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Improving the effects of Public Private Partnerships on ultra poor households in Bangladesh

Nilufa Akhter Khanom*

Poverty is a particularly severe in Bangladesh. To achieve the national development goals and especially to reduce poverty, the government of Bangladesh has started to experiment with cooperative approaches that involve the private sector and NGOs. Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) have been introduced as one of these novel approaches and the Income Generating Vulnerable Group Development (IGVGD) is one important PPP arrangement under the Social Safety Net Programmes (SSNP) in Bangladesh. This paper reports on the effectiveness of the IGVGD programme using information obtained from a survey of 66 IGVGD households from 15 Unions of 5 Districts. The survey results show households making only an insignificant improvement in income levels and no significant development in the acquisition of new assets as a result of the IGVGD programme. Also 9 government officials, 4 NGO executives, 9 field level informants and 10 IGVGD beneficiaries were interviewed as part of the study. They provided suggestions on how to improve the effectiveness of the IGVGD partnership programmes that cover both policy design and implementation aspects. Specifically, it was thought the duration of the IGVGD partnership programme should be longer; the interest rate of NGOs' loans should be reduced; NGOs should provide timely training for Income Generation Activities (IGA) and should link IGVGD participants with their regular credit programme; and finally the procedure for selection the IGVGD participants should be corruption free.

Keywords: Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), poverty alleviation, development, ultra poor women, Bangladesh.

Paper Type: Research paper.

Field of Research: Public Policy and Poverty Alleviation.

1. Introduction

Poverty has been identified as one of the world's biggest problem. The international community recognises that reducing global poverty is one of the major development challenges of the 21st century (World Bank 2001, p.1). In 2009, it was estimated that 1.8 billion people lived on less than \$2 a day and 903 million peoples were struggling to live on less than \$1.25 a day in the Asia and the Pacific region (Asia-Pacific Regional Report 2009/2010. p. i). The problem of poverty is particularly severe in Bangladesh. The Human Development Index (HDI) ranks Bangladesh at 146 out of 182 countries; the Human Poverty Index (HPI 1) ranks Bangladesh at 112 out of 135 countries; the population below \$1.25 income a day is at 40.0 percent and that falling

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below the national poverty line is 49.8 percent (Human Development Report 2007/2008).

The government of Bangladesh, which sets out the country's broad national development agenda and strategic plans, has a growing appreciation that contemporary development challenges are complex. It believes partnerships between government, the private sector and NGOs are required as a means of making the best use of limited resources. Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) are seen by the government as an innovative and effective approach to development in Bangladesh, and thus the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) prepared by the government of Bangladesh highlights Public Private Partnerships and the need for government-NGO collaboration (Bangladesh Economic Review 2007, p. 170-171).

This paper contributes to address this major policy issue by examining the effects of the Income Generation for Vulnerable Group Development (IGVGD) programme a novel approach of PPP aimed at alleviating poverty in Bangladesh, and how to improve the effects of that PPP.

2. Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and Poverty Alleviation

2.1 What is Public Private Partnership (PPP)

A number of definitions of PPP are found in different texts and literature (for example, McQuaind 2005, Holland 1984, Huxham, 1996, Bennet and Krebs 1994, Sellgren 1990, William 1997, Collin 1998, Stern and Harding 2002, Broadbent and Leaghlin 2003, Webb and Pulle 2002, Klijn and Teisman 2004 & 2005, Greve 2003, and Linder1999). Among the most influential definitions are those of the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) and the World Bank. The Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) defined "Public Private Partnerships" as: "collaborative activities among interested groups, based on a mutual recognition of respective strengths and weaknesses, working towards common agreed objectives developed through effective and timely communication" (ADBI 2000, p. 42). The World Bank's definition of PPPs is closely aligned to that of the ADBI. The World Bank (1999, p.4) defined "Public Private Partnerships" as "joint initiatives of the public sector in conjunction with the private, for profit and not-for-profit sectors", also referred to "as the government, business and civic sector". In these partnerships, each of the actors contributes resources (financial, human, technical and intangibles, such as information or political support) and participates in the decision making process.

2.2 Why PPPs are thought to be effective for poverty alleviation?

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are seen as a significant method of promoting development (Agere 2000, p. 68). Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are assumed to be effective for development since PPPs can increase benefits through collaboration, can use scarce resources effectively, promote economic growth and enhance efficiency.

The creation of partnerships is seen as an important aspect of development through making more efficient use of scarce resources (Lewis 1997) and reducing

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bureaucracy (Healy and Robinson 1992). In relation to poverty reduction, Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff (2004) argue that the emphasis on partnership is driven by genuine interest in seeking new inter-organisational arrangements to address poverty reduction and deliver development services effectively to those who need them. Brinkerhoff (2002) identified several reasons for the potential efficiency and effectiveness of partnerships for poverty reduction. These include enhancing efficiency and effectiveness through reliance on comparative advantages and a rational division of labour, and opening up the decision making process (Brinkerhoff 2002). These features of PPPs have led many observers to regard PPPs as an effective method for poverty reduction (Carroll 1992, Clark 1991, de Janvry et al. 1989, Esman 1991, Farrington and Biggs 1990, Korten 1987, and ADBI 2000).

2.3 Government- NGOs partnerships in Bangladesh

There are several examples of successes of Government - NGO partnerships in Bangladesh, which are resulted from several strengths of NGOs in Bangladesh. The main strength of NGOs in Bangladesh is their dedicated staff, especially their field workers who have strong attachment with and commitment to the local poor (Rahman 2000). NGOs reach out to the communities with a range of development interventions. The diversity of the NGO institutions and programmes, especially in health, education and poverty reduction programmes, and the presence of educated and experienced field workers in the NGOs provide a strong base to build sustainable systems for delivering better services to the poor in Bangladesh (CIRDAP 2000).

From the experiences and successes of GK (Gono-Shayastho Kenthro- in English Peoples' Health Centre) the World Bank argues that the development outcomes for poverty reduction and basic health services would be best attained through effective partnerships in Bangladesh that involve the triangle of national Government, NGOs and local government, in which each side of the triangle acts as an equal partner that strengthens the whole framework (World Bank 2007, p. xx). These successes have encouraged the government of Bangladesh to be involved in partnerships with NGOs for poverty alleviation in Bangladesh. Thus, the government of Bangladesh has adopted a strategy of seeking collaboration from NGOs especially to address the challenges of poverty alleviation (Bangladesh Economic Review 2007, p. 169).

3. PPP Programmes for Poverty Alleviation in Bangladesh

There are several partnership programmes for poverty alleviation in Bangladesh including Social Safety Net Programmes (SSNP), Rural Micro-credit programmes (RMC), Participatory Livestock Development Programme (PLDP), Rural Infrastructure Development (RID), Youth Development (YD), and National Nutrition Programme (NNP) (*Bangladesh Economic Review 2008 and 2009*). Under the Social Safety Net Programmes (SSNP) an important initiative is the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) which is designed to address direct income poverty as well as other development issues which are related to human poverty.

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4. The IGVD Programme

4.1. An overview of VGD/ IGVD programme

The VGD programme is one of the largest social safety net programmes under the government-NGO partnership arrangements in Bangladesh. It is targeted at ultra-poorⁱ women-headed households in Bangladesh.

The VGD programme aims to reach ultra-poor rural women with complimentary inputs that will improve their nutrition, social awareness, livelihoods and self-reliance. It aims to empower and develop its participants to graduate out of poverty, hunger and deprivation.

The VGD programme has two components: (i) Income Generation for Vulnerable Group Development (IGVD) and (ii) Food Security for Vulnerable Group Development (FSVD). The components together serve 750,000 households (about 3.75 million peoples) from the ultra-poor households in Bangladesh. In the IGVD component, beneficiaries receive a monthly ration of 30 kgs of wheat or 25 kgs of fortified flour (atta) and in the FSVDⁱⁱ programme, beneficiaries receive 15 kgs of fortified wheat flour and Taka 150 (US\$1= 69.42 Taka)ⁱⁱⁱ per month.

The IGVD sees ultra-poor women as being trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty, hunger and vulnerability. It identifies ultra-poor women-headed families according to five criteria. These are: extremely food insecure families who are unable to have at least two meals a day; families who have no land or have land less than .15 acres (in these two cases, the land less will be preferred for selection); families who have very bad housing conditions; families who have no regular source of income, or who earn very low and/or have irregular income; and the essential criterion is families must be women-headed, or have no male member to earn.

Over 24 months, the IGVD development package includes:

1. Provision of complimentary food ration (either fortified wheat flour or wheat);
2. Training in social awareness, personal health, hygiene and nutrition, legal issues, and income-generating activities (IGA);
3. Savings management;
4. Access to credit to start income-generating activities (IGA); and
5. Graduation into mainstream NGO development programmes for further sustainability. (Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh 2002a).

The IGVD enables the poorest and most disadvantaged women-headed families to overcome food insecurity and provides an opportunity to empower women and bring sustainable development through income-generating activities, saving and access to credit.

The VGD is operational in 54 districts out of 64 districts across the country. However, during the 2007-2008 cycle 17 NGOs were involved in only 17 districts with the package development services of the IGVD. The package development services were implemented in partnership with the local governments, and the Department of Women Affairs (DWA) of the central government of the Bangladesh.

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4.2 Partnership management structure of the IGVGD

The IGVGD is a unique partnership programme in the way it is implemented. Implementation involves the central government, local governments, donors through the World Food Program (WFP) and the NGOs.

The central government provides financial support through the Ministry of Finance (MOF) to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA). The MOWCA is mainly responsible for the overall design, planning, monitoring and evaluation of the programme. It provides all necessary guidelines, roles and regulations.

The Department of Women Affairs (DWA) coordinates the whole programme. It is also responsible for implementation at union and upazila levels with the involvement of local government representatives (UP chairmen and members), the NGOs and Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs) - government officials at upazilla level. The DWA selects the NGOs according to set criteria of MOWCA and signs contract agreements with the selected NGOs.

The local government representatives, especially the elected women members of unions, are responsible for selecting IGVGD women from their unions according to the set criteria of MOWCA. The local government representatives, mainly the Union Parishad (UP) chairmen are responsible for collecting food grains from district food offices and distributing these food grains among the IGVGD women.

In this partnership arrangement the NGOs are involved as partners to improve the socio-economic status of the participating IGVGD women. The NGOs are mainly responsible for providing a package of development services. The development package services include Social Awareness Trainings, Income-Generating Activities (IGA), Savings Management and Access to Credit, Refresher Training and Starting IGA and Follow Up (Please see Annexure 1 for details)^{iv}. For the development services the NGOs receive Taka 425 per IGVGD woman for a 12 month contract period from the government.

The World Food Program (WFP) is mainly responsible for mobilising donor resources, and for monitoring and evaluating this programme. It is also responsible for coordinating planning and implementation with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA, 2002).

4.3 Expected outcomes of the IGVGD partnership programme

The expected outcomes of this partnership programme are:

1. By receiving a monthly food ration of 30 kgs of wheat or 25 kgs of fortified flour the poorest families will be able to ensure food security for a 24 month period;
2. The participants will be able to improve their human and social wellbeing through social awareness training; for example, they will be able to meet the vegetables and protein needs of their families by utilising IGA training such as on kitchen gardening and poultry;
3. The participants will be able to improve their level of income through utilising IGA training;

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4. The participants will be able to come out of poverty by regular earning through utilising the credit of NGOs, which would further protect their families against the vicious cycle of poverty permanently (MOWCA, 2002).

5. Methodology: A Mixed Method

This research utilised a mixed method approach - a combination of survey and semi structured interviews were used in a single research project.

5.1 The Survey and Interview

The purpose of the survey was to explore the effects of the IGVDG partnership on the sample IGVDG households to see whether the households had attained any economic and social development after their involvement in the IGVDG in the 2007-2008 cycle. The survey questionnaire included several questions on the economic and social wellbeing of the participants covering particularly the average monthly and daily household income in 2007 and 2008; changes in food intake in 2008; loan receiving behaviour during 2007-2008; and changes in ownership of cultivatable land and residential housing land in 2007 and 2008.

To investigate the effects of the IGVDG programme, 5 districts out of 17, and 15 unions from these 5 districts were selected at random. From these 15 unions sixty-six women-headed households were selected randomly for the survey. Households were selected from those that had already completed the 2007-2008 cycle of the IGVDG programme.

The purpose of the interviews was to explore ways to improve the performance of PPPs, and how to make these PPPs more effective for poverty alleviation from the practical experiences of different respondents who were involved in the policy design and implementations of these PPPs. Nine government officials, four NGO executives, nine field level informants and ten IGVDG beneficiaries were interviewed. The respondents were asked how the performance of the IGVDG PPP could be more effective for poverty alleviation and whether they had any suggestions relating to the working of this PPP.

The survey and interview data were collected from February to June 2009 and processed using SPSS and NVivo software.

6. Findings

6.1 Findings from the Survey

The survey investigated the development status of the sample households including their social and economic development after involvement in the IGVDG programme in 2007.

The survey compared the monthly average income of the households for 2007 and 2008. It found that there was small improvement in monthly income of those households. The percentage of households which had an average monthly income of less than taka (Tk.) 3,000 decreased from 47.0 percent in 2007 to 34.8 percent in

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2008. The percentage of households which had an average monthly income of Tk. 3,000 to 5,000 increased from 34.8 percent in 2007 to 47.0 percent in 2008. Table 1 below shows a comparison of the monthly incomes of the sample households in the years 2007 and 2008. It also shows a comparison of the daily average income in US dollars. The daily income of the sample households with less than US \$1.43 decreased from 47.0 percent in 2007 to 34.8 percent in 2008; the daily income of those within US \$1.43 to US \$ 2.38 increased from 34.8 percent in 2007 to 47.0 percent in 2008, and the daily income of those within US \$2.38 to US \$ 3.34 increased from 16 percent in 2007 to 16.7 percent in 2008. These figures indicate a slight improvement in daily income among the sample IGVGD households in 2008 after involvement in the IGVGD in 2007.

Table 1: Monthly and daily average income of sample IGVGD households in 2007 and 2008

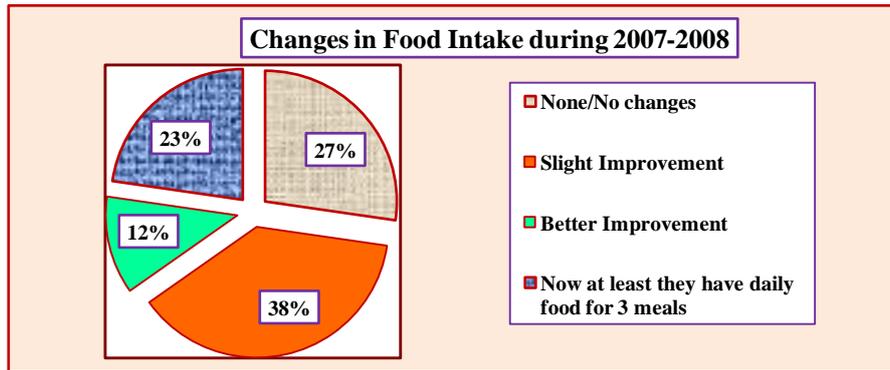
Monthly average income	Daily income in US \$ in 2007 ^v	Percentage of sample households in 2007	Daily income in US \$ in 2008 ^{vi}	Percentage of sample households in 2008
Less than TK. 3,000	Less than \$ 1.43	47.0	Less than \$ 1.46	34.8
TK. 3,000 to 5,000	\$ 1.43 - \$ 2.38	34.8	\$ 1.46 – \$ 2.43	47.0
TK 5,000 to 7,000	\$ 2.38 - \$ 3.34	16.0	\$ 2.43 - \$ 3.40	16.7
TK 7,000 to 10,000	\$ 3.34- \$ 4.77	2.2	\$ 3.40 - \$4.86	1.5

It also shows that 34.8 percent of sample households were not in the extreme poverty with daily income of more than US \$1.25 a day according to the new International Poverty Line set by the World Bank (World Bank, 2008); and most sample households (47.0 percent) were out of poverty in 2008 with the daily average income between US \$1.46 to \$2.43.

One expected outcome of this partnership IGVGD was the assurance of food security for vulnerable families. To explore this aspect the survey asked about changes in food intake in 2008 after involvement in the IGVGD in 2007. There were no perceived changes in 27.0 percent of sample households. However, 23.0 percent said that while they did not have any food security before involvement in the IGVGD programme, they now had food for 3 meals a day. There were slight positive improvements reported in 38.0 percent of households and even comparatively better improvements reported in 12.0 percent households. In total, the results reveal that there was a positive impact on food intake in 73.0 percent of sample households. It also shows that the IGVGD programme was effective in ensuring food security for 23.0 percent of its beneficiaries who had no such security before involvement in the IGVGD. Figure 1 shows the details of changes in food security resulting from the IGVGD programme in 2008.

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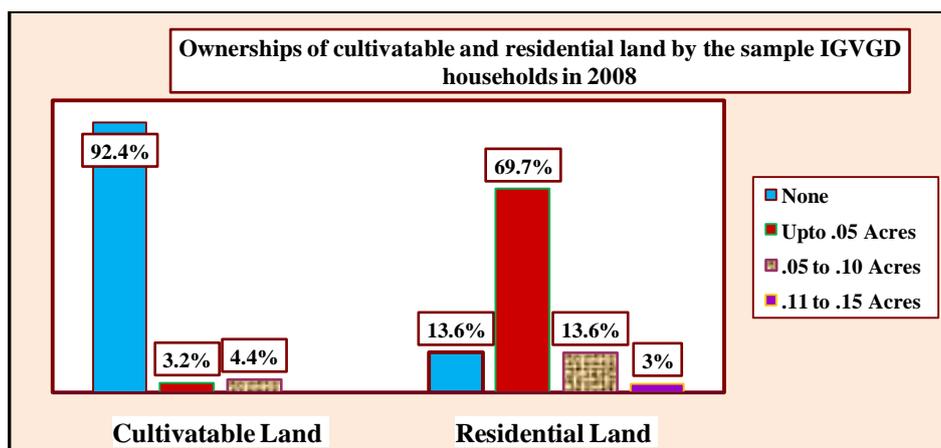
Figure 1: Changes in food intake in the sample IGVD households during 2007-2008



The survey looked at the total cultivatable and residential lands possessed by the sample households in 2008 after involvement in the IGVD programme in 2007. The results are summarised in Figure 2.

The survey found that 92.4 percent of sample households owned no cultivatable land, and only 7.6 (3.2+4.4) percent owned cultivatable land between .01 and .10 acres. It was also found that 13.6 percent of the sample IGVD households owned no residential land; 69.7 percent had up to .05 acres of residential land; 13.6 percent owned .05-.10 acres of residential land; and only 3.0 percent owned .11 to .15 acres of residential land. The sample IGVD households had the same profile of ownership of cultivatable and residential land before involvement in the IGVD programme in 2007. It is evident from the survey results that there was no apparent change in the ownership of land between 2007 and 2008. Thus, the IGVD had no effect on land ownership among the participating households.

Figure 2: Ownerships of cultivatable and residential land by the IGVD households in 2008



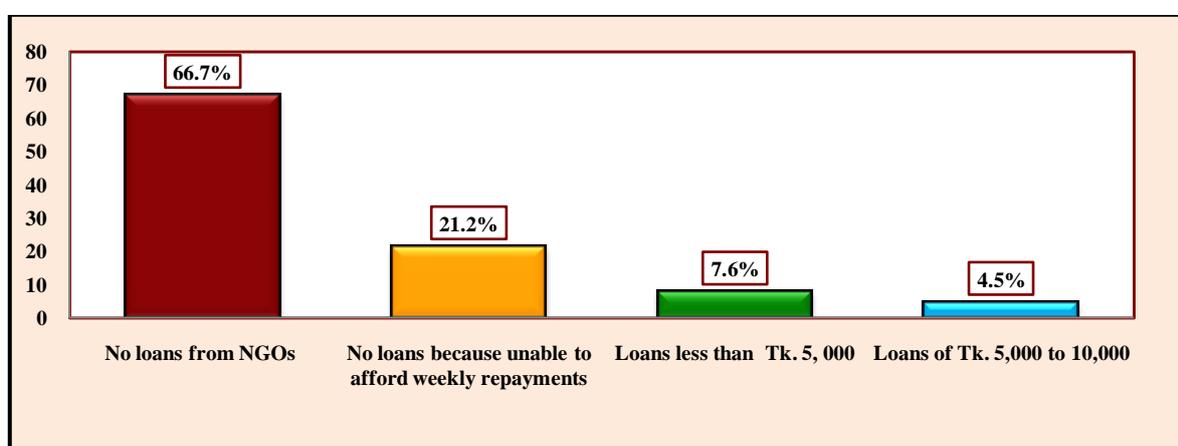
The Figure 2 shows the ownerships of cultivatable land and residential land by the IGVD households in 2008 which was same in 2007.

It was expected that the IGVD participants would be able to come out of their poverty cycle by joining the NGOs regular credit programme through regular

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earnings from investment of that loan money. To explore whether the participants had joined the regular credit programmes of the NGOs, participants were asked whether they received loans from the NGOs. Figure 3 shows the details of the survey results. It was found that 87.9 (66.7+21.2) percent of IGVGD participants did not receive any loans from the NGOs. Among them 66.7 percent of the participants said that the NGOs did not provide them with any loans, though NGOs had to provide access to credit according to the criteria of development package services, and though the IGVGD participants were interested to receive loans from the NGOs; and 21.2 percent said that they did not receive loans, since they were very poor and they would not be able to afford weekly repayments given the high interest rates attaching to the loans. The survey found that only 12.1 (7.6+4.5) percent of the sample IGVGD participants took loans from the NGOs.

Figure 3: Loans received from the NGOs by the sample IGVGD participants during 2007-2008



6.2 Findings from the Interviews

To explore potential improvement of the PPPs the different respondents were asked how the performance of the IGVGD PPP could be more effective for poverty alleviation and whether they had any suggestions relating to this particular PPP.

Of the respondents', the nine government officials were directly involved in policy design. Four of the nine government respondents', four NGO executives and nine field level informants were directly involved in implementation. The nine field level informants included four Upazilla Nirbahi Officers (UNOs), two Union Parishad (UP) Chairmen, and three NGO supervisors. The beneficiaries were direct recipients of the effects of the IGVGD PPP.

In response to the questions the respondents mainly mentioned several issues relating to policy design and implementation of the IGVGD PPP. They particularly mentioned the duration of the IGVGD programme, the rate of interest of the NGOs' loan money, corruption in the procedure for selecting the IGVGD participants and the lack of commitments by the NGOs in providing IGA training and credits to the IGVGD participants.

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Six (66%) of the nine government respondents, two (50%) of the four NGO executives, six (66%) of the nine field level informants and three (30%) of the ten IGVDG beneficiaries believed that the current design of the IGVDG was not effective enough for real poverty alleviation. It needed modification in several ways. For example, they thought the duration of the IGVDG programme needed to be longer, since they believed that two years was not enough to bring any sustainable development to the lives of poor people. Further, they thought that after two years no one cared anymore and thought about the IGVDG participants and their development. For example, one respondent said,

IGVDG/VGD programmes are for only 2 years. But it is not possible to bring any remarkable changes within two years in the life style of a poor family.

They suggested that the IGVDG programme should be continued for a longer period. For example, one respondent said,

If government is really interested to alleviate the poverty of that group of people and really wants to bring any sustainable development in their lives through the IGVDG, then it should be at least for 5 to 6 years or even for 10 years.

The respondents mentioned the rates of interest of the NGO's loan money. Six (66%) of the nine government respondents, two (50%) of the four NGO executives, eight (89%) of the nine field level informants and nine (90%) of the ten IGVDG beneficiaries believed that the interest rates of the NGO loan money were very high and suggested that it should be lower than the current rate. They also believed that if the rate of interest was lower, then more poor people would take loans and poor people would also benefit more from them. For example, one respondent said,

The rate of interest of loans should be reduced below than the current rate, so that the ultimate borrower can get more help from that loan.

The beneficiaries further mentioned that they were afraid of taking loans due to the high rates of interest. For example, one participant said,

If we could get loans at low rates then we could take loans. We could do some things for the business of my son and husband with the loans. Now, the rate of interest is very high, so we are afraid to take loans, we are afraid of weekly instalment. If we could not pay then what will happen.

They further suggested that government should provide loans with lower interest rates to the ultra-poor families through the Department of Social instead of going through NGOs, since they believed the NGOs charged more interest.

The respondents reported the lack of commitments of the NGOs to the programme's implementation. Five (56%) of the nine government officials and six (66%) of the nine field level informants strongly believed that NGOs did not provide appropriate IGA training, they did not provide training in a timely manner, and most times, they did not provide loans to the IGVDG participants. For example, one respondent said,

NGOs should be more supportive, and their training programmes should be more elaborate. They must link these IGVDG women with their regular credit programmes... But currently NGOs are not doing their job properly. I can say, as I know they do not provide any loans to the IGVDG women.

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Six (60%) of the ten IGVD beneficiaries mentioned the loan providing behaviour of the NGOs, specifically that NGOs were not interested in providing them with loans. They believed that NGOs were not really interested in providing loans as they were poor, the NGOs perceived such behaviour as risky. They suggested that NGOs should be more supportive, sincere and committed to provide IGA training, and linking the IGVD participants to the regular credit programmes of the NGOs.

Four (44%) of the nine government officials, three (75%) of the four NGO executives, six (67%) of the nine field level informants and three (30%) of the ten IGVD beneficiaries spoke of the corruption of the local UP chairmen and members, particularly of the corruption in selecting the IGVD participants. Specifically, all (100%) UNOs reported receiving complaints from several IGVD participants on bribery in distributing VGD cards. They strongly believed that UP chairmen and members should be more neutral and corruption free in selecting IGVD participants, since most times the selection was influenced by the local political leaders and the political affiliation of the IGVD participants. They emphasised that due to political bias the real poor were mostly not selected for the IGVD. Therefore, the respondents strongly suggested that the selection of the IGVD participants should be impartial, non-political and corruption free. As one respondent said,

Local government people [UP chairmen and members] should be more neutral and corruption free. They should not always think politically. What usually happens, when they are involved in any programme, they want to involve their political supporters and politically affiliated persons rather than really poor people. They always think about getting some financial benefits. However, real poverty alleviation programmes should not be so political; and they [UP chairmen and members] should be neutral and corruption free, and should think about the benefits for the real poor people, not about their own benefits.

7. Conclusion

The problem of poverty is particularly severe in Bangladesh. Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) have been introduced as a novel approach to poverty alleviation in Bangladesh. PPPs are assumed to be effective for development since PPPs increase benefits through collaboration, can use scarce resources effectively, promote economic growth and enhance efficiency. The IGVD is one of the important PPP arrangements under the Social Safety Net Programmes (SSNP) in Bangladesh. This paper has reported the results of the IGVD programme from the survey of 66 IGVD households which had completed the 2007-2008 IGVD cycle from 15 unions of 5 districts; and also the results from the interviews of 9 government officials, 4 NGO executives, 9 field level informants and 10 IGVD beneficiaries.

The aims of the IGVD partnership programme is to bring sustainable development to the lives of ultra-poor households in Bangladesh by different complimentary inputs, such as food rationing, social awareness and IGA trainings, and access to the credit programmes of NGOs. The expected outcomes of this programme were to ensure immediate food security, improve food intake, improve income, and acquire assets.

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The survey results revealed differential success in achieving the IGVGD programme goals. IGVGD was effective for ensuring food security. However, the survey results show an insignificant improvement in income levels and in the acquisition of new assets by sample households. Moreover, though the IGVGD partnership programme aimed to involve poor women in the regular credit programmes of NGOs to improve their income, this survey results revealed that most of sample IGVGD participating women were not involved in the NGOs credit programme.

The interviews revealed that the IGVGD PPP needed some changes in policy design, such as the duration of the IGVGD programme should be longer, and the interest rates of the NGO's loan money should be reduced. Further, the NGOs should be more committed in implementation particularly in providing IGA training and linking IGVGD women with regular credit programmes of the NGOs and the selection procedure of the IGVGD should be corruption free to make the IGVGD PPP more effective for the poverty alleviation in Bangladesh.

Endnotes

ⁱ Ultra-poor is the term usually used in most literature to address the poor women who are selected for the IGVGD programme in Bangladesh.

ⁱⁱ FSVGD is only operational in seven districts in Northern Bangladesh: Dinajpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Naogaon, Rajshahi, Panchagarh and Thakurgaon. These areas are 'monga' (Bangla name for a near famine situation) prone areas where the level of food insecurity is very high.

ⁱⁱⁱ US dollar = 69.42Taka according to the Bangladesh Bank exchange rate on 30 June, 2010.

^{iv} **Annexure 1: The Development Package Services of NGOs**

There are five different steps in the provision of the Development Package Services of NGOs. These are as follows:

Social Awareness Training: The IGVGD women receive formal classroom based social awareness training on different social and health issues. These issues are personal health and hygiene such as using safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation; prevention from basic diseases such as Diarrhoea, Tuberculosis and HIV; immunisation and child health; schooling of the children, food and nutrition; natural disaster management; women's empowerment such as legal rights of women, marriage and marriage registration, dowry, divorce, and birth registration.

Income-Generating Activities (IGA): The NGOs provide IGA skills training on at least five issues: poultry rearing, cow and goat rearing, kitchen gardening, pisciculture and entrepreneurship. The NGOs are responsible for developing training modules and providing trainers. The NGOs also ensure that each woman receives at least one of the IGA skills training programme plus the compulsory entrepreneurship development training through formal classroom training sessions.

Savings Management and Access to Credit: The NGOs provide training to the women participating in the IGVGD programme on how to save some money and how to manage weekly savings. They are also responsible for providing access to a credit programme in which formal security for the cash advances is not required from the IGVGD women.

Refresher Training: The NGOs then provide refresher training on different social and health awareness issues and the IGA subjects mentioned above.

Starting IGA and Follow Up: The NGOs are also responsible for monitoring whether the participating IGVGD women have started any income generating activities (IGA). The NGOs follow up the women's progress on IGAs during the contract period of 12 months.

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^v According to the exchange rate of 2007, 1 US\$ = 69.86 taka (in July 09, 2007); source: www.worldbank.org.bd/bds

^{vi} According to the exchange rate of 2008, 1 US\$ = 68.57 taka (in June 20, 2008); source: www.worldbank.org.bd/bds

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