemes. But if states could effectively mobilize funds from the banks, farmers could more effectively benefit from the bank schemes. There was only little coordination among the credit programmes at the Federal level. For instance, if a way could be found to permit an easy flow of credit from the banks to the NACRDB without employing coercive instruments, it might have produced a salutary effect on the agricultural credit system.

### **Specific Sources of Farm Credit and their Problems**

#### *(a) Problems Associated with Non-Institutional Sources of Agricultural Credit*

Non-institutional sources include relations, friends, merchants and moneylenders. Loans from these sources are usually made directly to the borrowers by the lender. They are prevalent in areas where individuals are quite familiar with and share confidence in one another. The relative ease of obtaining loans and flexibility built into repayment has made non-institutional sources extremely popular among stallholder farmers (Nwankwo, 1980). But non-institutional sources have their problems.

- a) Non-institution financial agents tend to be small and proprietary in size, confine activities to small neighbourhoods, and restrict activities to only well-known people in order to avoid default. Thus, non-institutional sources of credit can only cater for a limited number of trusted clients.
- b) Volume of lending is very small and may not meet the needs of the borrower.
- c) Endemic in non-institutional credit system are monopoly abuses. Many of the loans from money lenders, middlemen, landlords and merchants are at exceedingly high rates of interest, as well as purchasing of farmers output at unreasonably low prices. It is not uncommon for farmers to pledge their economic trees like cocoa, kolanut, rubber, oil palm and even entire farmlands as collateral for money borrowed from moneylenders.
- d) Adoption of third party guarantees as a technique of overcoming problem of collateral is defective in that enforceability is difficult and ineffective.

*(b) Problems Associated with Institutional Sources of Agricultural Credit*

Institution sources include commercial banks, specialized banks, cooperative institutions, savings and credit institutions and agricultural development projects. These institutions have specified and written procedures to administer farm credit and do have a legal backing. The main problems associated with these sources include the following.

1. *Scarce Collateral:* Physical assets that the lender can seize if the borrower defaults are usually hard to come by in the rural areas partly because the borrowers are too poor to have assets that could be collateralized, and partly because poorly developed property rights make appropriating collateral in the event of default difficult in rural areas.
2. *Underdeveloped Complementary Institution:* developed communication networks in the rural areas make the use of institutional banking arrangements costly for many individuals. It makes transaction costs of dealing with small loans, and geographically widely dispersed large numbers of borrowers too high for institutional lenders. Also low returns from investment in agriculture discourage institutional sources from providing loans to farmers. From the borrowers' side, there are high transaction costs in form of travel costs to lenders, application fees, collateral requirements, restrictions on loan usage, concerns about the timely delivery of credit, inflexibility in loan repayments and the need to make applications for the loans.
3. *Covariant Risk:* There is high risk of income shocks in agriculture. These include weather fluctuations as well as changes in commodity prices. Such shocks affect operation of credit institutions as shocks create the potential for loan default.
4. *Enforcement Problems:* The issue of enforcing loan repayment constitutes a serious constraint to channelling credit to the agricultural sector. Costs of sanctions such as seizing collateral may be too high in the light of poor development of property rights. In some respects, in their pursuit of other objectives, particularly distributional objectives, governments have often failed to enforce loan repayment the worst default rates.
5. *Imperfect Information:* Two significant problems that arise from imperfect information are adverse selection and moral hazards. Adverse selection occurs when lenders do not know particular characteristics of borrowers while moral hazard problems arise when lenders are unable to discern borrowers' actions.
6. *Bureaucratization:* of lending slows down loan processing and exposes credit to political or religious pressures and impedes proper working of credit institutions.
7. *Lack of Adequately Trained Personnel:* with agricultural background to supervise agricultural projects.
8. *Management Problems:* leading to inefficient application of funds and diversification of funds to non-agricultural and sometimes non-productive uses.

9. *Counterproductive Government Fiscal Policies:* For example, encouraging increase in production of poultry while at the same time banning poultry feeds and allowing importation of frozen chickens.
10. *Misconception about Loans:* Loans are often regarded as part of the national cake instead of depositors' money.

Several inadequacies have been noticed on the part of state credit institutions. These include, faulty initial concept, lack of initial groundwork, wrong training and experience, lack of continuity, shortage of technical staff and over-complacency.

Empirical investigations have shed more light on the effects of the various factors enumerated above on agricultural credit supply and administration, for instance, employed econometric techniques to analyse the effect of credit policies on agricultural credit supply. It was assumed that the lending behaviour of financial institutions is influenced by credit allocation and interest rates policies, rural savings mobilization and available incentives such as guarantees and refinance facilities. They found that at the national level, credit quota and allocation policies had failed to inspire both borrowers and lenders commitment to investment specified in loans contracts. Moreover, failure to integrate mobilization schemes into credit programmes militated against effectiveness. This often created serious bottlenecks in management of loans portfolios. It denies lenders access to financial transactions of borrowers and has often depended on extension service agents to determine level of credit worthiness of farmers. It makes loan recovery difficult, a factor which may be instrumental to the high rate of loan delinquency.

### **Critical Issues and Problems in Government Financing of Agricultural Development**

Contrasting the amount of financial resources provided for agriculture and general agricultural performance in the last 15 years, brings us back to the question raised at the beginning of this paper. However, two issues need to be resolved before an attempt is made to discuss the fundamental factors involved. First, the inference that increased government financing of agriculture would necessarily result in higher agricultural performance should not be carried too far. Irrespective of the levels of financing, the agricultural sector may not perform well because it is subjected to natural and man-made factors such as recurring droughts and misappropriation of resources. Also a sizeable portion of total capital generation is by the private sector whose performance depends on several other factors. However the whole macro-economic policy framework of the government does critically influence not only the general economy but also the trends in individual sectors, particularly agriculture which is, for practical purposes, the dominant sector of the economy.

Secondly, the inference that government financing of agriculture might not have been adequate to produce sufficient impact should also be cautiously made. During the national plan periods especially with respect to last four plan periods. Government capital allocations to agriculture averaged 10.3 per cent of total allocations to all sectors, while actual capital expenditures on agriculture in 1962/2/68, 1970/74 and 1975/80 averaged 11.6 per cent of total actual expenditures on all sectors. Many observers would have preferred higher proportionate allocations and expenditures, but this issue has to be looked at in the context of past experience. In recent years, most government agricultural development programmes and projects have been implemented under conditions of inadequate executive capacity. There is also the possibility that if more government funds were invested in agriculture, the level of waste would have increased significantly. Also, the deteriorating level of the external reserves would have limited further growth in government financing since the successful implementation of most projects and programmes has been dependent on the availability of foreign exchange because of their high import content.

This preliminary discussion seems to point to two critical areas which may be examined to provide some insight into the recent adverse trends in Nigerian agriculture in the midst of increased government financing of the sector. These are:

- a) the nature and outcome of government macroeconomic policies; and
- b) the nature of the development strategy for the agricultural sector.

a) *Macroeconomic Policies.*

Since the early 1970s, the so-called oil boom has been at the centre of government macroeconomic policy framework. The boom has meant in recent years a dependence on the oil sector for an average of about 95 per cent of foreign exchange earnings and over 70 per cent of federally-collected revenue, thereby making the development of the oil sector the most important determinant of Nigeria's economic growth. It became obvious that government was determined to use all available resources from the oil sector and this led to greater involvement of the government in the economy.

The macroeconomic policy framework had at least four undesirable features. Firstly, there was a rapid growth in the size of government budgets. For example, the size of the Federal Government budget increased from ₦ 7.4 billion in 1979 to ₦ 4.6 trillion in 2010 which indicates a total increase of over 1,000 per cent within thirty-one years. Also, State Government's budgets increased in size by 500 per cent between 1979 and 2010. In order to maintain their expenditure patterns, governments accumulated deficits, particularly when there were shortfalls in revenue. Between 1980 and 2010, the Federal Government budget deficits increased by 155.9 per cent,

while those of the State Governments increased by 58.2 per cent. The second feature of recent macroeconomic policies was the large distortion in the pattern of investment in favour of construction, transport, communications and other service sectors which have had better returns on investments than agriculture and industry. Thirdly, it helped to sustain an industrial sector, which did not have its base in the domestic economy. The result was an insignificant value-added and linkage effect. Fourthly, the whole policy framework appeared anchored on the external sector because of the large spill-over effect of government and private investments on the external payments' position.

These developments have had debilitating effects on the economy generally. There was a large growth in money supply arising from huge government expenditure, which accounted for the bulk of monetary expansion. Coupled with large deficits, domestic prices have escalated. Both internal and external debts increased substantially, while balance of payments deficits have similarly built up. In general, the recent macroeconomic policies and measures have tended to produce disincentive effects on the agricultural sector. For example, the pattern of investment had a bias for urban areas. The result has been a gradual increase in rural-urban migration. Also rising costs have increased labour costs in the agricultural sector. And, in any event, the wage earner most probably prefers to stay in urban employment. There was also the liberal food import policy since the early 1970s. Some imported food items have landed costs, which have been well below domestic costs and so put local food items at a disadvantage. Also, because of the over-dependence on oil revenue, the rehabilitation programmes for cash crops have not been pursued very vigorously until recently when President Obasanjo launched the cocoa revitalization programme headed by the Deputy Governor of Osun state.

The review of these development has been undertaken to illustrate the two-pronged problem of the agricultural sector – that produced by the macroeconomic policy framework and that produced by the development strategy of the agricultural sector. It must be conceded however that what government does in the agricultural sector may be more crucial for its performance.

*(b) Agricultural Development Strategy.*

Government financial plan for the agricultural sector should be based on two interrelated criteria. First, such a plan ought to strive to attain some of the objectives of national development. In Nigeria, such objectives include increased and more evenly distributed income, reduction in the unemployment level, increase in the supply of skilled manpower and greater balanced development. Secondly, such a plan must be worked out with due regard to the nature and structure of the agricultural system. In the early stages of agricultural development, it is felt that the priority in policy should be to remove the basic constraints on production through research,

extension, education, material inputs and institutional. Evidence also abounds of the need to adopt a gradual transformation process whereby the dominant small-scale farmers will be mobilized to increase their productivity and management techniques (Wells, 1974; Sinha, 1976). To apply this framework into the Nigerian situation, we can examine the nature of the various agricultural development projects and programmes, as well as the general attitude towards the small-scale farmer in these programmes.

With respect to the nature of the programme, one can examine some of the important ones like the River Basin Development Schemes, the state farm, the fertilizer scheme and tractor hiring service. One common feature of all these programmes is their capital intensity and tendency to support more of large-scale farming than being tools of removing basic constraints. In the Fourth National Development Plan, the Federal Government planned to spend about N2 billion or 35 per cent of its total allocations on the River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) schemes. The schemes involve a massive development of the nation's water resources on land provided by the RBDAs (Olowa and Omonona, 2008). Farmers are also to be supported with other inputs and services. From the current operations of the RBDAs, it does appear that they are expected to operate large-scale mechanized farms in which the small-scale farmers would be wage-earners or at best partially integrated into the production system. The state farms form a unique feature of recent agricultural policies because they developed on the assumption that the state can as well produce most of the requirements of our agricultural products. This found expression in the development of cash crop plantations in the early 1960s and the setting up of state food production enterprises such as those embarked upon by the National Grains Production Company. In fact, a good portion of officially-procured inputs has been channelled into these state farms. Very often, they require for their take-off, not only heavy equipment, but also technical partners from abroad. The importance of tractors mostly for hire and use in state projects tends to portray the anxiety to force modernization on the system. In 1979, over 1500 tractors were estimated to be in the hands of all the states and roughly 60 per cent of these were operational, the rest being out of use because of maintenance and spare parts problems. The fertilizer procurement programme is another programme which has a laudable objective but which has probably been overemphasized. Its implementation went far ahead of the necessary complementary role it was supposed to play, such as the provision of adequate infrastructure for fertilizer distribution and storage.

It seems some of the above programmes which consumed substantial government resources were only remotely linked with a systematic development. Some of the basic needs of the sector such as the application of research results, provision and expansion of extension services, pest

control, supply of adequate and improved seed varieties, soil conservation and smallholder tree crop development were somewhat relegated to the background.

Partly as a result of the poor results of the various state-operated projects from the first through the third plan period, the policy stance was to shift emphasis to the mobilization of the small-scale farmers from the beginning of the Fourth National Development Plan. The reference made to some programmes mentioned suggested that, unless these programmes were completely replaced, it was practically impossible to accommodate small-scale farmers in them. Some of the projects, like the state farms, either had little or nothing to do with small-scale farmers from the start, or, like the RBDA, the tractor and the fertilizer schemes, could only aid the small farmers if they were properly reoriented. The only exceptions which we have not mentioned so far are the Agricultural Development Projects which were specifically designed to mobilize the small-scale farmers and have been fairly successful.

Government funding of tree crop rehabilitation programmes which were capable of mobilizing a significant proportion of the sector's smallholders was rather disappointing. During the Fourth Plan, the states, for example, allocated only 10 per cent of their investment to tree crops, while the Federal Government allocated only 6 per cent. Allocation to the cocoa rehabilitation programme is not known; whereas, the states allocated 40 per cent of their resources to food crop development, compared with over 60 per cent of the Federal Government. Similarly, the livestock and fishery subsectors have been relatively neglected in government development efforts and consequently sidetracked a significant cross-section of small –scale farmers in those subsectors. In 1981/85, only 7.6 and 1.9 per cent of Federal and State Government allocations respectively went to the livestock and fishery subsectors. Actual expenditures for 1975/80 indicated that about the same ratios – 8.7 and 1.6 per cent of total actual expenditures of Federal and State Governments went to those two subsectors (Wells, 1974; CBN, 1984)

The credit schemes which have been articulated by government as part of their contributions also tend to sidetrack the small-scale farmers. The commercial banks lending programmes for agriculture have hardly come within the reach of the small farmers (Ijere, 1986). The public credit schemes have not fared much better because the much talked about cooperative development schemes have only contributed marginally to the agricultural credit system. The default rates in some of these credit schemes have been alarming because credit has either been improperly used or originally allocated to the wrong farmers.

### **Approaches to Solving Farm Credit Supply Problems**

The basic issues concern a change in the attitudes of both lenders and borrowers. Agricultural credit suppliers are not likely to be persuaded to extend credit which fails to generate substantial return in form of interest or is not fully secured. Suggestions to reduce the problems encountered by financial institutions in their small-farmer lending programmes include the following:

#### *(i) Group Loans*

This approach focuses on groups rather than on individual farmers. The expectation is that this approach reduces administrative costs of reaching borrowers. Group credit is extended to farmers who form some sort of associations, credit unions, cooperatives and so on. Such organizations play the role in the securing, sharing and repayment of such funds. Group loans may lower interest charges and make loans better secured. Group loans operate most successfully if the following conditions prevail:

- a) Existence of a viable group in the farming community with a credible record of successfully working together.
- b) In the absence of an existing group. Under such conditions, a potential exists for individuals to form a group to jointly address common economic and social interest.
- c) A good and credible leadership within the group.
- d) Credit must be committed to profitable and productive enterprise that the farmers are sure is potentially rewarding.
- e) Productive inputs (credit, fertilizer, seeds, etc) must be available at the right time.
- f) There should be a marketing arrangement that aids collection of loans when products are disposed off.

#### *(ii) Credit Arrangement That Incorporates Education, Input Supply and Marketing*

When credit to small farmers is accompanied with extension education, input provision and advice on marketing, farmers are likely to use credit profitably. Similar experience has been shared in several African countries. Multipurpose cooperatives and agricultural service centers have proved quite useful.

#### *(iii) Linking Savings with Credit*

The role of capital formation in economic development cannot be overemphasized. Without savings the volume of loanable funds remains limited. To encourage savings by farming communities the following strategies have been proposed and tried in several countries, (i) cooperative savings schemes, (ii) credit unions – linking savings and credit to meet the short-term and seasonal credit needs of farmers and (iii) local savings credit societies which could be effective if well organized and in the absence of formal savings institutions nearby.



(iv) *Subsidized Inputs and Education but No Credit.*

Substituting extension education and subsidized inputs for credit has also been proposed. This approach may be suitable to development agencies and project authorities but may not be acceptable to commercial credit providers. The effectiveness of these approaches has varied from one country to the other and from one type of financial institution to the other. What is undisputable and clear is that the commercial segment of the credit market is yet to devise a means by which it is to contribute much more significantly than it has done so far. It is unlikely that participants in this segment of the market will be persuaded to accord agriculture any favour that falls far short of the price of capital, that is, an adequate interest on loans disbursed to any of the economic sectors, including agriculture.

**Recommendations**

To make government credit policy more effective we recommend the following:-

- 1) A clear-cut credit policy which ensures a long-term financing of agriculture. Short-term, discriminations policies cause confusion and prevent farmers from investing in agriculture.
- 2) Efforts should be made to regulate the legal aspects of credit, particularly the laws relating to loan agreements and enforcement, moneylenders and transfers. The Land Use Decree should be amended to make it easy for farmers to acquire, cultivate land and feel secure on the land. This also implies that adequate compensation should be paid to those whose lands are acquired by government for development purposes.
- 3) Since credit does not exist in a vacuum, it is imperative that government should support its credit policy with the provision of infrastructure, good marketing facilities, storage, processing and manpower training.
- 4) An intensive cooperative and credit education should be imparted to those using credit before being entrusted with it. Educational institutions such as the Centre for Rural Development and Cooperatives of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka are relevant here. They should be adequately supported to provide the necessary training to farmers, school leavers and credit managers in the administration of credit and better farming practices.
- 5) There is need to revive and strengthen such laws as the Guaranteed Minimum Price and Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme to make them workable, so that farmers and banks can have enough incentives to invest in agriculture.
- 6) The same applies to the issue of the Certificate of Occupancy and the general question of the Land Use Decree. These deserve to be up-dated and made more functional. The present administration seven point agenda should address this.

- 7) It is imperative that a law on rural savings should be promulgated to regulate indigenous credit institutions as veritable agencies for savings mobilization. The same law should regulate against all forms of ostentation (expensive weddings, feasts, funerals etc). It is also imperative that one or other rural saving institutions (post office savings banks, cooperative banks etc) should be established in every autonomous community in Nigeria. This is because it is useless to blame people for squandering their earnings when there are no reliable institutions to help them save their money.

### **Conclusion**

The implementation of agricultural credit programmes in Nigeria in the recent past has been associated with many problems, which have tended to make the impact of such programmes insignificant. The agricultural credit problems and their sources can be classified into two groups. First are those problems, which arise from ineffective agricultural policies which have a more direct relationship with the successful implementation of the agricultural credit programmes. The implication of this is that there is need to redefine and articulate our agricultural development strategy in the country. Government has no doubt continued to emphasize the fact that agriculture is a priority sector, but the issue of a development strategy for the sector, backed up by appropriate policy instruments and programmes, appears to have defied proper articulation. Once an appropriate agricultural development strategy has been defined, agricultural credit policies and other policies will be formulated within that strategy. There will emerge a national agricultural credit system that is responsive to the needs of every potential credit user and the outlets for achieving this will also be determined. The main elements of the national credit system will be worked out, taking into consideration the current problems. Approaches may vary from region to region. But the evidence from the limited experience in past credit programmes suggests that there is merit in granting loans to groups of farmers such as through cooperatives, integrating credit with input supply and marketing and loan administered in special agricultural development programmes. These approaches have tended to reduce loan repayment problems.

The second group of problems of agricultural credit programmes has its roots in incoherent agricultural credit policies due in large part to missing links in the policy cycle. The cycle of agricultural credit policies begins with policy design which includes the statement of objectives, the definition of the policy instruments and the design of appropriate credit programme, and finally the execution stage during which constraints which tend to limit the performance of the programme are identified. The identification of the constraints will then necessitate a review of previous policy objectives and instruments which will then call for adjustments to the credit programmes. We have observed that every stage of the agricultural credit policy cycle in the country has been inadequate either in formulation or execution. The most disturbing gap has

been the inadequate monitoring and evaluation. What one has generally observed is that certain agricultural credit programmes have been embarked upon without a precise knowledge of what the impact would be and how they have performed. The main implication of these factors is that agricultural credit policy design and execution must show a definite departure from the present position. In particular, there is need to have a national agricultural credit system whose potential or actual effect can be assessed at any given point in time.

From the foregoing, the two major pre-conditions for more effective agricultural credit policies in Nigeria are the need to evolve an agricultural development strategy which can ensure total transformation of the agricultural sector within which credit policies will be formulated, and the need to streamline agricultural credit policy design and execution to make for continuous evaluation and adjustments. These two basic requirements underline the primary role of top managers in government and financial institutions throughout the country.

Agricultural credit policy design and evaluation are largely undertaken by top managers in the public sector. It will be their duty to plug the holes in policy design which has been sufficiently emphasized in this paper. There is need for top level administrators to conceive credit schemes within the framework of other agricultural programmes. The implementation of agricultural credit programmes is supervised by top managers in public sector, specialized credit agencies and private financial institutions. The most glaring loophole in policy is the inadequate monitoring and evaluation. There is need for top managers to design relevant assessment criteria for agricultural credit programmes which will enable the monitoring exercise to be carried out at acceptable intervals. There is also need for more objectivity on the part of assessors in an attempt to give correct advice to the top management of these institutions. Very often, many institutions that implement credit programmes only see problems from their own standpoint: which tend to suggest, though erroneously, that both policy makers and those implementing policies have conflicting aims. As indicated earlier, an effective evaluation of credit programmes will be an asset to policy makers. If necessary adjustments are made to such programmes they may help the implementing agencies to achieve their specific institutional objectives.

There is increasing awareness among the banking community that adequate knowledge of the rural setting is vital for assimilating the rural areas into their operations. Top managers should foster this trend. Some rough economic analysis of areas in which relevant institutions operate will help in determining credit demand, development plans and the general business environment. In the developed countries, many banks are generally dependent upon for certain types of economic data and information, particularly in respect of localities which may not have been covered in national statistical sample surveys. This type of activity will require more manpower

than at present. It may be necessary for top managers to recommend the relevant expansion programmes and to convince their institutions that the greatest potential for expanding bank activities lies in the rural areas where agricultural production and hence the credit needs has to be seen alongside other small-scale enterprises in which they should also be interested.

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# Conceptualising Northeast India: A Discursive Analysis on Diversity

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**Abstract:** *Northeast India is often illusively constructed, even by policy makers and social scientists, as a homogeneous entity of misty mountains inhabited by tribes who profess Christianity. The Siliguri corridor, which connects mainland India with the rest of the northeastern states, is regarded as the “Mongoloid Fringe”, from where the land of the mongoloid races starts. However, in reality, the region is as diverse as India in terms of race, ethnicity, culture and also religion. This paper traces the background of how all the states of the northeastern region came to be clubbed together as “Northeast” and also attempts to explain that the diversity of the region has to be taken into account to understand the problems associated with it. Various policies adopted by the Indian government towards the region are also analysed in brief for a better understanding of the region.*

## Introduction

Northeast India, popularly known as the “seven sister states”, comprises Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. The region covers an area of 262,000 sq. km. and accounts for 7.9 percent of total geographical area of the country. With a total population of 39 million (2001), it accounts for 3.8 percent of the total population of India. The region is physically isolated from the rest of India with a tenuous connection through a 21-kilometer long landmass, known as the “Siliguri corridor” or the “Chicken’s neck”. Sikkim was included into the northeastern states in 2002 due to its proximity to the area, a similar developmental problems and convenience in implementing developmental projects (Haokip 2006: 41). However, there are others who argue that although Sikkim does not qualify for inclusion in the Northeast as it does not meet the contiguity criteria, and it was only at Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling’s insistence that the Centre had agreed to the arrangement (Chakravarti, 2008: 11). The Chinese scholar and pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, who visited the plains of Assam in the first half of the seventh century described the region as covered with beautiful mountains, lush forests and wild life, and depicted a fairly advanced civilisation and rich cultural heritage in his narratives. Contrary to the mainland Indian perception of Northeast India as a culturally homogeneous region of mongoloid races, the region is diverse in almost every aspects; it is inhabited by a mosaic of societies characterised by diversity in ethnicity, language,

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culture, religion, social organisation, economic pursuits, productive relations and participation in political process.

The diversity, obscurity and problems associated with the northeastern region made B.G. Verghese (2004: 280) describe the region as “another India, the most diverse part of a most diverse country, very different, relatively little known and certainly not too well understood, once a coy but now turbulent and in transition within the Indian transition.” J.B. Fuller (1909), in his introduction to Major Alan Playfair’s book on the Garos, wrote that, “The province of Assam at the far northeastern corner of India is a museum of nationalities.” It has been the meeting ground of different people who migrated to the region from Southwest China or Southeast Asia via Burma at various points of history. A substantial portion of the population is also composed of migrants during the British rule, one group consists of people recruited to serve the colonial administration in the region and the others are tea planters and cultivators. The Tai-Ahoms of Assam and the Khasis of Meghalaya (Gurdon, 1907: 11-12; Bareh, 1967: 35) claimed to have migrated from Southeast Asia through Burma. The Kuki of Manipur, Nagaland, Assam and Tripura, the Mizos of Mizoram and the Chins of Chin Hills in Burma believe that they migrated from Southern China, while the Garos migrated from the southern side of central Tibet (Playfair 1909: 10-16). The Nagas are also believed to be immigrants from southern Tibet and the Meiteis probably emigrated from the northwest borders of China in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Pemberton 1838: 36).

### **Historical Background**

Northeast India is the northeastern borderland of South Asia and also the northwestern borderland of Southeast Asia.<sup>1</sup> The people of Northeast India have distinct ethnic and cultural identities, which are similar with the people of Southeast Asia and China than with people of the rest of India. The region has more geographical contact and proximity to other national states than the Indian mainland and interacts mostly with the present day Myanmar. The region had been known for her natural resources and maintained active trans-border trade with its neighbours during the pre-independence period (Pommaret, 1999: 285-303).

Assam had interaction with the British East India Company as early as 1792, at the request of the king of Assam, “for commercial advantages” by a friendly and open intercourse.<sup>2</sup> The persisting internal strife and disorder led the Burmese to occupy the plains of Assam from 1817 to 1826 and Manipur from 1819 to 1826. At the request of the king of Assam the British defeated the Burmese who were forced to surrender their suzerainty over Assam and Manipur by the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826. Eventually the British rulers annexed the whole region in the subsequent years, the Cachar plains in 1830, Khasi Hills (1833), Jaintia Hills (1835), Karbi Anglong or Mikir

Hills (1838), North Cachar Hills (1854), Naga Hills (1866-1904), Garo Hills (1872-73) and Mizo Hills (1890). These annexations brought about drastic changes in the polity as well as in the economy of the region, with the gradual decay of feudal institutions and the rise of capitalist economic entities.

The plain areas of the region, the Brahmaputra, Barak, Imphal and Agartala plains, and the hill areas have distinct cultures, traditions and histories. They have coexisted for the past several centuries, amidst cordial relations combined with conflicts as well as social, economic and political interdependence. The hill areas are mainly inhabited by different tribes who mostly profess Christianity. However, most of the tribes in Arunachal Pradesh are Buddhists and Hindus. Some of the major hill tribes of the region are the Mizos of Mizoram, Khasi, Jaintia and Garos of Meghalaya, the Nagas of Nagaland and Kukis who have settled in Manipur, Nagaland, Assam and Tripura. There are also tribes who have settled in the plains known as "plain tribes" like the Bodos, Mishings, Rabha, etc in Assam. The plain areas of the region are mainly inhabited by non-tribals, who are Hindus with a substantial number of Muslims. The Meiteis of Imphal and Barak valley, the Bengalis of Agartala valley and the Assamese of the Brahmaputra valley are the prominent plain dwellers.

In the past few decades there were conflicts around land, and ethnic enmity have intensified. In such baffling situation history has been used as a tool to protect identity and for its own good without taking into account the genuine rights of the others often leading to antagonism among them. Each community has rewritten exclusive histories of itself that speak of its own rights to the exclusion of the rest. Such nationalism based on ethnic and linguistic lines led the Assamese nationalists to propagate *Swadin Asom* which aims to re-read, re-interpret and even re-create history in order to build up the theoretical base that Assam had always been a free nation.

### **Origin of the Term**

The term "Northeast" was first used by the British rulers to identify a geographical area. Alexander Mackenzie was perhaps the first to use the term "Northeast Frontier" to identify Assam, including the adjoining hill areas and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura in his book *History of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal* in 1884. When there was a plan to merge Assam with Eastern Bengal in the late 1890s and the beginning of 1900, there were proposals to name the new province as the "North Eastern Province" (Guha 1977: 73). Initially the term remained a geographical concept and throughout the colonial period the British rulers referred to Assam as the "Northeastern Frontier of Bengal". Thus, in the colonial period the area what now constitute the "Northeast" was considered to be a frontier of Bengal that needs to be protected and defended militarily.

Northeast India became a region merely through a geo-political accident. The separation of Burma from the Indian sub-continent in 1937 and the partition of 1947 virtually created what we now call the "Northeast". The Partition of India in 1947 caused the extreme geo-political isolation of the Northeast, making it the most regulated, a sensitive border region and the most exposed territory. In addition, the partition also caused the severance of the inland water, road and railway communications through the erstwhile East Pakistan and access to the Chittagong port was lost. The Chinese take over of Tibet and the virtual closure of the border with Burma added to the isolation of the region. This condition has not been conducive to the region's economic and political well-being and set its economy back by at least a quarter century (Verghese, 2001).

Before partition there was no idea of a separate northeastern region. The region does not fulfill the three traditional approaches to the definition of a region which are homogeneity, nodality or polarisation around some central place. In the words of Barrister Pakem (1985: 9), Northeast India is a region as the lack of sophisticated definition of a region for Northeast India does not make it a non-region. It is a region despite its varied physical features and its different economic, political and social systems. Thus, Northeast India is a region of diverse geographical features with a population characterised by diversity of ethnicity, language, culture, religion, social organisation and levels of economic development.

At the time of Independence "Northeast" basically meant Assam and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura. In order to quell the various ethnic, cultural and political aspirations for self-government among various tribal groups, new states were carved out of Assam. The notion was that such groups require representation in the democratic process and that once they have voice and representation in the parliamentary democracy, many of their problems would be abated.

The state of Nagaland was created in 1963 by joining the then Naga Hills district of Assam and Tuensang Frontier division of North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) or the present Arunachal Pradesh.<sup>3</sup> In 1969, the Indira Gandhi government intended to fulfill the long standing demands of the hill tribes by providing them an autonomous state within the state of Assam covering all the autonomous districts of Assam, i.e., the Garo Hills, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Mikir Hills, North Cachar Hills and Mizo Hills district. The Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Act of 1969 provided Meghalaya, comprising the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills district and Garo Hills district, a semi-autonomous state which came into effect on April 2, 1970. Subsequently it became a full-fledged state of India on January 21, 1972 with the passing of North Eastern Areas (Re-Organisation) Act, 1971.<sup>4</sup> The Government of India, in July 1971, offered the proposal of turning Mizo Hills into a Union Territory and the insurgent group Mizo National Front (MNF) was ready to



accept the offer on condition that the status of Union Territory would be upgraded to statehood and therefore the Union Territory of Mizoram came into being on January 21, 1972 and subsequently the state of Mizoram was created on February 20, 1987.<sup>5</sup> Even though the people of the NEFA did not voice for statehood, due to strategic reason the Indian government granted NEFA statehood by renaming it as Arunachal Pradesh in 1987.<sup>6</sup>

The concept of Northeast was formalised politically and the term became popular with the formation of the North Eastern Council (NEC) in 1971. Since its inception the NEC functions as a regional planning body for the whole northeastern states and thus it is the nodal agency for economic and social development of the region.

### **The Problem**

There is a tendency by scholars and policymakers to club the whole northeastern states together as “Northeast” and use the term as an analytical category for the whole region. However, the practical relevance of clubbing all the eight states together and calling it the “Northeast” is always questioned. Udayon Misra points out that the use of the term “Northeast” is itself problematic as the region represents a varied cultural mosaic and has never considered itself to be one compact unit. He says, “One has to recognise that there are many different communities in the region and the dynamics of each single movement have to be taken care of, if any solution is to be achieved”. To him “New Delhi suffers from a strong misconception that by coming to an agreement with the “most powerful insurgent group” (that is, National Socialist Council of Nagaland-IM), it would be able to solve the problem and that the situation could be improved. It has failed in appreciating the complex nature of the problem. The positive fallout of the multifarious identity movements in the region has been that the civil society organizations have gathered strength and it is no longer possible to ignore them.”<sup>7</sup> Wasbir Hussain also observes that, “By bracketing the eight northeastern Indian states, with its diverse tribes, customs and cultures, into what is called the ‘Northeast,’ we tend to ignore the distinct identity and sub-national aspirations of these ethnic groups. More so, such clubbing together of the region, in an attempt to look at it as a single entity, has led to stereotyping of the problems that plague the area. The fact that each state has a different set of location-specific concerns and grievances often gets blurred in the scheme of things of policy framers and government leaders who are supposed to address these issues” (Hussain, 2004).

It is true that the northeastern region shares certain common problems like ethnic unrests, insurgency, immigration, drug trafficking, communication gap, etc. However, there are severe intra-regional differences in social issues and ethno-political aspirations. The region is, in fact,

one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse region in Asia and each state has its distinct cultures and traditions.

### **Diversity and Developmental Disparity**

Northeast India, which occupies a remote corner of India, is one of the least developed regions of the country. This development begins with the region's initial absorption into the world economy as a marginal periphery, a part of frontier of the British rule and which eventually leads to the region's peripheral position within the Indian nation-state after independence (Ahmed and Biswas 2004: 50). The first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru stated during the debate on the First Five Year Plan:

...it is admitted that there should be attempt to make every region, every part of India develop equally in so far as we can, and that we should remove the disparities that exist in India. There are some tremendous disparities. Some of our provinces, I would not name them, are extremely poor. They do not deserve to be poor (Nehru, 1952).

The lofty goals of the founding fathers of the Indian nation-state did not materialise even after sixty years of independence. Not only the northeastern states are far from being at par with other Indian states in terms of development, even within the region there is huge disparity. Although the northeastern region shares certain problems there are severe intra-regional differences on economic development. The plain areas of the region, which are also the centre of administration, are more developed than the hill areas. Not only the hills and valleys are at different levels of economic development; the urban and rural areas of the valley exhibit economic disparities.

Even though the region is conceived as a tribal region, taking the region as a whole the non-tribal population is more than the tribals. The states of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland have tribal population as majority (See table). The region has a literacy rate of 65.77 percent as against the all India average of 65.2 percent. However, the literacy rate varies from state to state in the region from a lowest figure of 54.74 percent (Arunachal Pradesh) to the highest figure of 88.49 percent (Mizoram).

The similarities that exist between different states of the region should not overshadow the different stages of socio-cultural and politico-economic development (Misra 2000: 2). Udayon Misra further observes. "The use of the illusive construct, the *North-East*, has not only led to discriminations in matters of financial allocation to resource rich and larger states like Assam, but more importantly, to serious administrative mishandling by the Centre of the complexities of the region. The tendency of the Indian State to treat this extremely diverse region as one unit has resulted in the growth of totally incomplete and often misconceived notions about the different states that make up the northeastern part of the country. Such monolithic conceptions about a region, which stands out of for its diversity of cultures and civilisations, would only help to nourish

the biases and prejudices which have marked the Indian State's approach towards Assam and her neighbours since independence" (*Ibid*: 3).

**Table 1. General Information of the Northeastern Region**

State	Total Population (in million)	Percentage of ST Population	Literacy Rate (percentage)
Arunachal Pradesh	1.09	64.2	54.74
Assam	26.64	12.4	64.28
Manipur	2.39	34.2	68.87
Meghalaya	2.31	85.9	63.31
Mizoram	0.89	94.5	88.49
Nagaland	1.99	89.1	67.11
Sikkim	0.54	20.6	69.68
Tripura	3.19	31.1	73.66
Northeastern Region	39.04	26.9	65.77
India	1027.02	-	65.20

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India, 2001.

### **Ethnicity and Ethnic Nationalism**

Ethnicity or ethnic consciousness rose steadily since the beginning of the twentieth century with renewed vigour in post-independence period. It culminated during the late 1980s and early 1990s, which found its expression in the rise of various insurgent movements demanding "ethnic homelands" ranging from autonomy to secessionism from India. In multi-ethnic or plural societies like Northeast India, diverse factors play their roles in shaping such ethnic consciousness. The ethnic consciousness that grows from their encounter with the dominant cultures leads to identity expansion.

The British were perceived to have laid the foundation for the emergence of ethnicity as a political force among the tribes. Since the advent of the British in the region, especially the first half of the twentieth century, education made great advances in the hill areas with the spread of Christianity and Christian Mission Schools. This led to the rise of small middle class among sections of each tribe. With British patronage the Naga Club was formed in 1918, which was perhaps "the first attempt at organised political opinion in the Naga Hills" (Misra, 2000, p. 29). The Mizos of the then Lushai Hills formed the Mizo Common People's Union in April 1946 and was later renamed as Mizo Union. The Kukis of Manipur also formed Kuki National Assembly (KNA) in the late 1950s to cater to their political interests.

### **Insurgency**

Most of the northeastern states are infested with insurgency, which is mainly the offshoot of rising level of ethnicity. There are several wrong presumptions and accusations by many mainland Indian scholars that insurgency in the region is due to the spread of Christianity. If Christianity would have been the founding base of such groups fighting against the Indian state, the infamous Kuki-Naga conflict of the 1990s would not have taken place. Even among the Christian sects, the Kukis and Nagas mainly belong to Baptist denomination. Thus, insurgent movements in the region have to be understood based on the rise of ethnic consciousness and penchant for protection of identity and land through demarcation of a specified area as “ethnic homeland”.

Insurgent groups in the region demand various levels of autonomy ranging from sovereignty, statehood to autonomous/development councils. These movements did not start as a militant one at the outset. When the grievances of ethnic communities were not redressed,, the discontentment manifested in the form of unrest. Subir Ghosh believes that “either frustration or sheer conviction that might is right pave the way for violence” (Ghosh, 2001: 141).

In some states like Assam and Tripura migration is the main cause of insurgency. The indigenous tribes in Tripura were reduced to a minority during the last century. The Assamese were also reduced to minority in various districts of lower Assam. In the words of Myron Weiner, illegal migration “was also the prime contributory factor behind the outbreak of insurgency in the State. There is a tendency to view illegal migration into Assam as a regional matter, affecting only the people of Assam. Its more dangerous dimension of greatly undermining our national security is ignored” (Weiner, 1978: 3).

### **Migration**

Popular discourse on migration in Northeast India is about state sponsored migration towards the region. Migration into Northeast India is of two types - migration from other parts of India and migration from outside India which is generally termed as “influx” and the immigrants are often called “foreigners”. The large inflow of immigrants has resulted in huge demographic changes in the last century. Thus, as Myron Weiner pointed out, in a multi-ethnic developing country like India, migration tends to have destabilising effects and can arise intense conflict (Weiner, *op. cit.*).

During the British period, the colonial power encouraged large scale migration from different parts of British India and Nepal into the northeastern region. Raising land revenue was the motive behind this state sponsored migration. The tribals were brought by the British capitalists mainly from Bihar, Orissa, Chottanagpur, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh to labour in tea gardens

consequent upon the development of tea gardens in Assam, as the local supply of labour was too small (Gait, 1906: 413). The Bengali Muslim peasants from East Bengal migrated to the vast tracts of fertile lands in Assam. The Hindu Bengali migration was in the service sector and Marwari migration in trade, business and industry. These four separate spheres where migration was large in number have had long-run implications for the process of nationality formation in Assam and had intensified the competition for resources. The new Muslim League government of Assam formed in 1921 under the leadership of Sayed Mohammad Abdullah gave political impetus to migration in the name "grow more food" by easing land holding regulations for immigrants from Bengal Province (Barpujari, 1998: 37-38). The Partition of British India in August 1947 also resulted in quick and large scale mass migration.

Although some states make a big fuss about migrants from Bangladesh, in fact, in such states like Tripura and Meghalaya the percentage of non-tribals have decreased. In Meghalaya the non-tribal population has declined from 19.5 percent in 1971 to 19.42 percent in 1981, 14.47 percent in 1991 and further to 14.1 percent in 2001. The Khasi Students' Union (KSU) had made a hue and cry over the illegal influx of Bangladeshis into Meghalaya, the *war* people of Khasis also do immigrate to Bangladesh (Lyngdoh, 1999: 223). The partition of India could not cut-off the trade between the trans-border tribes in Meghalaya and Bangladesh besides the large scale smuggling in the border areas. There is a need to understand the existing economic relationship of people in the border areas and also ponder upon the other side of the story.

Since the crackdown of pro-democracy groups, especially the National League for Democracy of Burma in 1990, there has been an enormous immigration into the northeastern states like Manipur and Mizoram as the Indian government sympathise with the Burmese democracy activists. In December 2010, the Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitu Committee (Leader of Mizoram Churches Committee) expressed the need for census of Burmese nationals in Mizoram. It is alleged that there are about 100,000 Burmese nationals in Mizoram and most of them are Chins.<sup>8</sup>

### **India's Policy towards the Northeastern Region**

Since independence the Indian government has adopted several policies towards the region. Many of these policies have changed in the past decades. Such policies were measures to solve the complex problems of alienation, insurgency, ethnicity/cultural identity and to bring about economic development in the northeastern region.

The first one and half decade of India's policy towards the northeastern region can be described as "Nehru-Elwin policy" where quick administrative expansion associated with the revivalist-protectionist approach towards tribal development in the hill areas was followed. It has accepted

the right of tribals to retain their way of life and identity and has sought to integrate them through democratic means into the federal frame of the Constitution of India (Sachdeva, 2004). Therefore, the post-colonial Indian state followed the British policy of Inner Line Regulation within the Nehruvian policy framework, which ensures non-interference from the people of the plains and also carve out an area of unimpeded self-development for the tribes of the region (Ahmed and Biswas, 2004: 3).

There was drastic change in India's policy towards the northeastern region in the early 1960s due to its defeat against the Chinese aggression in 1962. It was the first setback in India's foreign policy and changed the course of India's security and even foreign policy. This brought back the colonial approach considering the region as a "frontier" that needs to be protected and defended militarily.

In the aftermath of Indian independence many tribes of Northeast India started demanding various levels of autonomy and even secession from the Indian union. Thus, in the early 1970s there was a conception that the region "required political representation; the diverse tribal cultures and diverse sub-nationalities required participation in 'mainstream' democratic process" (Ramesh, 2005).

By the turn of the century the Government of India came out of its state-centric security approach and launched the second phase the Look East policy. In this new phase India is looking towards a partnership with the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nation) countries, both within BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) and the India-ASEAN Summit dialogue as, integrally linked to economic and security interests of the northeastern region.<sup>9</sup> The union government initiated dialogue with certain insurgent groups and also offered olive branch to all the remaining groups.

### **Conclusion**

There is often an illusive generalisation about the whole northeastern region as a homogeneous entity. Such stereotyping needs to be avoided for practical purposes and dynamics associated with the region. In this globalised world there is also a need to change both the perspective and approach towards the region, while taking into account the diversity and disparity.

Migration has to be viewed in a different perspective rather than as a threat. Instead of fencing the borders there should be a policy of issuing temporary work permits and better management of borders as nations are coming closer. Issuing of work permits has been widely propagated and

practiced in a number of western countries and even in West Asia. This scheme will not only allow migrants to come legally into the region, it will also discourage illegal migration, and promote healthy economic cooperation between the Northeast and its neighbouring countries.

Since the early 1990s the Government of India has started negotiating with the various insurgent groups of the region. It would be wrong to presume that settling the major insurgent group(s) would end violence in the region. In order to derive a lasting solution to the decades old insurgencies in the region, the diversity of the region, their culture and aspirations, have to be understood and taken into account and dealt with each group differently.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Peter Kunstadter in his two-volume edited book *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities and Nations* published by the Princeton University Press in 1967 says that the region has a large population of tribal and minority peoples whose languages are more closely related to the languages of Southeast Asia than to those of the Indian subcontinent and their cultures too resembling the cultures of their neighbours in Southeast Asia.

<sup>2</sup> Minutes of Cornwallis (October 3, 1792) cited in Bhuyan, S.K. (1949). *Anglo-Assamese Relation, 1771-1826*. Gauhati: Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies in Assam, p. 301.

<sup>3</sup> The Naga Hills-Tuensang Area Act, 1957 (Act number 42 of 1957) form the Naga Hills and Tuensang area of Assam as an administrative unit comprising the tribal areas which at such commencement were known as the Naga Hills District and Tuensang Frontier Division of the North East Frontier Agency by Amending the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

<sup>4</sup> The North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 provide for the establishment of the states of Manipur and Tripura and to provide for the formation of the state of Meghalaya and of the union territories of Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh by reorganisation of the existing state of Assam and for matters connected therewith.

<sup>5</sup> The poor handling of the famine (mautam) of 1959-60 and inadequate relief measure caused great frustration among the Mizos, coupled with the imposition of Assamese as the official language in the state accelerated the politics of negativism. The Mizo National Famine Front was formed in 1960 to launch relief operations and it was converted into a political party known as Mizo National Front (MNF) in October 1961 with Laldenga as its president.

<sup>6</sup> When India became an independent nation on August 15, 1947 the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) was administrated by the Ministry of External Affairs with the Governor of Assam acting as agent to the President of India. In 1972 NEFA became a Union Territory under the Congress Government of Indira Gandhi and acquired the name Arunachal Pradesh. After three years, in 1975, it acquired a legislature. And finally, on February 20, 1987, statehood was granted to Arunachal Pradesh by the Congress Government of Rajiv Gandhi, and it became the 25th State of the Union of India.

<sup>7</sup> Udayon Misra's view is also taken from session report of "Civil Society Dialogue on Peace in the Northeast", prepared by Sminr Kr. Das and Paula Banerjee in October 2001, published by Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, available electronically at <http://www.mvrc.ac.in/civilsocietydialogue1.htm> (accessed on March 5, 2011)

<sup>8</sup> The issue of census on Burmese nationals appeared on various electronic medias on December 17 and 18, 2010 with the heading "Mizoram Governor wants census of Burmese nationals in state".

<sup>9</sup> "Year End Review 2004", *Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India*. New Delhi.

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