

**REPORT ON
WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2008:
“AN ANALYSIS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF
AGRICULTURE IN BANGLADESH”**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is a report on the review of the World Development Review 2008, carried out by HDRC (Human Development Research Centre), Dhaka, on a request by Oxfam Great Britain (OGB) in Bangladesh. The review was requested as an initiative to carry out possible advocacy projects under the Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL) of OGB.

1.1 The Context

As far as the development of the developing countries (DCs) and least developed countries (LDCs) is concerned, agriculture plays a pivotal role in determining the countries' socio-economic condition, sustainable development, food security, and achieving self-sufficiency in food production. It is the main source of potential domestic surplus for investment in other sectors with higher value added that are crucial for human development.¹ Agriculture accounts for 70 percent of employment in LDCs and 30 percent in DCs².

Since the late 1980s, most developing and least developed countries have been obliged under loan conditions from the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to open their markets for international trade. The policy prescriptions suggested by the IFIs and practiced by most least developed countries in the agriculture sector during the last over two decades has been characterized by the following: (i) agro-export based rural development; (ii) liberalization of agricultural markets and inclusion of agriculture in multilateral trade negotiations; (iii) privatization and commercialization of land, water, forest, fisheries, and others; (iv) privatization of credit, commercialization and technical assistance; (v) cutting of price supports and subsidies; (vi) patenting of crop genetic resources; (vii) limited role of the government in the redistribution of land; (viii) limited role of the government in providing essential services (health, education, social security, food distribution systems, marketing support for small scale producers); (ix) support for investment in science and technology, especially biotechnology; (x) support for diversification of export agriculture; and (xi) privatization of rural extension services.

Despite its presence for more than two decades in several countries, the IFIs' support has so far not been able to help countries increase agricultural productivity sufficiently to address declining per capita food availability. The effect of trade liberalization and globalization has been that the richest countries have become more prosperous, but most of the poorest countries have been worse off than they were 20 years ago. In rural areas of the developing world, close to 900 million people live on less than US\$1 a day. Some 96 percent of the world's farmers – approximately 1.3 billion people – live in developing countries, but, in every aspect of agricultural trade, they face handicaps when compared

¹ Malhotra Kamal, "Making Global Trade Work for Poor", <http://www.rbf.org/pdf>, July 2004. Also see in Barkat A and Das Palash Kanti, "Agriculture within Globalization and WTO: Politico-Economic Issues of Bangladesh Agriculture" in Bangladesh Journal of Political Economy, Volume 22, November 1 & 2 2005.

² *ibid.*

with people in the industrialized world³. The result of import liberalization under WTO ends up with a decreased food production in DCs and LDCs. Between 1990 and 1997, 24 LDCs experienced a decline in per capita food production.⁴ Evidence based on 14 developing countries shows that the food import bill of most countries increased since the implementation of Uruguay Round. In Bangladesh alone, it grew by 50 percent.⁵

The policies imposed by the IFIs have the following consequences on the LDCs:

- a. Trade liberalization and subsequent dumping of cheap food imports flooding the local markets has undermined the economic viability of small scale peasants and family farmers.
- b. Credit is inadequate and expensive to cover rising production costs for smaller and poorer farmers.
- c. Prices are too low to cover credit and production costs.
- d. Poor farmers have been losing ownership of land and forced to sell land. They cannot afford land rentals and other similar arrangements, and have been forced to sell land by defaulting on credit.
- e. Land and other resources (water, seeds, forests, and oceans) have been increasingly commercialized and privatized.
- f. Communal and public land and territories of indigenous people and local communities have been encroached for business interests which are agricultural (plantations), non-agricultural (petroleum, tourism and mining), and infrastructural (e.g., projects like hydro-electric dams).
- g. Commodity chains on both the input end (seeds) and the output end (grain trading) have become increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few transnational companies who, by virtue of their near-monopoly status, have been setting costs and prices unfavorable to farmers.
- h. Short-term profit motivation has resulted in intensive monoculture production of pesticides-and-chemical fertilizers for export and has given rise to the following consequences: (i) soil compaction, (ii) erosion, (iii) water logging, (iv) loss of fertility, and (v) loss of biodiversity.

The agriculture sector is vital for Bangladesh economy and it is expected to remain so in the near future too. In fiscal year 2003-04, its gross contribution to GDP was 22.8 percent, while 62 percent of labour force is employed in this sector⁶. However, the sector has remained largely traditional beset with vicious cycle of poverty, low productivity, low income and low investment. Most of the rural people in the country are engaged in agriculture and the scarcity of land leads them to the status of marginal farmers, tenant

³ The Rural Poverty Trap: Why Agricultural Trade Rules Need to Change and What UNCTAD XI Could Do About It, Oxfam Briefing Paper 59, Oxfam International.

⁴ UNCTAD (2002): Least Developed Country Report 2002, p 250.

⁵ FAO (2002): "Agriculture, Trade and Food Security, Chapter 1 and FAO (2002) Papers on selected issues relating to WTO negotiation on Agriculture" p 13-17.

⁶ Bangladesh Economic Review 2004.

farmers including sharecroppers, landless agricultural labour, and wage labourers. Acute inequality in landownership among the rural households is also evident, which shows a rising trend. The share of population (also more or less equivalent to that of the households) who are absolute landless is 22 percent with no land while the largest owners' group represents only 3.5 percent with 27.4 percent of land. Functional landless (0.05-0.50 acres) and marginal farmers (0.50-2.50 acres) together constitute 61 percent of the households. Thus 83 percent population in lower three tiers and own only 33 percent of all land and the rest 18 percent representing upper-tier households own a high of 67 percent of total land. The declining share of ownership of land by the landless and marginal groups and the increasing share of land ownership by the few large-owner groups indicate the accumulation of resources, deprivation of the real producers- the poor and marginalized farmers. According to the Population Census 2001, as many as 45 percent of all households in Bangladesh do not own agricultural land, and this shows a rising trend.⁷

The domestic policies of the Government for the agricultural sector are not conducive enough to ensure pro-poor development of the sector. Over the last two decades, due to donor conditionality and pressures, the country has undertaken a series of agricultural policy reforms including reduction of tariff rates and quantitative restrictions, and removal of agricultural subsidies. The un-weighted average tariff rate for import of all agricultural products declined to 15 percent in 2002-03 from 55 percent in 1991-92. Subsidies on irrigation and fertilizer declined from 2.5 percent of the value of unassisted output in 1988-89 to 0.45 percent in 2002-03. Moreover, there is a very low rate of subsidies on agricultural exports. However, the impact of trade liberalization policies was not favourable for the agricultural economy of Bangladesh. Total agricultural export increased by about 2 percent and agricultural import increased by 9 percent per year over the 1990s.⁸ The country became more dependent on commercial imports of food-grains and other agricultural commodities. The marginalization of farmers has been on rise due to liberalization and commercialization of agriculture and they are becoming more and more dependent on the transnational and multinational corporations who are the major suppliers of inputs.

1.2 Background and Rationale of the Review

Oxfam International (OI) is a confederation of 13 organizations working together with over 3,000 partner organizations in more than 100 countries to find lasting solutions to poverty, suffering and injustice. Currently OI, with an objective to ensure Economic Justice, has initiated a global campaign with national focuses. Bangladesh has been selected as one of the ten focus countries across the globe. This has resulted into the Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL) in Bangladesh with a view to seeing that more women and men living in poverty with vulnerable livelihoods in rural areas will realize their right to secure sustainable livelihoods. This will require Oxfam to

⁷ Barkat Abul (2004): Political Economy of Land Litigation in Bangladesh: A Case of Colossal National Wastage, ALRD.

⁸ Alam Jahangir, "Impact of Trade Liberalization on Agriculture: Evidence of Bangladesh" in Bangladesh Journal of Political Economy, Volume 22, Number 1&2 2005.

contributing to equality with growth, the empowerment of women and men to demand their economic rights, and reducing the vulnerability of poor women and men. Under the framework- agriculture, climate change and trade policy have been identified as three major areas to address and work on to reduce rural poverty and vulnerability. Nearly 70 non-government organizations are now part of the campaign in Bangladesh. The Campaign's goal and objective necessitate OI's basic campaign activities like, research, advocacy, media works and popular mobilization (pop-mob) to advance the campaign.

It is argued that despite being rewarded with different special and differential treatments under multilateral trading framework, LDCs like Bangladesh cannot enjoy rights to be enjoyed under multilateral framework due to conditionality imposed by international financial institutions (IFIs), donors and corporate dominance at their national level. It has been claimed that Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF)- a forum of donors, instead of state or people and politicians- is the influential policymaker in Bangladesh despite the fact that domestic policies evolved from Bangladesh's constitution can uphold the rights of people. Consistent with the emerging trends of the market economy, Bangladesh has been pursuing a liberal trade policy, mainly due to the policy suggestions given by the BDF (formerly known as the Paris Consortium of donors, like World Bank, International Monetary Fund - IMF and Asian Development Bank - ADB). Although Bangladesh became the member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, prior to that, she has been pursuing a liberal trade policy that opened the economy to a great extent since the 1980s. The opening was most of the time more than Bangladesh's commitment under the WTO framework. Extensive reform programmes in Bangladesh have dismantled both tariff and non-tariff barriers to a large extent. The prime objectives of the trade policy of Bangladesh is argued as to strengthen the economy of the country by sustaining the shocks of rapid changes in global trade regimes and trade liberalization and to promote export-based development strategy.

Regarding the agriculture sector, most important problems, although these could be argued and challenged, identified by the professionals are (i) crisis of agricultural inputs, (ii) lack of coherent agricultural policy, (iii) lack of farmer's organization, (iv) lack of agricultural services, education and research, (v) lack of agricultural land, (vi) destruction of agro-ecology *vis a vis* bio-diversity, (vii) absence of fair price for farmers, (viii) corporate dominance in agriculture sector, and (ix) lack of finance. It is argued that there are around 17 national policies related to agriculture in Bangladesh, but those policies are not comprehensive and coordinated and are largely driven by IFIs, large corporations and some donor agencies. **The 17 policies are:**

- i. National Agriculture Policy (NAP), 1999
- ii. New Agricultural Extension Policy (NAEP), 1996
- iii. DAE Strategic Plan 1999-2002
- iv. DAE Agricultural Extension Manual, 1999
- v. National Seed Policy, 1993, and Seed Rules, 1998
- vi. Plan of Action on NAP, 2003
- vii. Actionable Policy Brief and Resource Implication (APB), 2004
- viii. National Jute Policy, 2002
- ix. National Livestock Policy, 2005

- x. National Fishery Policy, 1998
- xi. National Forestry Policy, 1994
- xii. National Land Use Policy
- xiii. National Water Policy, 1998
- xiv. Environment Policy, 1992
- xv. National Food Policy, 2004
- xvi. National Rural Development Policy, 2001
- xvii. PRSP- Agriculture and Rural Development, 2005.

In this backdrop, after two decades, the World Bank has published the first World Development Report (WDR) on Agriculture, 'Agriculture for Development', since 1982. The publication has been seen as a reflection of IFIs' interest in the agricultural sector's potential to reduce rural poverty, vulnerability and inequality.

Considering the context and past trend in policy formulation process of Bangladesh, it is argued that WDR 2008 would bring new policy doctrines for Bangladesh regarding its agriculture. Based on that, it became imperative to make an analysis of WDR 2008 from the perspective of agriculture in Bangladesh to assess the effects of new policy doctrines rising from WDR 2008 on sustainable rural livelihoods. In order to get a holistic Bangladesh perspective, it was also important to review other relevant documents.

2. OBJECTIVE

Primary Objective of the review was to find out the major policy recommendations and findings of the WDR 2008 that are relevant to Bangladesh context with an analysis of how those policy recommendations/findings might have an effect on agriculture and sustainable rural livelihoods of Bangladesh.

The Terms of Reference laid down the **Other Objectives** as:

- (i) clearly identifying the advocacy agenda, if any, for (a) CSRL in Bangladesh and (b) a broader global campaign
- (ii) suggesting alternative policy options not presented in the WDR 2008.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference was composed of 5 (five) Basic Research Questions, as mentioned blow:

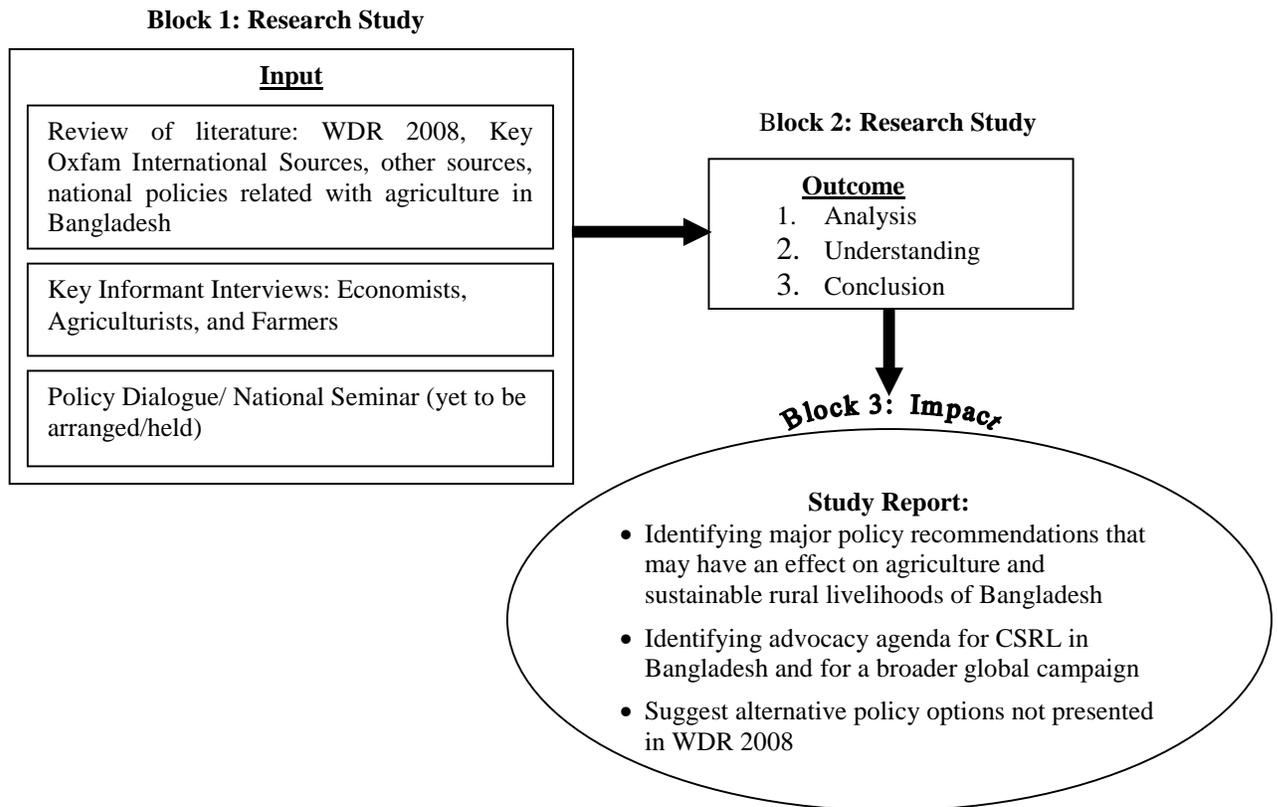
- (i) What are the major policy recommendations/findings of the WDR 2008 that are relevant to the Bangladesh context?
- (ii) How might the major policy recommendations/findings of the WDR 2008 have an effect on agriculture and sustainable livelihoods of Bangladesh if those are implemented by the Bangladesh Government?
- (iii) What are the linkages of the WDR 2008 and other policy documents of IFIs, especially of the World Bank?

- (iv) What are the advocacy agenda related to the WDR 2008 in the Bangladesh context and OI's global campaign?
- (v) What are the alternative policy options for Bangladesh not presented in the WDR 2008 but important for securing sustainable rural livelihoods?

4. METHODOLOGY FOLLOWED

All pertinent secondary sources of information were reviewed and analyzed including WDR 2008, key Oxfam International sources and other sources, and national policies related with agriculture in Bangladesh, including PRSP. Interviews were carried out with key informants including authors of OI responses to WDR 2008; intelligentsia working on IFIs' policies in academia; NGOs and CSOs; and policy makers. A policy dialogue will be held with Oxfam based on findings of this (first) draft report. Comments and suggestions from the policy dialogue will be reviewed and a final draft will be prepared after incorporation of necessary changes. *HDRC team of consultants visualized the overall research study in three major blocks, wherein the first block will generate materials for the 2nd block, which then will contribute to the final outcome of the study and act as an instrument in policy advocacy agenda. Major blocks of the study have been shown in Figure 1.*

Figure 1: Three Major Blocks of the Study



5. MAJOR FINDINGS

5.1 Major Policy Recommendations/Findings of the WDR 2008

- i. In its Chapter 1, the World Development Report 2008 classifies all countries of the world under three different heads, agriculture-based, transforming, and developed. The definitions of various groups being based on the share of aggregate growth originating in agriculture and the share of aggregate poverty (\$2.15 a day) in the rural sector. Bangladesh has been placed under the group of transforming economies, like India and some other countries. In the definition of the transforming economies, the report states that in the countries under this group, agriculture contributes less to growth, but poverty remains overwhelmingly rural- and growth in agriculture and the rural non-farm economy is needed to reduce rural poverty and narrow the urban-rural divide. The contribution of agriculture to growth has been defined as the agricultural growth rate times the sector average share over the period divided by the GDP growth. The report does not explain the purpose for which this particular classification, based mainly on contribution of agriculture to national GDP, has been followed. In addition, the methodology followed for composing the Report is also missing. Based on these two findings, it may be commented that the Report's content suffers from methodological insufficiency.
- ii. It has also been mentioned that taxation on the agriculture sector must be balanced. There are records saying that tax on Bangladesh's agriculture has decreased over time. However, the challenge in this respect is to ensure that reinvestment of funds after taxation is taking place in this sector.
- iii. It has been maintained that at low levels of development, contribution of agriculture to GDP is relatively high. In case of Bangladesh, the contribution of agriculture to GDP has also been relatively high, but on a gradually declining trend, as reflected in the following Table 1 and Table 2.
- iv. The Report, in its Chapter 2, also defines less favoured areas as the ones which suffer agriculturally due to climatic constraints and/or lack of market access. Viewed critically, the currently reign of global climate change has already wrought gross climatic changes on Bangladesh, especially by way of over-flooding during the rainy season and a desert-like situation in the northern part, i.e., the *Barind* Tract of the country.
- v. It has been claimed that all the three pathways out of poverty- such as (a) agricultural entrepreneurship, (b) rural labour market and the rural non-farm economy, and (c) migrating to towns, cities and other countries- have been successful altogether in Bangladesh. However, the magnitude of success and the trend require to be analyzed in context of policy-making in this regard for future. But linkage between rural non-farm economy and agriculture is yet not encouraging due to weaknesses in operations of the agricultural extension workers.

Table 1: Sectoral Growth Rate of GDP at Constant Prices (Base Year: 1995-96)

(In Percentage)

Sector/Sub-sector	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07 (prov.)
1. Agriculture & Forestry	5.57	1.63	3.24	6.92	5.53	-0.62	3.29	4.38	1.80	5.23	2.95
a. Crops & vegetables	6.44	1.05	3.11	8.10	6.18	-2.39	2.88	4.27	0.15	5.03	1.92
b. Livestock	2.58	2.64	2.69	2.74	2.81	4.70	4.51	4.98	7.23	6.15	5.85
c. Forestry	4.03	4.51	5.16	4.94	4.85	4.91	4.43	4.18	5.09	5.18	5.25
2. Fishery	7.60	8.98	9.96	8.87	-4.53	2.22	2.33	3.09	3.65	3.91	3.99
3. Mining & Quarrying	3.56	5.76	1.32	9.48	9.75	4.53	7.17	7.66	8.38	9.26	10.02
4. Industry (Manufacturing)	5.05	8.54	3.19	4.76	6.68	5.48	6.75	7.10	8.19	10.77	11.19
a. Large & medium-scale	3.97	9.28	4.19	4.35	6.55	4.60	6.56	6.95	8.30	11.41	11.56
b. Small-scale	7.75	6.77	0.75	5.80	7.02	7.69	7.21	7.45	7.93	9.21	10.28
5. Electricity, Gas & Water	1.93	2.01	6.00	6.78	7.40	7.63	8.02	9.09	8.90	7.67	5.37
a. Electricity	1.98	1.30	6.75	6.87	7.60	7.78	7.29	9.19	8.58	7.45	4.52
b. Gas	1.39	5.30	0.63	5.61	6.05	6.53	8.77	8.81	8.87	9.37	10.55
c. Water	2.49	7.20	6.44	8.06	7.05	7.52	20.01	8.00	14.44	7.55	7.80
Growth Rate (%)	5.39	5.23	4.87	5.94	5.27	4.42	5.26	6.27	5.96	6.63	6.51

Source: Bangladesh Economic Review 2007

Table 2: Sectoral Share of GDP (%) at Constant Prices (Base Year: 1995-96)

(In Percentage)

Sector/Sub-sector	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07 (prov.)
1. Agriculture & Forestry	20.39	19.67	19.35	19.49	19.51	18.58	18.22	17.97	17.27	16.98	16.38
a. Crops & vegetables	15.21	14.59	14.33	14.59	14.70	13.75	13.43	13.23	12.51	12.28	11.72
b. Livestock	3.27	3.19	3.12	3.02	2.95	2.96	2.93	2.91	2.95	2.92	2.90
c. Forestry	1.91	1.89	1.90	1.88	1.87	1.88	1.86	1.83	1.82	1.79	1.76
2. Fishery	5.48	5.67	5.93	6.09	5.51	5.40	5.25	5.11	5.00	4.86	4.73
3. Electricity, Gas & Water	1.46	1.41	1.42	1.43	1.46	1.51	1.54	1.59	1.64	1.65	1.63
a. Electricity	1.23	1.18	1.20	1.21	1.23	1.27	1.30	1.34	1.37	1.38	1.35
b. Gas	0.17	0.17	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.17	0.17	0.18	0.18	0.19	0.19
c. Water	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.09
4. Mining & Quarrying	1.03	1.03	1.00	1.03	1.07	1.07	1.09	1.11	1.14	1.16	1.19
5. Industry (Manufacturing)	15.41	15.88	15.60	15.40	15.59	15.76	15.97	16.16	16.51	17.08	17.79

Source: Bangladesh Economic Review 2007

- vi. Land fragmentation and fast increase in the number of farms have been mentioned as one of the problems in enhancing agricultural output. This holds true of Bangladesh. At present, agricultural landholding per household is less than 0.2 hectare in Bangladesh. Besides, the population growth rate is also rapid.
- vii. The importance of microfinance in improving agriculture has been emphasized. In Bangladesh, many women have been recipients of microfinance. The trend in agricultural practices and status in Bangladesh deserves a comparison with the efficacy of microfinance loans, especially those distributed among women in this country.
- viii. Financing of agricultural practices has been emphasized. Along the same line, it has been mentioned that insurance and credit should be ensured in order to minimize risks at the end of the farmers. This issue is relevant to Bangladesh in context of insufficient agricultural credit and practically no institutional arrangements for agricultural insurance in this country.
- ix. Full agricultural trade liberalization, especially in the developed countries, is not necessarily going to provide benefits to countries like Bangladesh (and Mozambique) which is basically an importer of wheat, cotton and oilseeds. In fact, the trade liberalization is expected to increase the prices of especially cotton and oilseeds in the world market, because there are many developing countries that would enter the markets for these commodities at relatively higher prices in the developed countries.
- x. In agricultural trade liberalization, developing countries are in a favourable position when they are net exporters of food commodities. But Bangladesh being a net importer of agricultural products is expected to have unfavourable terms of trade, which is expected to translate into lower poverty levels as the poor are more dependent on low-skill wage-based employment and benefit from low food prices.
- xi. As the Report puts it, poorer households in Bangladesh would be short-term losers due to increase in food prices in the short run following trade liberalization, but they are likely to be gainers in the long run through increase of wages over time.
- xii. As Bangladesh may face certain economic hardships in the face of trade liberalization, stopgaps like Food Security and Safeguard Policies may be relevant for this country.
- xiii. Investments on road connections and other public expenditures, as suggested by the World Development Report 2008 seem relevant for Bangladesh, because there are still many areas in this country that would seek such infrastructural investments.
- xiv. Bangladesh is a country extremely infested with age-old land-related problems. On one side, intensive usage of land due to a rapidly growing population is gradually being rendered less fertile. On the other hand, there numerous difficulties in managing land tenure properly. Poor documentation due to grabbing by the people with access to the power structure and lack of computerization in the land-related offices have led to many landowners' deprivation from ownership. This particular problem is relatively more marked among the ethnic communities. This phenomenon, as indicated by the Report is likely to contribute to lack of motivation to enhance agricultural production.

- xv. Public agricultural banks have been globally a failure to meet the demands of the farmers on a number of grounds. The case in Bangladesh is similar. Usually, the number of bank branches is large, a few of them operating profitably, and the rate of loan recovery is low. However, though a large part of the microfinance market has been occupied by Grameen Bank and many NGOs dealing in micro credit, little or no part of micro credits serviced by them has reached the agriculture sector.
- xvi. The Report has rightly acknowledged that one of the problems in ensuring that the right type and quality of crop seeds are bought is that the seeds are packed, and it is near impossible to confirm if the seeds are of the right quality even by barely looking at their physical appearances. Newspaper reports in Bangladesh have been rife with information on numerous shipments of crop seeds imported from neighbouring countries.
- xvii. The WDR 2008 has put an emphasis on having Producer Organizations. It has also documented the history of failures of various types of producer organizations across many countries, including cooperatives among others, which failed to provide necessary services to farmers in the past. To the contrary, Bangladesh has very few producer organizations irrespective of how they are performing. In addition, a trend in the Bangladesh domestic market is the rise of Market Syndicates that manipulate the prices of various commodities, especially agricultural commodities (including inputs), raising the prices of these commodities significantly. It has been sometimes reported that these Syndicates are closely patronized and participated by the politicians and people currently in the country's power structure.
- xviii. GMOs/GMFs described by the Report have already arrived in Bangladesh. Proliferation of the idea of using GMOs/GMFs yet stands at a low level. On the other hand, information on the advantages of such foodstuff has not been widely disseminated. Besides, technical labs for testing and experimenting GMOs/GMFs are rare in this country. In fact, sale of GMOs/GMFs is likely to face a bit of resistance now as there are confusions in the minds of their potential users about inherent potentials and dangers in their use.
- xix. In Chapter 7 of the WDR 2008, it has been mentioned that zero (or conservation) tillage gives good yield levels, helps in conserving soil and promotes reduction of environmental degradation. But the Report also shows that zero tillage starts with its initial adoption by the farmers having large landholdings, followed by the smaller farmers.
- xx. In Chapter 8 of the Report, it has been mentioned rightly that agriculture is intertwined with environment, and that as such, agriculture needs careful planning. Production of biofuels has been termed as a risky activity, which may push the world toward high food prices and fast-paced deforestation. Both high food prices and environmental degradation through deforestation would be to Bangladesh's serious disadvantage.
- xxi. Chapter 9 of the Report rightly attaches importance to attainment of education and skills by the poor country populations, especially their women, for them to be incorporated into the lot of capable people for getting engaged into lucrative non-farm employment. The rapid population growth, a staggering relatively low literacy rate and the impending impact of the global agricultural trade liberalization- all make it true that this suggestion made in the Report applies well for Bangladesh.

xxii. Chapter 11 deals with the governance methodology required to make necessary trade reforms in the agriculture sector. As applies for Bangladesh as well, the Report suggests (i) maintenance of a sound political economy, (ii) a strong governance system, (iii) a mix of centralized and decentralized agricultural services, and (iv) a community-driven development process in order to ensure implementation of an agriculture-for-development policy. This suggestion is extremely important for Bangladesh as the governance system here has long remained weak, inefficient and corrupt which could not pave the way for progress toward transparent administration to ensure social peace.

5.2 How the Major Policy Recommendations/Findings may Impact on Agriculture and Sustainable Rural Livelihoods of Bangladesh

The recommendations made by the World Development Report 2008 are of a mixed nature. Some of the analyses of the realities against which recommendations have been made are partial or unclear. Some of the recommendations are clear and have been strongly made. However, efforts have been made in the remaining parts of this section to point out the merits and demerits of the relevant recommendations along with recommendations as to how the recommendations by the WDR 2008 should be effected.

Classification of Various Countries:

The type of classification of all countries made in the Report is not acceptable in general, and more so by Bangladesh. The classification has been made mainly on the basis of "the share of aggregate growth originating in agriculture and the share of aggregate poverty". While narrowly elaborating on the elements considered for the classification process, the Report says "In transforming economies agriculture contributes less to growth, but poverty remains overwhelmingly rural. Thereafter follows the contextually more important statement: "Growth in agriculture and the rural nonfarm economy is needed to reduce rural poverty and narrow the urban-rural divide." In Bangladesh, the total urban population is 30.5 million (23.43%), against a total rural population of 99.6 million (76.57%). When the country's per capita income (\$520 in 2007) and its distribution is considered, it may be commented that the poverty is somehow rural. But the data used for this classification especially for Bangladesh is largely outdated, because the total population of the urban areas being 39.22 million (26.88%) now, 60 percent of the total urban population is 'poor'. On the top of that, the intensity of poverty of the poor in the urban areas accommodating 43.17 percent of the total urban population are more impoverished than their rural counterparts. In addition, the extreme poor in the urban areas are mostly the economically failed agricultural families from the rural areas, who could otherwise have been the target beneficiaries of non-farm employment in rural areas, which is one of the three major prescriptions made by the WDR 2008.

In light of the above analysis of the situation in Bangladesh, it is apparent that Bangladesh should have been classified as an agriculture-based economy.

However, on another level, it is evident that there is a positive correlation, for whatever reasons, between the growth in agriculture and the scale of benefits that would be probably enjoyed by a country in the context of proposed trade liberalization. As for instance, the Bangladesh, other South Asian countries, and other countries where growth in agriculture has already diminished irrespective of reasons, would lose from liberalization in the developed countries. This classification of countries is too straightway and simplistic- and Bangladesh,

even still being one of the UN-defined LDCs (least developed countries), will apparently bear the maximum loss of benefits as a result of agricultural trade liberalization.

Taxing the Agriculture Sector in Bangladesh:

It is true that the agriculture sector is important in that the majority poor of this country have to buy food at reasonably low prices. In addition, the food market is often politically important because a majority of the population ascribes popularity to a particular government partially on the basis of how well it could manage the food market. In the above perspective, tax on the agriculture sector may be cut or foregone. But as the fiscal market is already weak, adoption or strengthening of other fiscal measures (e.g., VAT and/or other taxes) may be adopted.

Steps to be taken up for the Less-favoured Areas:

In Bangladesh, a number of projects for road construction may be apparently profitably taken up for connecting areas remote from the cities, towns and other well-populated growth centres with their neighbouring growth centres to facilitate marketing of the agricultural produce from these areas. In addition, the Government may augment efforts for timely irrigation in the northern part (*Barind* Tract) of the country which is gradually turning to be desert-like. Incurring of such a social overhead should be quite justifiable from the point of view of public welfare.

All the Three Pathways were Successful in Bangladesh:

It is probably true that all the three pathways (i.e., agricultural productivity, non-farm employment, and migration) have contributed well to mass welfare, but specific information with regard to respective contributions from the three pathways appears to be unavailable, which would be of greater value for future guidance. Studies should be launched toward finding out these necessary data. However, the reasons for recommending such studies are:

- i) Mechanism through which all the three pathways usually operate
- ii) Differences in the mechanisms through which these pathways shall operate in countries of various types or economic development, considering the human nature and the types of governments
- iii) Level of contribution made by each of the three pathways to development
- iv) Cost of contribution from each pathway, and the efficiency of contribution from each pathway
- v) Inter-pathway comparison of efficiency of contribution
- vi) Value added to mass welfare by way of migration
- vii) Value added to development of the recipients (domestic or international) of the services of the emigrants.

Land Fragmentation and Land Inefficiency:

It is almost a natural process through which lands in Bangladesh have become severely fragmented; and the number of land plots has thereby increased. Besides, land rights are also being frequently violated by the relatively stronger and more influential people through grabbing of lands owned by the weaker and less influential population. In addition, there are significant amounts of land under *khas* ownership, and many *khas* lands are illegally occupied by various individuals. As of date, only 10% of the total 3.3 million *khas* lands (agricultural, non-agricultural, and water-bodies) have been distributed. In addition, (i) the sharecroppers' rights in Bangladesh are also not established practically as yet, (ii) land administration-and-management is fraught with corruption and inefficiency- resulting to 'dual ownership' and land litigation, and (iii) there is no land use policy in place. The other problem that ensued from these anomalies is that the total area of land under sharecropping has increased from 20% to 40% during the last 20 years⁹.

The above task of recovering *khas* lands from illegal owners and releasing them to the deserving landless is not going to be easy. In the line of doing so, initial efforts must go toward making Agrarian Land reforms. The reasons behind this proposal are manifold: (i) it is a constitutional responsibility of the state to ensure access of the citizens to land ownership, and to protect the rights of the land owners; (ii) it is imperative for one to own lands in order to produce food for himself and/or to sell to others toward food security, and it is also the state's constitutional responsibility to ensure the people's access to food; (iii) equitable distribution of lands is indispensable, failing which the state and its citizens are expected to incur poverty (i.e., huge costs) in the form of (a) disparities of income among the people at large lowering social peace, (b) low agricultural productivity due to lack of opportunities to utilize the higher propensity of the landless and poor to produce food, and (c) low efficiency in agriculture, as the landless and the poor would otherwise remain limited with no or small (more fragmented) lands where efficient use of agricultural inputs is relatively difficult.

However, advocacy campaigns for the following activities may be suggested:

- i) Identifying all *khas* lands, irrespective of category and rural-urban disaggregation
- ii) Publishing widely all relevant information in the daily Bangla Newspapers and by using electronic media, and disseminate the same up to the grassroots level.
- iii) Recover all *khas* land distributed and distributable from the illegal occupants, as soon as possible.
- iv) Ensure effective retention of *khas* agricultural land by the landless poor, which has already been distributed.
- v) Organize cooperative farming in all possible situations, e.g., if relatively large compact area is available, or even if such compact area is not available - organize cooperative for input, credit, marketing and other productive purposes.
- vi) Distribute available non-agricultural *khas* for the betterment and uplifting the livelihood of the urban poor and forest community (including the indigenous people, where applicable).

⁹ Barkat Abul (2008), Agrarian-Land-Aquarian Reform in Bangladesh: A New Horizon for Development, Bangladesh Economic Association.

- vii) Pro-actively pursue distribution of *khas* water-bodies to uplift the life of the fishermen and other relevant professional communities. In this connection, vigorously pursue materialization of the fundamental spirit of the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act (1950) and amendment in 1972 (PO 135) **"banning the vested interest of all rent-seekers and intermediaries"**.

Microfinance:

Studies reveal that though Bangladesh has advanced significantly toward financing of the rural poor, a very small portion of the disbursed micro credits has reached the agriculture sector. Microfinance has almost always been used for promotion of non-farm economic activities in the rural areas (i.e., one of the Pathways mentioned by the WDR 2008), often backed by no feasibility studies. Disbursement of loans has been rash and the target has been focused on increasing the organization's achievement of the loan delivery target and loan recovery target only, and a little bit on farming in the 'expanded agriculture', for promoting vegetables production, horticulture and livestock. In effect, a small fraction of micro or small entrepreneurs benefit from microfinance.

Bangladesh NOT to Receive Benefit of Trade Liberalization regarding Cotton, Oilseeds, and Wheat:

It has been clearly mentioned a number of times in the WDR 2008 that Bangladesh would not straightway get the benefits of trade liberalization; and the maximum number of beneficiary countries of the liberalization belongs to Africa and Latin America. It is time that the developed countries must take note of the number of countries, especially the agriculture-based and transforming countries, who will not get the benefit of their trade liberalization and re-visit the possibility of modifying the expanse and intensity of the required trade liberalization.

The above paragraph is a suggestion to the community of developed or urbanized countries. At the national level in Bangladesh- DAE (Department of Agricultural Extension), with increased support of the development partners, may take up new initiatives and/or strengthen and commercialize the existing crop diversification projects in order to adjust to the existing global demand pattern. Reportedly, there are already a number of crop diversification projects blessed with development partners' support. But the three following conditions must be fulfilled in order to achieve success in such projects:

- the gestation periods of such projects must be well-measured so that they get synchronized with the ever-changing global crop and fruits demand pattern
- the spectrum of crop and fruits varieties must be kept as broad as possible
- the harvesting schedules of all the crops, especially those of the cash ones, should be made in such a manner that they (the schedules) preferably coincide with the respective lean periods for respective crops or fruits in target importing countries.

Increase in World Staple Prices:

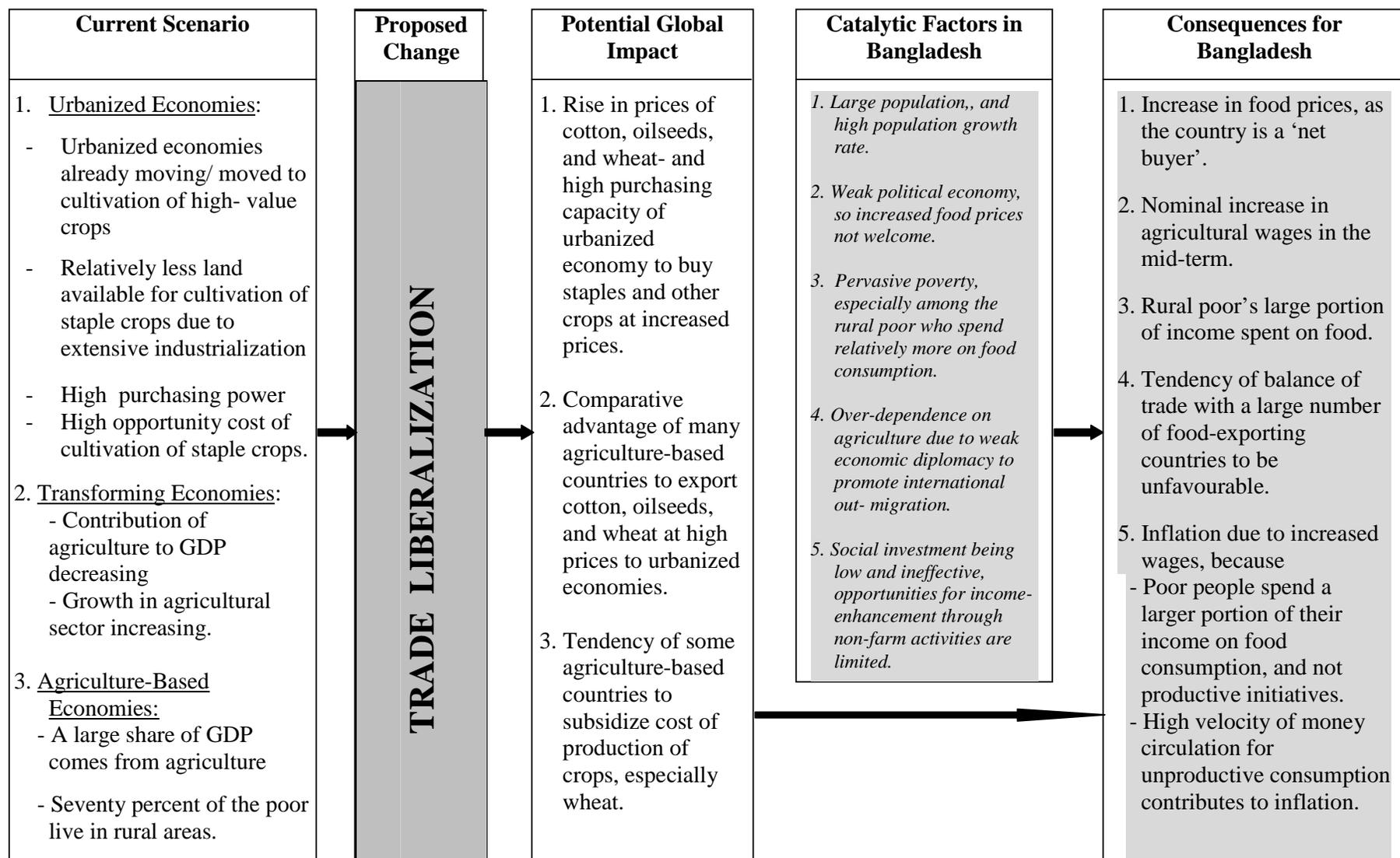
It has been stated in Chapter 4 of WDR 2008 that when the world prices of staples will increase as a result of trade liberalization, countries like Bangladesh which is largely a non-competent exporter of the commodities being increasingly traded, will benefit because of "low food prices". To put up this statement otherwise for better clarification: *Bangladeshis*,

in a context where other poor countries will be trading in food items with developed countries at relatively higher or increased prices, will have staple food items produced by herself and sold at prices lower than the prices for same items traded among other countries.

The above statement in the Report on increase in world staple prices seems to be an oversight of the reality, especially because Bangladesh in this situation is import-competent rather than being export-competent. The ground reality is that among the three liberalized commodities (i.e., cotton, oilseeds and wheat), wheat is purchased by Bangladesh from the wheat giants in huge amounts every year. Additionally, Bangladeshis in general consume wheat as one-third to a half of their total staple consumption followed by rice. This means that liberalization, other things remaining the same, will result into increased outflow of foreign currency from the poor Bangladesh for many years ahead because finding out substitutes to specific staples usually takes decades together. The validity of this analysis has also been echoed in the *Overview's* particular section on Chapter 10 of the Report wherein it is clearly mentioned that the transforming countries have to import food in order to keep food prices low for its poor consumers, while trying to reduce the rural-urban income divide. That particular statement thus contradicts the content of Chapter 4. The particular statement in the Overview reads: "On the other hand, addressing those disparities through import protection would elevate food costs for the large masses of poor consumers who are net food buyers."

The mechanism through which food prices in Bangladesh would increase as a result of trade liberalization, affecting especially the rural poor, has been manifest in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Trade liberalization increasing food prices in Bangladesh affecting especially the rural poor



In order to defend the decision to go ahead with the specified liberalization despite potential harm to poor countries like Bangladesh, the Report indicates that, in such a situation (of increased world staple prices), the wage-based labourers would be able to increase their wages over time. Though this statement may be likely true, the impact of the increased staple prices will not stop merely at the stage of delayed increase in wages of poor labourers having little or no bargaining power. Beyond this slow and delayed phenomenon and in absence of any intrinsic addition to agricultural productivity- when the price of a staple having almost no substitutes has increased, there would be heightened inflation for a most rapidly growing population, affecting the poor farmers as well as all other citizens.

Impact of Terms of Trade on Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh:

It has been found that in a liberalized global economy, the terms of trade will improve for developing countries exporting commodities to the developed or urbanized countries. But the Report reads: "Subsequent changes in national welfare usually follow the direction of these terms of trade changes, but changes in poverty often do not follow this pattern. A fall in poverty can occur even with worsening terms of trade (as estimated for Bangladesh) and vice versa (as estimated for Vietnam)."

The extract from the WDR 2008 shown in the above paragraph is partially misleading on a number of rationale, such as:

- The paragraph extracted from the WDR 2008 does not quantify the potential negative contribution from agricultural trade liberalization and the potential positive contribution from poverty-reduction efforts.
- It seems that when Bangladesh is still one of the poorest countries, the proposal for trade liberalization has been directed most toward development of the already developed countries, and least toward development of the poor agriculture-base and transforming countries. The core issue of a discussion on trade liberalization is how welfare-oriented the ensuing terms of trade for Bangladesh are, and not directly "poverty".
- The result of a scattered study may cannot be compared with what is true based on hypotheses crystallized through decades which are applicable for every country around the world and not Bangladesh let alone.

Stopgaps are Necessary:

As an analysis of the possible effects of agricultural trade liberalization in the foregoing paragraphs points out fears of backlash especially for Bangladesh, it should be worthwhile to arrange programmes for Food security and Safeguards. Such proposed transitional programmes should be withdrawn or phased-out only on proven improvement of the related macroeconomic indicators.

Compensating Bangladesh and the Other Affected Countries:

The more powerful and richer countries are opting to go for more trade liberalization, with ensuing negative impacts on Bangladesh and other poor countries which are also being advised to forego subsidies to their agriculture sectors. A glance at the following table will reveal how much it takes to keep the agriculture running in comparison with the scenario even 5 to 6 years ago. Now, Bangladesh's withdrawal or reduction of subsidies to the

agriculture sector will have the potential of decreasing agriculture production, as well as losing popularity and giving rise to socio-political tensions.

Table 3: Agriculture Subsidy in Annual Budget

Fiscal Year	Subsidy to Agriculture	
	Total (crore Taka)	Percentage of total budget
2008-09 (proposed)	4,278	4.28
2007-08	3,892	4.16
2005-06	1,200	1.68
2004-05	600	1.04
2002-03	200	0.45

Source: National Annual Budget 2002-2008 of Bangladesh

On the practical ground, payment of subsidies to the farmers in Bangladesh is relatively less useful as the genuine target framers enjoy less benefits for a number of reasons as the following:

- i. Subsidies are paid at the level of dealers in agricultural inputs
- ii. As the market of agricultural inputs is volatile and largely beyond the Government's control in Bangladesh, prices are subject to fluctuations, mostly spiraling beyond the official prices.
- iii. As the Bangladeshi farmers are generally poor, they cannot purchase inputs at higher prices.

Quality Crop-seeds are Dear:

The WDR 2008 has rightly pointed out that healthy seeds are extremely important for a country's agriculture- and variations in quality of seeds, which is almost impossible to verify by merely a physical look at the seeds, can effect significant variations in quantities of crop yields.

On the top of other things, demand for seeds has been increasing at a very fast pace especially as a result of the introduction of HYVs, hybrid crops and/or GMFs. Quality seeds, if arranged for all farmers in Bangladesh, can enhance agricultural productivity by around 20% of the current level. With partial privatization of the seeds market of Bangladesh in the past, deterioration in supply of quality seeds has taken place: and further deterioration is looming large in absence of any quick remedy in place. Besides, BADC (the governmental organization entrusted with agricultural responsibilities in the past) nowadays supplies the highest-generating clean seeds, commanding around 14% of the country's seeds market. Though more than 30 seed-producing private firms, national and international, have emerged, two particular problems still lurk, that is:

- a) Sufficient seeds are not available
- b) Quality seeds are scanty.

Producer Organizations Help Protection of Farmers' Interests:

The WDR 2008 contains a vivid description of how Producer Organizations may enable the agricultural producers protect their interests and remain competitive. The Report also embodies the reasons for which various forms of producer organizations, including cooperatives, failed to survive in the past. Political interference had been one of the reasons behind the past failures. In the present context, it would be advisable for the Government of Bangladesh to take lessons from the past and plan to initiate formation and protection of producer organizations only if it can ensure that past blunders (especially political and administrative interferences) and other blunders will not occur.

GMFs/GMOs:

The WDR 2008 generously supports the proliferation of GMFs/GMOs. At the same time, it has cautioned its readers against rampant and random use of GMFs/GMOs. It is not clear from the Report as to what efforts were made for the GMFs/GMOs at their pre-formulation stages to look into the needs of various countries or contexts with regard to a particular foodstuff or organism. The world regulatory bodies, therefore, have to ensure certified pre-formulation compliance with the given standards.

On the other hand, quick studies must be launched in order to identify harmful GMFs/GMOs from the point of view of (i) health grounds, and (ii) financial tolerance, especially at the end of the farmers and their consumers.

Innovations in Technology Much Needed:

Chapter 7 of the WDR 2008 says that innovations in agricultural technology are almost at a standstill nowadays. There are many reasons for the recent standstill in R&D in agriculture. One of them is that the achievement of one country in this line is later enjoyed by many others. However, Bangladesh being one of the poorest countries and given the typical long gestation periods of agricultural R&D projects as compared against the short-length political commitments usually made by a particular government in this country makes it difficult for the country to perform well in this area. On the other hand, as the farmers do not have a strong voice especially due to typical political polarization of the last two decades, linkage between the research universities and the farmers or their associations has also not evolved. However, this situation has perpetrated a long spell of disadvantages to the farmers of the country, especially in the less-favoured areas.

The farmers of the less-favoured are the worst sufferers due to staggered R&D in agriculture which could provide them with the following endowments:

- Enhance food production
- Successful farming, even in droughts, flooding, and salinity
- Standing crops even in storms
- Reduction in inputs, i.e., water, energy, and seeds
- Higher quality crops
- Higher quality seeds
- A better environment.

In the above context, it is recommendable that Bangladesh should move ahead toward investing more in suitable R&D in agriculture and patenting the evolving technologies as much as possible. The other facilitating role in this regard would be to patronize formation of positive associations of the poor farmers, so they can voice their preferences and priorities to the agricultural service deliverers, including particularly the research universities involved in agricultural R&D. Such R&D initiatives, if well-managed, can increase agricultural productivity, and reduce yield-gaps. (*Yield gaps refer to the differences in yields in yield of a particular crop in two different situations, i.e., the laboratory and the practical crop field. Non-disclosure or partial disclosure of contextual requirements during dissemination of a specific technology may cause differences in yields, especially when the farmer is not aware of what type of situation is necessary for production of specific type(s) of crop*).

High Food Prices due to Biofuels:

The production of biofuels by the richer countries is gradually gaining both pace and volume. Bangladesh- especially being a poor country with small natural endowments as compared to its fast-pace population growth and little social capital because of lack of literacy, skills and appropriate social service organizations- has been targeted to bear the brunt of administering a huge population by feeding it at high prices through imports. Without quick measures for positive changes in macroeconomic indicators and special Food Security and Safety Nets, Bangladesh may even face higher levels of socio-political tensions.

However, proliferation of biofuel practices is a natural process- but is mainly feasible for crop-surplus countries, given any expected outcome globally. In a crop-deficit country, biofuel practices may face resistance from the oppositionists and consequent socio-political tensions.

Making the Transition Tolerable:

As the agricultural trade liberalization is going to be implemented, chances are high that the process of transition will become difficult and painful for a country like Bangladesh which is extremely poor and has little social capital. On the other hand, women being relatively disadvantaged, especially in the rural areas, are going to face most of the challenges in getting the benefits of the liberalization process. As such, by following the suggestions made by the WDR 2008, Bangladesh may benefit in introducing the new pace and style of her agriculture sector through making quick provisions for rural non-farm employment, Food Security projects, and Social Safety Nets projects. Relative advantage given to the otherwise less-favoured areas would also likely give out important benefits.

Too Early to Comment on Political Modality:

The WDR 2008 in its Chapter 11 mentions that political and macroeconomic stability are necessary for reforms to trigger growth in the agriculture sector. Besides, it is true that political economy and governance set-up in a country must be appropriate for proper implementation of a plan for trade liberalization. Bangladesh has lacked a good governance system for a long time, has suffered from political instability for long, and her welfare-oriented pro-poor political bases have waned or been uprooted. In this context combined with a non-partisan emergency caretaker government- it all depends on how well the present government leads the country to a balanced implementation of the entire trade liberalization process for mass welfare and justice. Therefore, though it is too early to comment on how the implementation would be, it is imperative that the essential governance system is positive and efficient enough to take care of the transition phase.

However, the current emergency caretaker government and the successive governments, in steering the implementation of the recommendations in the WDR 2008, should highlight that there are three types of mis-governance that hamper the country's agriculture sector, that is:

- i) Fiscal/Financial mis-governance in sanctioning of agricultural loans
- ii) Benefits from agricultural subsidies usually reach the dealers in agricultural inputs
- iii) Lack of effective khas land-khas waterbodies distribution programme.

5.3 Linkages between WDR 2008 and Other Policy Documents of the World Bank

An analysis of the major policy statements in the WDR 2008 and other documents of the World Bank has been made, the findings from which have been presented below.

- i. Bangladesh Development Series Paper No. 7 (2005)- Revitalizing the Agricultural Technology System in Bangladesh:
 - The current scenario of agricultural research and extension system is currently unable to assist in increase of productivity of both food crops and high-value agriculture, including horticulture, livestock and fisheries.
 - A high-level priority should be given to facilitation of the growth of high-value agriculture.

Related Chapters in WDR 2008:

The WDR 2008 has, therefore, recorded in Chapter 7 that the knowledge divide between industrial and developing countries is widening. Additionally, it has also been stated that the governmental research organizations in various countries are plagued with leadership, management and financial problems. In order to overcome such institutional problems, as WDR 2008 puts it, public and private partnerships in agricultural research are important to obtain efficient and sustainable production processes.

- Enhance the use of biotechnology in agricultural research, the national agricultural research institutions should examine what other initiatives should be taken to facilitate access to other sciences, which would require appropriate and adequate attention to biosafety of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Related Chapters in WDR 2008:

In Chapter 7 of WDR 2008, it is evident that use of biotechnology in agriculture can increase productivity, ensure yield stability and better environmental make-up, protect crops from diseases, and cater to high demands of highly specific types of consumers.

- Officials in the MOA are concerned about the weak responsiveness of the national agricultural institutions to the farmers, their main client.

Related Chapters in WDR 2008:

In Chapter 2 of the WDR 2008, it has been emphasized that proper understanding of the political economy of agricultural policy-making can assist in avoidance of (i) under or over-investment in the agriculture and (ii) faulty policy-making.

- Farmers and their organizations should be empowered for them to share responsibility for planning, implementation and monitoring of extension.

Related Chapters in WDR 2008:

In Chapter 3, WDR 2008 states that producer organizations by farmers may act as an input to smaller farmers' competitiveness. In Bangladesh, such groups of farmers have not yet evolved, but groups of microcredit borrowers have evolved quite successfully. In Chapter 6, the Report emphasizes that one of the advantages that a producer organization may draw is relatively lower transaction costs.

- Private funding should be increased by triggering (i) extension services to the expanding contract farming system, and (ii) cost-sharing arrangements through private-public partnerships.

Related Chapters in WDR 2008:

In Chapter 5 of the Report, it has been recommended that smallholder participation should be promoted through public-private sector partnerships and corporate social responsibility initiatives.

In Chapter 7, public-private partnerships in developing countries can foster successes in R&D, trigger creation of value chain shops in the private sector, which are nowadays quickly proliferating. Whereas the smallholders are mainly the value-adders, the public sector takes care of them through correcting market errors, taking remedial measures during catastrophes etc.

ii. **Bangladesh Country Assistance Strategy 2006-2009:**

- Though there has been the emergence of a vigorous private sector, especially due to macroeconomic management and trade liberalization, there are failures in governance.
- Following the PRSP, the World Bank's strategy is focused on governance, composed of two pillars, that is, (i) Improving the Investment Climate, and (ii) Empowering the Poor.

Related Chapters in WDR 2008:

In Chapter 10, there are examples of agriculture policy instrument that (i) enjoy strong political support and (ii) demand strong administrative capacity and funding. Policy instruments that do not consider the necessity for these two essential inputs usually fail—as indicated in Chapter 4. In Chapter 11, examples of governance problems that give rise to such a dilemma have been stated to be political and economic instability, limited accountability, low state capacity, corruption and poor rule of the law.

In Bangladesh which relatively recently turned out to be a transforming economy, and close to being an agriculture-based economy, governance problems are severe, as considered in the World Bank Bangladesh Country Assistance Strategy 2006-09. It has also been clearly echoed in Chapter 11 of the WDR 2008.

Therefore, the above statement in the Bangladesh Country Assistance Strategy is extremely important for Bangladesh because the global governance problems like those in Bangladesh are the major reason why many recommendations in the 1982 World Development Report on agriculture could not be implemented.

- Poverty pervades through two-thirds of 63 million deprived people, and inequality is rising

Related Chapters in WDR 2008:

Chapter 1 of the WDR 2008 indicates that rural poverty and rural-urban income disparity even in transforming countries, like those in the agriculture-based countries, are staggering, beside some positive changes in the macroeconomic indicators. However, it has also been mentioned in Chapter 9 that the global rural-urban income divide has been gradually declining.

iii. Bangladesh Development Series Paper No. 18 (2007)- Bangladesh: Strategy for Sustained Growth:

- Diversification into higher-valued crops and increased output of the livestock and fishing sub-sectors will be required to raise real agricultural incomes.

Related Chapters in WDR 2008:

In Chapter 2 of the WDR, it is stated that diversification to higher-value products is one of the ways to offset declining prices of cereals and to boost traditional exports. However, it applies for Bangladesh as the situation is in this country. It has been further justified in the WDR 2008 referring to the fact that rapid income growth and increasing urbanization have been contributing to crop diversification. It has also been added that crop diversification around the globe is now encouraging because- among the exports from all developing countries, exports of horticulture, livestock, fish, cut flowers, and organic products account for around 47 percent of the total.

- Research, extension, and investments in infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges and telecommunications) are essential for promoting agricultural diversification.

Related Chapters in WDR 2008:

In Chapter 2, it is available that lack of appropriate infrastructure that could facilitate market access, beside difficult agro-climatic condition, may impact on agricultural performance. It has also been mentioned that roads in Asia has been instrumental in making contributions to agricultural growth.

5.4 Advocacy Agenda Related to WDR 2008 in the Bangladesh Context

As Oxfam has a global presence and the heritage of an age-old advocacy and campaigning projects around the globe, it is being proposed that OGB take on a number advocacy initiatives, in Bangladesh as well as internationally for addressing a number of issues related to WDR 2008 and the agriculture sector of Bangladesh. The two following tables will indicate the types of advocacy tasks being recommended.

5.4.1 Suggested Advocacies in Bangladesh:

<i>Suggested Advocacy Task</i>	<i>Objective(s)</i>	<i>Target Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Target Audience</i>	<i>Partners, if any</i>
Agrarian-Land-Aquarian Reform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying all <i>khas</i> lands, and publishing information on their locations in all media - Recovering all illegally occupied <i>khas</i> lands, and retaining <i>khas</i> lands owned by the landless - Distributing appropriate <i>khas</i> lands among the urban poor - Organizing cooperative farming and establishing sharecroppers' rights - Pursuing distribution of <i>khas</i> water-bodies to eligible fishermen - Creating enabling environment to ensure women's access to and ownership of land - Establishing tenancy rights of the share croppers - Establishing a Land Commission for all indigenous peoples - Repealing Vested Property Act-protecting the rights of the co-sharers of all lands; In the process of returning vested lands, giving priority to small landowners and lands grabbed by people from the administration cadre. 	To have equitable ownership and broader use of arable land and water-bodies	Landless households	MoL/MoF, BADC & NGOs	Relevant development partners & NGOs
Enhanced Support to the People in the Less-Favoured Areas for their Agricultural Activities	To exploit the potentials for enhanced agricultural production	Especially the poor people in the less-favoured areas	MoF/MoA/MoW/R&H Deptt., BADC & Deptt. of Agricultural Extension	NGOs
Automation of the Land Management System with the Government	Reduce irregularities in ownership, tenancy and payment of land tax	All people in Bangladesh	MoL/MoF/Ministry of Science and Technology & NGOs	N. A.
Provision of Micro Credit to the Agriculture Sector	Use of the potentials for enhancing agricultural yields	Poor farmers	MoF/MoA/Banks/BA DC/NGOs	Micro credit NGOs
Enhancing Production of Diversified Crops for Export based on the Conditions Recommended in this report	Facilitating production, and especially export of cash crops	Poor farmers	MoA/MoA/BADC	Relevant development partners & NGOs
Ensuring Transitional Provisions for Adoption of the Agricultural Trade Liberalization	Facilitate peaceful and efficient transition to trade liberalization for a good world order	All people in Bangladesh	MoF/MoA/BADC/NGOs/Development partners	Relevant development partners & NGOs
Enhancing Public Spending to Build Infrastructure to Benefit of the Agriculture Sector	Use of the potentials for enhancing agricultural yields	Farmers and other citizens	MoA/BADC/MoW/R&H Deptt./MoF	N. A.
Ensuring Efficient Crop Seeds	Enhancing crop yield	Farmers and other citizens	MoA/BADC/MediaMo HA	NGOs from neighbouring countries
Patronizing Producer Organizations	Protecting the rights and interests of the farmers	Farmers and other citizens	MoA/BADC/MoSS/Farmers/NGOs	N. A.
Safe Experiments on and Use of GMFs/GMOs	Efficient, safe and healthy use of GMFs/GMOs	Farmers and other citizens	MoA/MoST/MoF/BADC/BARI	Relevant development partners & NGOs

<i>Suggested Advocacy Task</i>	<i>Objective(s)</i>	<i>Target Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Target Audience</i>	<i>Partners, if any</i>
Rational Production/Use of Biofuel	Ensuring conservation of food items and reasonable food prices	World community	Biofuel producers/producing countries/GoB/Other governments	Donors & NGOs
Department of Agriculture Extension's mission must be strengthened and effective	To provide efficient and effective needs based extension services to optimize use of resources	All categories of farmers	DAE	Producer organization, agriculture university/institution
Shifting the Laboratory of Agriculture University/Institution to the field level	To provide research result and scientific farming techniques to the farmer	All farmers and researchers	Agriculture University, DAE, MoA, Farmer Organization	Donors, and Private Sector Research-based Operators
Conducting field-based national agriculture survey, and taking necessary steps considering survey-based results	To achieve sustainable agriculture development	All people in Bangladesh	MoA, BARC, DAE, BARI, BRRI, and LRDI	Donors
Cultivating demand-driven and region-wise crops based on comparative advantages	To achieve sustainable agriculture development	All people in Bangladesh	MoA and DAE	Donors and NGOs

Index:

BADC = Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation, BARI = Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute, Deptt. = Department, GoB = Government of Bangladesh, IIRI=International Rich Research Institute, MNCs = Multinational Corporations, MoA = Ministry of Agriculture, MoF= Ministry of Finance, MoL = Ministry of Land, MoSS = Ministry of Social Services, MoST = Ministry of Science and Technology, MoW = Ministry of Works, N. A. = Not Applicable, R&H = Roads & Highways.

5.4.2 *Suggested Advocacies in the International Arena:*

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Suggested Advocacy Task</i>	<i>Objective(s)</i>	<i>Target Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Target Audience</i>	<i>Partners, if any</i>
1	Provision of Micro Credit to the Agriculture Sector	Use of the potentials for enhancing agricultural yields	Poor farmers	Development partners/GoB	Micro credit NGOs
2	Enhancing Production of Diversified Crops for Export	Facilitating production, and especially export of cash crops	Poor farmers	Development partners/GoB	Development partners & NGOs
3	Transitional Provisions for Adoption of the Agricultural Trade Liberalization	Peaceful, efficient transition to trade liberalization for a good world order	All people in Bangladesh	Donors/Donor Governments/Donor consortia/GoB	Relevant development partners & NGOs
4	Enhancing Public Spending to Build Infrastructure to Benefit of the Agriculture Sector	Use of the potentials for enhancing agricultural yields	Farmers and other citizens	Donors/Donor Governments/Donor consortia/GoB	N. A.
5	Ensuring Efficient Crop Seeds	Enhancing crop yield	Farmers and other citizens	MNCs/Governments of neighbouring countries	NGOs from neighbouring countries
6	Safe Experiments on and Use of GMFs/GMOs	Efficient, safe and healthy use of GMFs/GMOs	Farmers and other citizens	MNCs/IRRI	Relevant development partners & NGOs
7	Rational Production/Use of Biofuel	Ensuring conservation of food items and reasonable food prices	World community	Biofuel producers/producing countries/GoB/Other governments	Donors & NGOs

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5.5 Alternative Policy Options for Bangladesh Not Presented in WDR 2008

The likely alternative policy options for Bangladesh not presented in WDR 2008 are the following:

- a) Intensification of crop diversification for exports to the developed countries:

This particular step is relatively easier, because projects in this direction are already in place, and these projects are supported morally and financially by the development partners.

- b) Exclusive efforts for skills and education enhancement, beside a status quo in the agriculture sector, especially for expediting further quick international outmigration:

Usually, improvement in education and skills levels is a time-taking phenomenon. But the government's patronage coupled with vigorous donor support may sometimes bring out success in this area. Bangladesh already has the trend and practice of exporting mostly unskilled and low-skilled manpower to the rich countries where such a labour force is less prevalent. What is most essential to make it happen is a sound economic diplomacy. The Government's creation of a separate ministry to look after the affairs of the Bangladeshi expatriate workers points out the importance and apparent dedication of the Government to implement a crash programme to export manpower at a fast pace.

- c) Graduated scheduling of the trade liberalization to the convenience of Bangladesh, as her government deems fit:

Bangladesh, considering her preparation for implementation of her trade liberalization, could request the donor consortia to delay the inception of her implementation. Had such a request been made by Bangladesh and accepted by the donors, respect for the donor community would have increased among the Bangladeshis significantly, and strengthened Bangladesh's participation in the process of liberalization more vigorously. As a result, mutual trust, confidence and respect among the global community would have increased.

- d) Generous donor support to maintain balances at the macroeconomic level for a given number of years:

It is a reasonably reasonable approach, because the Doha Round of Talks is just a donor imposition on the agriculture-based and transforming economies. But donor support in such a case must be in the form of grants for a given number of years, and NOT interest-bearing loans.

- e) Financing of Bangladesh farmers with donor money for micro financing to the agriculture sector:

Analyses have already shown that whatever alternatives to full-fledged compliance with the Doha Round are adopted, Bangladesh is going to require a huge amount of micro credit for her poor farmers. At present, the support provided to the farmers by the public agricultural banks and a negligible amount by NGO microcredit is extremely insufficient and generally ill-managed.

f) Continuation of the current levels of taxation on and subsidies to the agriculture sector:

An extreme pressure on the Government of Bangladesh to go by a mandatory full-compliance with the Doha Round and non-provision of any support suggested above or otherwise would push the country to a position where all her plans to make transitional adjustments would get nullified.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the Terms of Reference for this review, **the major recommendations in view of the analyses carried out in the preceding sections of the report are the advocacy agenda related to WDR 2008, described in Section 4.** Besides- in order to lead Bangladesh toward a more prosperous economy especially by augmenting agricultural productivity and profitability- the following specific recommendations are being made, some of which may be related to the foregoing recommendations for advocacy programmes/projects.

- i. By basing on a huge microfinancing network already in place, initiatives should be taken up to provide financial support to the poor farmers through either of the mechanisms mentioned in or outside the WDR 2008. Additionally, the huge networks of banks in the public sector, especially the ones that are operating inefficiently in areas of more sophisticated loan servicing, may also be used.
- ii. When poor countries like Bangladesh complies with the Doha Round provisions and plan to go ahead with spending for building essential infrastructures rather than arranging subsidies for their poor farmers, they (complying countries) must be provided with necessary compensating grants, and NOT interest-bearing loans.
- iii. Crop diversification is a must to alleviate rural poverty, and such an attempt may be achievable through adoption of cultivation of region-specific and appropriate fruits and vegetables. Such an undertaking is aimed at promoting agribusiness.
- iv. Urgent steps must be taken in order to enable the country to have a sound research-and-extension system based on regional-and-local demand patterns- so the farmers are able to boost their income rapidly, especially through cultivating high-value crops, e.g., horticulture, poultry, animal health, fish, and dairy.
- v. Subsidies to agriculture should be individual farm/farmer-wise packages which may contain one or more of diesel for irrigation water, fertilizers, seeds and pesticides by way of maintaining inventories of farmers and their season-wise cultivation schedules.
- vi. Fiscal/Financial governance system for the agriculture sector, especially in sanctioning of agricultural loans, should be improved.
- vii. Standards of type and quality of various crop-seeds should be determined for subsequent compliance during commercial seed production.
- viii. Quick studies should be launched on *country-context issues* of (i) probable impact on health aspects, (ii) yield levels, and (iii) financial tolerance of poor farmers for production and consumption of major GMOs/GMFs in Bangladesh.
- ix. As zero (or conservation)-tillage farming has not yet been practiced so far in Bangladesh, appropriate but low-cost R&D on this issue should be launched.

LIST OF RESPONDENTS INTERVIEWED

Sl. No.	Name	Position	Institution	Date
1	Dr Uttom Kumar Dev	Additional Director (Research)	Centre for Policy Dialog	07-07-2008
2	Jatish Chandra Sarkar	Project Director (More Seed Production)	Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC)	14-07-2008
3	Prof. Dr. Ashraf Uddin Chowdhury	Chief Economist/Consultant	General Economic Division, Planning Commission	19-07-08
4	Dr. Wais Kabir	Member Director (NRM), NATP	Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC)	15-07-2008
5	Md. Mahmud Hossain	Project Director (Bangladesh Agribusiness Development Project)	Department of Agriculture Marketing	15-07-2008
6	Dr. Muhammad Solaiman	Senior Advisor (Agriculture and Rural Development)	Japan International Cooperation Agency-Bangladesh (JICA)	17-07-2008
7	Dr. QK Ahmed	President	Bangladesh Economic Association	11-07-08
8	Sayedul Arefin	Deputy Director	Japan International Cooperation Agency-Bangladesh (JICA)	17-07-2008
9	Mahbubul Islam Khan	Governance Coordinator	CARE-Bangladesh	21-07-2008
10	Asgar Ali Sabri	Head-Social Development and Economic Justice	Action aid-Bangladesh	27-07-2008
11	Dr. Shafiq-uz-Zaman	Professor	Department of Economics, University of Dhaka	29-07-08
12	Hasanur Rahman	Member	Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation	30-07-08
13	Shamsul Huda	Director	Association for Land Reform and Development	02-08-08
14	Ziaul Haider	President	Diploma Agriculture Institutions	03-08-08

*Annex-II***CHECKLIST FOR KIIs**

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Topic/Issue</i>	<i>Specific Question</i>	<i>Response(s)</i>	<i>Study Team's Remarks/ Analysis</i>
1	Diversification of the rural poor's occupations	How can occupations of the rural poor be diversified in Bangladesh?		
2	Success of all three Pathways out of Poverty in Bangladesh (<i>agricultural productivity, rural non-farm employment, and migration</i>)	Do you agree that all the 3 pathways out of poverty have been successful in Bangladesh? If 'Yes'/'No', why/why not?		
3	Three different worlds in agriculture	Do you agree to this division of the world in agriculture into three groups? If 'Yes'/'No', why/why not?		
4	Keeping food prices low	How to keep food prices low, especially in a transforming economy like Bangladesh?		
5	Subsidies to agriculture	Should poorer countries (e.g., Bangladesh) continue subsidies to agriculture? How and why richer countries increase/maintain subsidies/transfers? Who will import from Bangladesh? & which products?		
6	Outmigration of Bangladeshi rural poor	Outmigration is not the way, but better outmigration works well- what should Bangladesh do?		
7	Women's participation in agriculture	Women's participation in agriculture works well. How much does it apply for Bangladesh? Please suggest any recommendations in this regard.		
8	Fiscal policy and food prices	Are transfers to agriculture possible to lower food prices within Bangladesh's weak fiscal policies?		
9	Biofuels (in Brazil, India etc.)	What would be the impact/implications of BIOFUELS in Brazil, India and other countries for Bangladesh?		
10	Success of "Education for Cash"	WDR 2008 says "Education for Cash" has been successful in Bangladesh. How would you respond to this statement?		
11	Governance in Bangladesh	How has governance in Bangladesh's agriculture been as compared to those in her other sectors?		

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Topic/Issue</i>	<i>Specific Question</i>	<i>Response(s)</i>	<i>Study Team's Remarks/ Analysis</i>
12	Price stability and border trade	WDR 2008 says- border trade is a good way to stabilize food prices. How does it apply for Bangladesh? Please suggest steps to further improve her border trade.		
13	Access to financing for the rural poor	How can Bangladesh widen access of her rural poor to financing?		
14	Microfinance in Bangladesh	How much of microfinance in Bangladesh has supported (been received by) her agriculture? Please suggest steps to enhance microfinance to Bangladesh's agriculture.		
15	Marketers' syndicate	How to reduce or eliminate marketers' syndicates in Bangladesh?		
16	GMFs/GMOs	Are GMFs/GMOs are good for Bangladesh? If 'Yes'/'No', in what respects/why not? What are the steps toward better utilization of GMOs/GMFs by Bangladesh?		
17	Zero-tillage in Bangladesh's agriculture	Is it possible to introduce "zero-tillage" agriculture in Bangladesh for better environmental keep-up? Is it possible to introduce other types of agriculture than traditional/full tillage and <i>jhum</i> cultivation?		
18	Inter-sectoral coordination	How has the inter-sectoral/inter-ministerial coordination for agriculture been in Bangladesh? How can Bangladesh improve on her inter-sectoral/inter-ministerial coordination for agriculture?		

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