Politiques **E**conomiques et **P**auvreté
Poverty and **E**conomic **P**olicy

Working Paper 2005-02

Poverty Profile of Five Wards under Muhammadpur Union

Ranjan Kumar Guha

April 2005

Ranjan Kumar Guha, Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development

Poverty Profile of Five Wards under Muhammadpur Union

Ranjan Kumar Guha[1]

Abstract

Lack of capacity to meet basic needs of ones is termed as poverty. Poverty monitoring helps to know the performance of poverty reduction and potential problem in combating poverty. There is a system to monitor poverty at national level but the initiative to monitor poverty at local level is missing in Bangladesh. Local Level Poverty monitoring system is trying to address this gap with a view to know poverty situation in the respective areas for taking corrective action by the local government. In the mean time, survey of five Wards has been completed.

The survey findings suggest that, the family size of all wards is higher than the national average. The adult literacy varies from 38 percent to 66 percent from one Ward to another. The net enrollment rate at primary level is quite satisfactory that varies from 78 percent to 91 percent. In case of variation of primary enrollment in different Wards it is found that demand factor is more responsible than the supply factors. The coverage of electricity is higher than the national average. On an average, 53 percent people are living below the poverty line, which is higher than the average picture of other rural areas in Bangladesh. Per month per household income is lower than the national average but it is higher than the other rural areas in Bangladesh. This implies that the inequality in these villages is higher than the other rural areas in Bangladesh. The people of the areas are found to be very much deprived of access to pure drinking water as most of them in this area are drinking arsenic contaminated water. There is variation of performances in every indicator at Ward level but the aggregate performance of the indicators is satisfactory. This justifies the data desegregation at Ward level. Data desegregation on the basis of social stratification also provides some policy implication. Finally, uses of NRDB for presentation of poverty situation are very much helpful for the policy planner to grasp the problem. It would also help to make local government transparent and accountable.

1. Introduction

Poverty is the condition of deprivation resulting from various reasons having many roots as well as many dimensions. For that complexity, it is really difficult to single out the cause of poverty and determine one single

[1]Assistant Director, BARD, Comilla & Project Leader, LLPMS

indicator for monitoring poverty in rural areas. In Bangladesh, 44 percent of the people in rural areas are living below the poverty line while 20 percent are hard-core poor. Bangladesh has done remarkable achievement in reducing human poverty in terms of attaining adult literacy rate, closing gender gap in education specially enrollment rate, increasing life expectancy, reducing maternal and infant mortality rate and intensifying coverage of Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) etc. For reducing income poverty the achievement is also modest in Bangladesh. The main causes of poverty in Bangladesh are lack of employment opportunity, lack of ownership in productive assets, vulnerability due to lack of capacity to cope with the adverse effect of natural calamities, and overburden of populations. But the reality is that causes of poverty differ from one region to another and lack of understanding about the causes of poverty in a particular place makes difficulty to take realistic steps for reducing poverty. In Bangladesh, Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) is being conducted every four years to monitor poverty situation at rural and urban areas. The findings of the survey help to appreciate the progress of poverty situation in country situation and determine policy interventions at macro level. Disaggregated data at Divisional level is incorporated in this initiative. But, experience shows that even within a district, the poverty situation differs from one village to another and the service delivery agencies, specially the local government authority face difficulties to take proper steps due to lack of reliable data at the grassroots level. In that perspective, an initiative was taken to develop a user-friendly poverty monitoring system at Union level by involving local people on the basis of the piloting experience of four villages under MIMAP-Bangladesh in 2002 to 2003. The pilot testing was kept limited in four villages of a Ward. After successful completion of the pilot phase of the Local Level Poverty Monitoring (LLPMS), Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) is implementing the system in the Muhammadpur (west) union of Daudkandi Upazila, Comilla covering all villages under the auspices of IDRC, Canada through CBMS international network.

2. Objective

The general objective of the paper is to describe the background information of LLPMS, its methodology and findings of the survey conducted in five wards under LLPMS. The specific objectives of the article are as follows:

1. to describe the background and methodology of LLPMS;
2. to analyse the findings of five Wards;
3. to share the lessons learned from LLPMS.

3. Methodology of the Project

Local level trained people are involved under the supervision of the functionaries of Local government to generate community and household level information. Two sets of questionnaire/ checklist are designed to generate information through using PRA and household survey. Tabulation of some core Indicators by the local people is another focus of the LLPMS. Compiling some basic information of each household and aggregate information of some basic indicators, Ward Information Book (WIB) of each Ward has been prepared. Then the functionaries of Local government and elite people of respective Ward were invited in a training workshop to analyze the information and identification of problems in various fields. They were also encouraged to prioritise the problems with a view to prepare a pragmatic plan. After preparation of plan, Ward meetings were organsied in each Ward to disseminate the findings of survey as well as plan prepared by the respective functionaries of local government in that Ward. After a long discussion, the plan was finalized and the functionaries of Local government prioritised the problem and identified some plan of action according to their resources and some plan was chalked out with the hope of getting support service from the nation-building departments. Finally, a planning workshop was organised in presence of the officials of nation building departments and NGOs for getting commitment to chennalise need based support services.

4. Findings

4.1. Survey Result:

A. Household and Population Characteristic

The total number of households in the five wards is 1,956 while the total number of population is 10,972. The average household size is 5.6. The

sex ratio is (number of male against per hundred females) 108. The average household size and the sex ratio of the studied area are higher than the national average. Considering the religious belief to the people, it is found that 87 percent of the households are Muslim while the rest belong to the Hindu religion. Male heads of households constitute more than ninety eight percent household heads while female heads are only 1.6 percent. (Table 01).

Table 01 Demographic Characteristics of Population

A. Household and Population Characteristics	
Number of Households	1,956
Sex of the household heads	
Male (% of total households)	98.4
Female (% of total households)	1.6
Number of Population	10,972
Male	5,707
Female	5,265
Average Household size	5.6
Sex Ratio (males per 100 females)	108
Religious Status	
Muslim (Families %)	87.3
Hindu (Families %)	12.7

Considering the age structure of population it is found that the highest concentration of population remains in 15 to 49 years of age group. The demographic dependency ratio for both sexes is 68 percent –66 percent for male and 69 percent for the female. Although the demographic dependency ratio for the female is higher than the male but average ratio is lower than the national average, which suggests that dependency burden on active population of this area is lower than the national level. Furthermore, nearly two-fifths population belongs to the age up to 14 years that advocates stable growth of school going aged children and working people in coming years.

Table 02: Population Age Structure

Age groups (years)	Male	Female	Both Sex
0-4	9.48	11.62	10.51
5-9	11.79	12.63	12.19
10-14	13.68	13.69	13.69
15-49	52.08	51.36	51.73
50-64	8.32	7.65	8.00
65 and above	4.64	3.02	3.86
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Demographic Dependency Ratio	65.56	69.42	67.39

B. Education

Education helps to explore latent potentiality of a person by imparting knowledge that eventually assists to develop capacity and morality of a person. An educated person can meet his/her own and family requirements by utilising his or her knowledge. On the other hand, the state is responsible for ensuring free primary education to all. So, monitoring educational status is very important.

Table 03: Educational Status of Five Wards

	Male	Female	Total
Net Enrolment Rate (Primary)	82.87	83.64	83.25
Net Enrollment Rate (Secondary)	30.67	41.95	36.19
Drop out Rate (Primary)	3.08	1.37	2.25
Drop out Rate (Secondary)	11.41	7.31	9.09
Literacy Rate (7years and above)	52.96	43.68	48.60
Adult Literacy Rate (15 years and above)	59.61	45.28	52.95

Source: LLPMS Survey

The adult literacy rate in five Wards is recorded around 53 percent while the literacy rate for the people 7 years and above is 49 percent. Females are lagging behind the males in both cases. Although literacy rate of this area is lower than the national average but it is higher from the average of other rural areas in Bangladesh. The net enrollment rate at primary and secondary level is 83 percent and 37 percent respectively while the drop-out rate stands at 2 percent and 9 percent at primary and secondary level respectively. Considering enrollment and dropout rate females are in a more advantageous position than male as enrollment rate

of girls is higher and dropout rate is lower than the boys. It is to be noted that there are five primary schools in five Wards and no secondary school in this Union. The main problem in primary education lies with the demand factor, and for the secondary education it is supply factor. As there are sufficient physical facilities for primary education in these Wards, people should come forward to utilise this facility by sending their children to schools. On the other hand, for the development of secondary education facility a secondary school should be founded. An initiative has already been taken to establish a secondary level school in the Union. Field observation suggests that the poor parents deemed it profitable to involve their children in works rather than sending them to school. Field observation suggests that the government initiative for increasing female education has positive impact on increasing enrollment rate of females at the secondary level. It may be mentioned here that the primary education for all is free while secondary education for female is free in Bangladesh. Moreover, the girls at secondary level are provided with stipend. As there is little opportunity for the girls to be involved in paid labour, parents feel it is better to involve their son as income earner and send the girls to school. People of this area have stressed on ensuring quality of education.

c. Health and family Planning

A healthy person is a resource for the economy while a sick person is a burden for the family, society as well as for the nation. Healthy life depends on availability of health related support services to the society and positive attitude towards use of this facility. The health related support services raise life expectancy at birth by reducing infant mortality, maternal mortality and morbidity. Healthy environment at rural areas related to using hygienic latrine and safe drinking water are prerequisites for reducing morbidity. As measurement of life expectancy at birth is difficult, some

proxy indicators that have direct or indirect relation with life expectancy is considered and can be seen in following Table-04.

Table 04 Health and Family Planning Status of Five Wards

Infant Mortality Rate (per thousand live births)	14.37
Maternal Morality Rate (per thousand live births)	2.87
Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (%)	48.45
Use of Sanitary latrine (%)	67.66
Use of safe drinking water (%)	15.00
Babies born under the supervision of Trained Birth Attendant or in health centre	25.86

Source: LLPMS Survey

The infant and maternal mortality rate of the studied Ward is 14 and 3 respectively per thousand live births which implies the people of these Wards enjoy better maternal and child care facilities than that of the national level as the rate is lower than the national average. But the danger remains with the delivery practices of newborn babies. Only 26 percent, of the new born babies were born under the supervision of doctor or trained birth attendant. More than two thirds of households use ring slab or sanitary latrine. People use tube well water for drinking but arsenic contamination has created a health hazard for the people in this area. As a result only 15 percent people can use safe drinking water. The situation of this Union in respect of access to safe drinking water is quite different from other areas of Bangladesh. Recently Arsenic contamination in drinking water becomes a severe health hazard in some region of the country. The surveyed area is severely affected with the problem of arsenic contamination. The government has provided some arsenic free tubewell in different areas through the *Union Parishad*. Field observation suggests that people become habituated with collecting drinking water from the doorsteps, so they are reluctant to fetch water from a distant place. Besides, these tube wells go out of order frequently. These are the main reasons for poor access to safe drinking water. The average contraceptive prevalence rate is recorded 49 percent which is lower than the national average and the health workers informed that religious beliefs against use of contraceptive is one of the

reasons for poor performance in attaining the CPR rate satisfactorily. Excluding provision of safe drinking water other areas of health sector in the studied Ward are satisfactory. There is a Union Health Center and Upazila Health Complex at a close distance along with a private diagnostic center at local market for getting health services. People generally consult with the village doctor or pharmacist in case of normal diseases but they usually go to upazila health center for complicated diseases.

D. **Income Poverty**

When people fail to meet their minimum basic needs due to lack of purchasing power resulting from inability to earn sufficient income, is called income poverty. For measuring income poverty, three methods are used ie. Cost of Basic Need, Self Perception, and Villagers Perception Method. First method considered ability to purchase fixed bundle of food and non food items to meet minimum consumption requirement as poverty line, Under second method, the household heads categorized themselves into four categories i.e. occasional deficit, chronic deficit, breakeven and surplus on the basis of their ability to meet food requirement. The households who identified them as chronic deficit and occasional deficit are considered as poor and the household who identified them as breakeven or surplus are considered as non-poor. The villagers have their own perception to classify people as poor and non-poor. During PRA all households were categorised as poor, very poor and non-poor after identification of the each households at village on the basis of the criteria fixed by them.

Table 05 Income Poverty Scenario of Five Wards

	Poor	Non Poor
Cost of Basic Need Method (CBN)	52.2	47.8
Self Perception Method	31.7	68.3

Source: LLPMS Survey

The incidence of poverty under the CBN method is recorded 52.2, which is higher than the national average. But the incidence of poverty is low if we consider only food intake to define poverty. Thirty two

percent families face problems to meet their food requirements occasionally or constantly. The area is situated on the riverside of the Meghna and almost every year the cultivated lands remain inundated by floodwaters for nearly two months. As a result, cropping intensity is lower than the other areas of Comilla District. Moreover, a sizeable portion of the households is a agricultural laborer who depend on selling their labor. For that reason, the incidence of poverty remains higher than the national level poverty. The dependency on own physical labor, inability to meet sufficient food requirements of family members, less number of earning members in relation to the number of family members, inability to cope with the crisis arising due to natural disaster and lean season, inability to give treatment and continue children's education   due to lack of income, and households having no lands are considered as main criteria for assessing the poverty.

E. Asset Ownership and Living Condition

In an agrarian society like Bangladesh, ownership of land particularly cultivated land and pond and ownership of bovine animal are termed as productive assets as these assets are prerequisites to be involved in productive activities. Nearly two thirds of the household heads of this area depend on the non-farm activities for their livelihood. Still people believe, ownership of cultivable land is the most productive asset in rural areas. Although, in the era of globalisation, there is lot of scope of earning for the skilled people by engaging in non-farm sector utilising one's knowledge but still lack of modern technical know-how, lack of money and traditional mentality inhibit getting involved in non farm sector profitably.

Table 06 Assets Ownership

Average owned land per households (acre)	.85
Average operated land (acres)	.76
Percentage of households having ownership in ponds	64
Average area of ponds per households	.09
Percentage of households having poultry	76
Average number of poultry	6.37
Percentage of households having ox	6.56
Average number of oxes	1.25
Percentage of households having cows	25
Average number of cows	1.72
Percentage of households having goats	11.81
Average number of goats	1.47

Source: LLPMS Survey

The average owned land and operated land per holding are .85 and .76 acres respectively that suggests that the land holding size is lower than the national average. Although 64 percent households have ownership in ponds, but the average size is very small i.e. .09 acres, as most of the ponds are owned jointly. Seventy percent households rear poultry and average number of poultry is 6.37. In case of livestock rearing, only 25 households and 12 percent owns cows and goat with an average number of 1.72 and 1.47 respectively. The result suggests that ownership of land and bovine animal is less than the national average. The area is situated near to the capital city so the population density is high compared to other rural areas in Bangladesh. Scarcity of homestead area, lack of grazing lands, and flood are the main reasons for lacking interest to rear cattle. But some of the entrepreneurs are involved in poultry farming commercially and fish culture by taking lease of the ponds in the area.

F. Living Condition

Living condition of people is the most important indicator to know well-being of the people. Housing condition with other facilities is considered under the purview of living condition.

Table 07: Living Condition

Percentage of households having houses made of CI sheet or pucca building	98.6
Percentage of households having electricity	52.8
Having Tape recorder or Radio	28
Having Television	21.53
Having Mobile telephone	5.11

Source: LLPMS Survey

It is found that most of the houses (98.6%) are made of Corrugated Iron sheet or pucca so it is difficult to identify the poor and non poor by observing housing condition. Micro finance by Government and Non-government organisation in Bangladesh becomes a popular strategy for fighting against poverty. Some NGOs including Grameen Bank are providing housing loan for building the houses. These facilities have created the opportunity to build good houses in the rural areas. Inflow of remittance was also found to be a reason for good housing condition in these Wards as remittance earner gives emphasis on building a good house as a social prestige. More than fifty-three households have electricity facility although people are dissatisfied with the frequent load shedding. The most significant thing is that 5% of the households of these areas have mobile phone using personally or commercially. Recently, mobile phone has brought a revolution in communication sector in the rural areas of Bangladesh. *Grameen Phone* a sister concern of *Grameen Bank* is the main initiator for introducing mobile phone at the grassroots level. People said that this facility has been able to make life easier and anxiety free.

G. Employment and Income

Broadening employment opportunity in rural areas has direct relationship with income rise which eventually helps to reduce poverty. Incremental increase of population and reducing per capita cultivable lands due to increase in use of lands for homestead purpose inhibits employing the labor force in rural areas profitably. So, for increasing employment opportunity especially in rural areas, the other possible areas of non-farm sector needs to be explored by capitalising the potential benefits of ICTs.

Table 08: Employment and Income status

	Male	Female	Both Sex
Labour Force Participation Rate	80.06	55.16	67.98
Average number of active labour per household	1.56	1.18	1.37
Unemployment Rate	6.72	46.55	21.83
Under employment Rate	7.67	40.19	20.02
Child Labour (%)	3.43	.19	1.54
Per household per month average income		Tk. 4947	
Per household per month average expenditure		Tk. 4,179	

Source: LLPMS Survey

Labour force participation rate is recorded 68 percent and the average number of active labour force is 1.37. The unemployment rate is found very high while the under employment rate is little higher than the national average. Considering gender variation, it is observed that the variation of unemployment and under employment rate is very minimal for the male while for female the rate is much higher than the national average. The problem may lie with the definition of underemployment and unemployment rate. For study purpose, an active member having worked less than 15 hours and 35 hours in the preceding weeks   is considered as unemployed and under employed respectively. In the study areas the females are mostly involved in the household works along with poultry raising, livestock rearing and threshing, drying rice during harvesting period of crop. The information was collected from the household during the time of transplantation and flood and only household work were not considered as economic activities. It may be one of the reasons for higher unemployment and under employment rate for female. Nearly 2 percent of the children (6-14 years) are supplementing their family income by selling their physical labour. Poverty is the main reason for getting involved as child labour.

Per month per household average income is found Tk. 4,947 (around $ 85), which is lower than the national level but higher than other rural areas in Bangladesh. Comparing the data with the incidence of poverty, one can observe that although per household income is higher than other rural

areas in Bangladesh but the incidence of poverty recorded higher than the same - suggests that inequality between rich and poor people of the study area is higher than other rural areas in Bangladesh.

H. Selected Poverty Profile
H.1. Gender and Poverty

Poverty falls disproportionately among females, as in rural areas in Bangladesh there is little scope to be employed in gainful activities for a woman. It is found that nearly one half of the male headed households and around three fifths of the female headed households are poor. Considering the religious beliefs it is found that poverty is lower among the Hindus than the among the Muslim families.

Table 09: Gender and Poverty

	% Poor
Sex	
Male headed households	50.8
Female headed households	57.7
Religion	
Muslim	52.6
Hindu	39.4

Source: LLPMS Survey

H.2. Educational Qualification of the Household Head and Poverty

Education has positive impact on poverty alleviation. It is commonly believed that an educated person is able to cope with the abnormal situation by utisilising his or her capacity. The study findings also recognised this hypotheses.

Table 10 Education and Poverty

	Poor (%)	Non Poor (%)	Total
Illiterate	62.64	37.72	50.41
Primary	14.42	14.75	14.58
Secondary	16.75	22.13	19.39
SSC	4.26	11.49	7.81
HSc	1.52	9.27	5.33
Graduate	0.20	3.58	1.86
Masters	0.20	0.84	0.52
others	0.00	0.21	0.10
Total	100	100	100

Source: LLPMS Survey

It is found that among the poor, 63 percent households are illiterate while 38 percent of the non-poor household heads are illiterate. The incidence of poverty declined along with the increase of Educational qualification.

H.3. Land ownership and Poverty

Land is considered as productive asset in rural areas although good portions of people in rural areas depend on assets other than agriculture. So, ownership in land is considered a vital point to monitor rural poverty in Bangladesh.

Table 11 Land Ownership and Poverty

	Poor	Non Poor	Total
Landless	71.9%	42.9%	57.7%
Marginal	20.8%	28.5%	24.6%
Small Farmer	4.9%	16.0%	10.4%
Medium Farmer	2.4%	11.7%	6.9%
Large Farmer	.1%	.8%	.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: LLPMS Survey

Among the poor, 72 percent households are landless and poverty declines along with an increase of land holding size. It is interesting that nearly half of the total non-poor is landless. So land ownership is not the only factor to classify people as poor or non-poor. There are lots of opportunities to be involved in non-farm activities for the landless in rural

areas but experience suggests that flourishing of all other sectors in rural areas depends on the growth of agricultural sector.

H.4. Age of the household head and poverty

Age of the household head has positive relationship with the poverty reduction. Generally it is observed that household heads at the early stage of life cycle are affected by poverty. The burden of poverty continued to decline along with the increase of age of the household head following the increase of earning members and experiences of household heads.

Table 12 Age of the household heads and poverty

Age of the household heads	Poor	Non Poor	Total
<30	18.0%	16.0%	17.0%
30-40	37.1%	26.9%	32.1%
40-50	23.5%	24.9%	24.2%
50 and highest	21.4%	32.2%	26.7%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean age of Household Head	42.9	46.11	44.47

Source: LLPMS Survey

Among the poor, more than 55 percent of the household heads belong to the age group within 40 while percentage is 43 in the same ages of non-poor household. Thirty two percent of the non-poor household heads belong to the age group of 50 years and above against 21 percent poor household heads. The mean age of the poor and non-poor household heads is registered 43 and 47 years respectively.

H 5.Profession and Poverty

Household heads as service holders and businessmen are in a better position than the household heads involved in other professions. It is observed that nearly three fourths of the service holders and three fifths of businessmen are non-poor. But, among the laborer household heads,, rickshaw pullers are severely affected by poverty.

Table 13 Profession and poverty

	Poor	Non poor	Total
Farmer (crop)	59.91	40.09	100.00
Labourer	74.49	25.51	100.00
Fisherman	75.00	25.00	100.00
Service	25.84	74.16	100.00
Business	39.57	60.43	100.00
Rickshaw puller	75.15	24.85	100.00
Professional	43.62	56.38	100.00
Others	42.51	57.49	100.00

Source: LLPMS Survey

4.2. Utility of the System: Perception of Different stakeholders

❑ The local government authority has prioritised some problems in the fields of education, health, infrastructure development, building economic institutions, agriculture development and gender development at the grassroots level. In absence of additional funds for implementing plan, emphasis has been given on proper utilisation of existing resources. For example, a road was constructed in a backward village as per plan of the Union Parishad. According to the honest confession of the late Chairman of the Union Parishad, they usually give emphasis on the localities of their supporters to make them happy. But during the planning workshop, he identified that some areas were not getting due priority in gaining resources as the inhabitants belong to opponent party.

❑ The officials of nation building departments committed to provide arsenic free tubewell in a Ward meeting to Ward number 05 on a priority basis as the problem is more severe in this Ward than other Wards.

❑ One of the policy planners underscored the necessity of this system. According to his comment, this system will ensure the accountability and transparency of local government. But preparing a database at the upazila level covering all unions would be helpful

for its wider replication. This system would be helpful to identify area specific problems and to respond to their needs.

❑ People said that the information generated through LLPMS is new to them. They tried to organize themselves for strengthening social capital and to take necessary action for combating poverty.

❑ During the Planning workshop officials of nation building departments stressed the importance of giving a special amount to the Union Parishad for implementing their plan on an experimental basis in order to help developing a model for replication all over the country.

❑ Some teachers also appreciated the effort of poverty monitoring . They also showed their interest to get involved in the process. To their opinion, students can be mobilised for data generation if they are involved in the process.

❑ Functionaries of neighboring Union Parishad showed their interest in this system. They also requested to expand the programme to the neighboring Union Parishad of Muhammadpur Union.

❑ Representative of National Statistics Department said that if the process could be done properly it would be helpful to complement the national initiative. They also showed their interest to get involved in the process during the initial workshop organized for getting feedback.

4.3. Learning from LLPMS

❑ The functionaries of Union Parishad are in a position to coordinate the efforts. Expertise support for collecting and tabulating data from the local people is essential for carrying out the activities of poverty monitoring. Training should be an integral part of LLPMS.

❑ Respective Nation Building Departments can be involved in providing specialized services related to data collection and tabulation for its

sustainability. During the initial workshop the national level agency showed their interest to be involved in the process.

❑ Encouraging to form village/Ward organisation by ensuring participation of people of all categories by the functionaries of local government would facilitate the wider use of data generated through LLPMS. Some of the leaders of village organisations informed that they would be able to undertake some projects for the development of the areas from the profits of mutual undertakings.

❑ Presenting indicators of survey area by comparing them with national indicators using NRDB software is helpful to sensitize the policy planner.

❑ Information dissemination by the functionaries of local government has impact on mobilizing the people. The functionaries of Union Parishad are able to prepare plan by reflecting the collected information if they are trained.

❑ The indicators should be very simple and short for involving local people in the poverty monitoring system.

❑ Preparation of Information Book incorporating some essential information of each household is helpful to ensure quality of data. During the training workshop and Ward meeting, the Information Book was kept open to check the information of encouraged villagers. So, the investigators become very serious in data collection. In that way, the reliability of information increased.

4.4 Future Plan

Two things are essential for sustaining the activity: one is arranging training and the other is managing funds for the field investigators. The functionaries of the Union Parishad said that voluntary involvement of people is possible but the initiative would suffer from quality of survey. In that case cost sharing may be one of the ways for continuing the process. They also agreed that soon after public examination, students remain idle

for three to four months. In that period they may be used for data collection with a very minimum cost. There is a plan to allocate a portion of funds to the local government directly by the central government. In that case, a system could be developed to allocate a portion of funds for poverty monitoring. The issue of involving students during the period of their free time may be experimented by giving a portion of fund from the CBMS to another Union Parishad.

Conclusion: Poverty monitoring at local level by involving local people and local government proved its urgency in Bangladesh through the project of LLPMS. Different stakeholders of the project have given positive feedback on the outcome of the project. As a philosophy to develop a sense of ownership of the people on data generated through quick dissemination of information and ensure its use for planning purpose become partially success. Local people also proved their capacity for data collection and partial tabulation of some core indicators if they are trained. Initiatives from the local government to continue the process, cooperation from the educated young local people and expertise support for orienting data collection and tabulation of some indicators will ensure its sustainability.