



Operationalising pro-poor growth: research-policy links

[A roundtable discussion, jointly organized by BIDS,
Economic Research Group and International Growth Centre]

Meeting room 'Bakul' of Hotel Sheraton
10 a.m., 15 December, 2009

Talk by Dr. Atiur Rahman, Governor, Bangladesh Bank
Email: governor@bangla.net

- Hon'ble Adviser to Prime Minister Dr. Moshir Rahman, Distinguished leading development Economists, Professor Mahmud, and esteemed participants; a very good morning to you all. It is my pleasure that I'm honored to be invited here as I'm getting a chance in taking part with my few words at such an important and practical roundtable discussion.
- The PRSP and the next FYP seek inclusive growth towards opening up advancement opportunities for all, with increasing social and financial inclusion. GOB and BB policies have focused on SMEs and small landholder agricultural activities for special support intervention. It will be timely now for professional economists to investigate the impact of these interventions at the micro-macro interface; to find out the extent and nature of linkages that these interventions are helping develop between larger formal businesses and the SMEs and rural small farming households.
- Exports of Bangladesh are still heavily concentrated in the apparels and textiles sector; in spite of initiatives such as the SAPTA of SAARC and EBA of the EU opening up tariff preferences on many other industrial products from Bangladesh. A research initiative from the applied economists can usefully investigate whether the apparent indifference of our exporters to these new opportunities arise from ignorance, and how best to enhance alertness of our entrepreneurs in locating and availing of prospective new export opportunities in both the existing and the prospective new markets abroad.
- Over the recent past, the extended family structure that provided some safety net support and protection to members in personal debacles or natural calamities have largely disintegrated; requiring substitution by publicly funded social safety net. Resources available from meager public revenues will clearly be inadequate for a comprehensive publicly funded safety net covering the entire population. Equity demands that public resources are used for the worst off, i.e., the poorest, as in the current approach. A research initiative investigating how best to promote development of private sector safety net structures in various forms such as insurance (life, endowment, the newly emerging micro-insurance, crop insurance), pension funds and provident funds will be of substantial policy relevance.

- The private sector in Bangladesh has substantially taken over healthcare and education for the better off sections of the population; freeing up public resources for better attention to basic healthcare and primary/secondary education for the poorer rural and urban population. A research initiative from the economics profession can usefully look into whether public resources should be spent on establishing further new tertiary education and healthcare institutions in the public sector, or instead in strengthening the existing establishments, particularly in areas of applied and basic research.
- I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to BIDS, ERG, & IGC for organizing such important and essential event within the limited time constraint.
- Thank you very much, ***Ladies and Gentleman.***