

# Policy Brief 4: Post-2015 Development Agenda

## Key Points

- ◆ The extremely poor has limited livelihood assets and options, which are being severely effected by climate change impacts
- ◆ Social deprivation and adverse ecology are aggravating both income and human poverty in the HTR areas
- ◆ A resilient livelihood approach must increase the ability to anticipate risk, capacity to organized and act collectively and capacity to learn and change the strategies and actions for sustained outcomes
- ◆ Reform of government's fiscal policy to invest more on health, education, infrastructure and human resources for the HTR areas
- ◆ Improve skills and employment for the poor in rural and urban setting
- ◆ More social protection and safety net for the extremely poor
- ◆ Climate resilient livelihood and disaster proofing in the HTR areas
- ◆ Improve communication and infrastructure
- ◆ Resource transfer and technologies for the poor, and
- ◆ Small enterprise development and market linkage.

## Resilient livelihood for the Extreme Poor of the HTR Area of Bangladesh

### Background

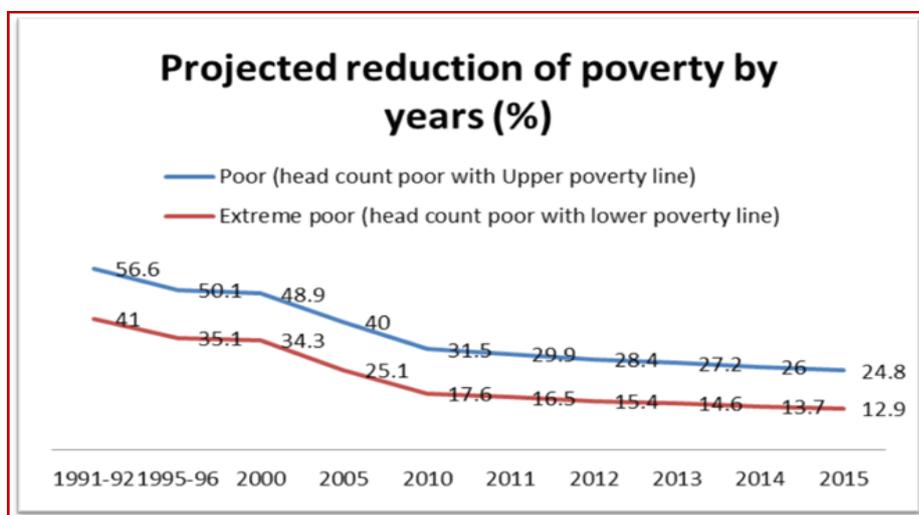
There has been some positive trend in poverty reduction globally, regionally and nationally. The number of people living in poverty has come down to 836 million in 2015 from 1.9 billion in 1990. In Bangladesh, poverty ratio has come down to 24.8% (GED 2015) from 42% in 2000. Still millions live in extreme poverty in the hard to reach areas (HTR) and in the climate affected zone e.g., coastal area and off-shore islands, haor basin, riverine charland, hill areas, drought prone upland and in urban slums. Many of them do not have good employment, adequate income, access to safe water and sanitation, health service and suffer from insecurity, deprivation and injustice. Human induced rapid climate change are affecting their lives and livelihoods making them most vulnerable. The poor has very limited livelihood assets, capacity

and options, which are affected by many externalities including market force and climate change making the livelihoods and outcomes fragile and un-sustainable. This process pushes them into poverty trap associated with different insecurities and uncertainty. Three main aspects have been identified in relation to poverty dynamics in Bangladesh.

- First, extreme poverty decreased quite dramatically in both rural and urban areas since 1990.
- Second, the rate of extreme poverty reduction has been faster in the decade of 2000s compared to the 1990s in both rural and urban areas.
- Third, the proportionate share of extreme poor in total poor at the national level has diminished with the passage of time, especially in the second half of the 2000s.

Poverty reduction trends and projections of two decades

Figure 1: Poverty Reduction Trends in Bangladesh



Various efforts are being made by government, NGOs and development agencies to protect livelihoods of the poor with limited results. Christian Aid and their partners in Bangladesh are working with poor, vulnerable community and local government institutions in HTR areas adopting systematic approach to make their livelihood options profitable, adaptive and sustainable. The UN has set global goals for eradication poverty and hunger by 2030. This will drive the government and actors to act collectively with the pledge for zeroing poverty and enhancing sustainable livelihoods resilient to internal and external shocks.

**Resilient Livelihood Framework**

The concept of resilience is relatively new. In the late 80s, the drought cycle management approach was developed by NGOs working in the pastoralist sector, as a result of an increased realization that droughts were not one-off events that inconveniently interrupted long-term development, but were affected by climate cycles and climate change. In the late 90s, the sustainable livelihoods approach explicitly linked resilience with sustainability. However, it was not until disaster risk reduction approaches influenced development thinking in the early 2000s that a more general acknowledgement of risk cycles and their potential application to risks other than drought began to emerge. Christian Aid, UK sought to build on this through its inclusion of a climate risk cycle management approach in the Adaptation Toolkits in 2008 (Christian Aid, 2009).

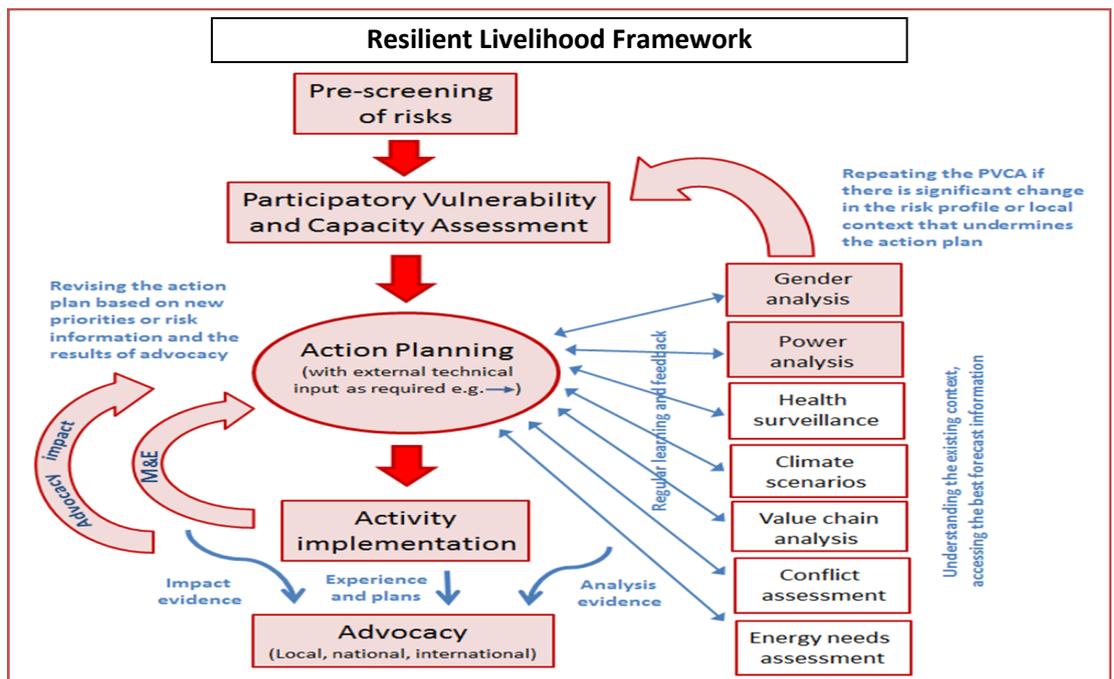
Chambers and Conway (1992) defined a livelihood system as comprising the capabilities, assets (including both materials and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. The sustainable livelihoods framework has been framed considering vulnerability context, which includes seasonality, trends and shocks. Carney (1998) explains that a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resources base. The concept of resilience was attached with livelihood framework in the face of increasing disaster risk and climate change impacts. Resilience has been described as the capacity of people or systems to cope with stresses and shocks.

Hence, a resilient livelihood is one that enables people to feed, clothe, house, educate and take care of themselves and their household with dignity, and to build up savings and/or other resources. This enables them to prepare for and cope with shocks and to adapt proactively to new and emerging threats and longer-term changes in their context.

Christian Aid proposes a resilience livelihood framework which considers assets, capability, vulnerability, resilience, productivity and human well-being as the core elements. The theoretical underpinning of the framework of resilience livelihood focuses on the importance of building assets as a process of livelihoods development and the pressure and release model (PAR), which demonstrates the necessity of addressing both the structural causes and the dynamic pressures that give rise to higher risk and increasingly stressful conditions. The common principles of the resilient systems are:

- Increasing the ability to anticipate risk. Addressing those that can be anticipated requires an understanding of forecasts, their reliability and managing the uncertainty they contain.
- Increasing the capacity to organize and act collectively to address the drivers of poverty and risk, following the priorities established by the community through local planning processes, and
- Increasing the capacity to learn and change, especially to transform institutions, governance and regulation, market systems or social processes that may be increasing risk or creating obstacles to the desired pathway out of poverty. The figure 2 shows the key components and steps of promoting resilient livelihood.

**Figure 2: Resilient Livelihood Framework**



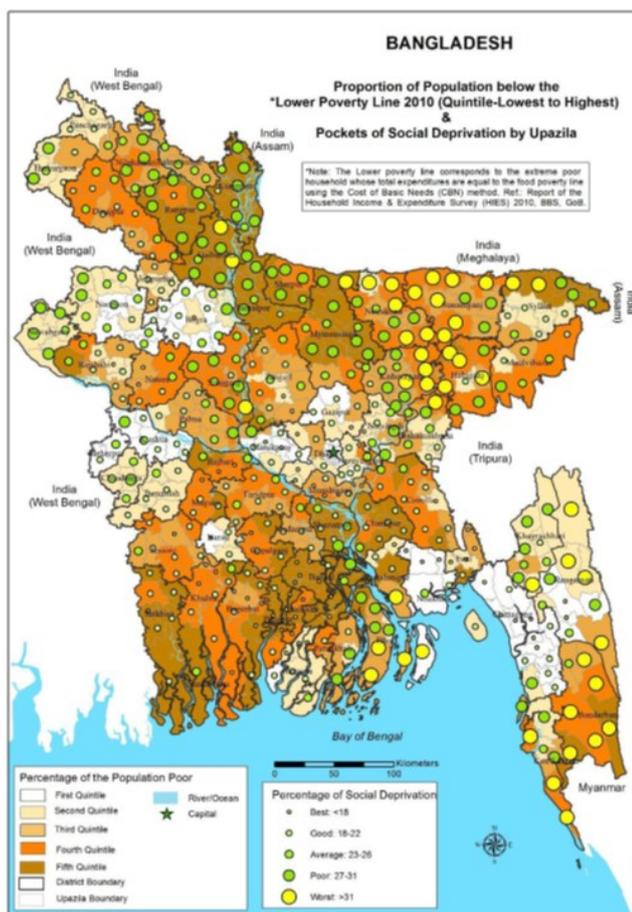
## Hard to Reach (HTR) Areas and Extreme Poverty

HTR area is defined practically in Bangladesh by taking into account of geographical locations communication, social aspects and development deficit.

There are many isolated communities who are very inaccessible than general communities. Millions of extreme poor live in the HTR areas. The Bangladesh map shows the concentration of poverty in the HTR areas. These groups are scattered and live in different places of the country. The multi-dimensional poverty has four main causes:

- Lack of economic opportunity, relates to low or exclusionary economic growth, the level and distribution of physical assets, human capital or social assets, and market opportunities which determine the returns of these assets.
- Low human capabilities, relates to levels of health, education and organizational capacity.
- Lack of empowerment, relates to the inability of poor and marginalized people to influence the social processes and state institutions that shape resource allocations and public policy choices which directly affect their livelihoods.
- Low level of security, relates to exposure to risks due to natural disasters or income shocks, which may arise at the national, local, household or individual level.

**Map 1: Concentration of Poverty in HTR Areas**



## Box-1: Six Principles of Resilient Livelihood

**A resilient livelihood system should have the following features:**

**Sustainable:** supports social and economic development in ways that are productive, profitable and environmentally-sound, enhancing rather than depleting the natural, social and physical resources upon which it depends.

**Profitable:** empowers its operator to gain fair profits and increased value from labour and productivity, leading to a growing and more predictable income. Women and men therefore gain an equitable and predictable share of the value from their labour and production, enabling them both to meet their basic needs and build up savings for the future.

**Risk and Resource Management:** is less damaged by sudden shocks, recurring risks and incremental stresses. Implicit in reducing vulnerability and increasing the capacity to respond is the importance of access to resources, or buffers, that can be mobilised when needed. In consequence, women and men are able to manage resources to cope with currently-known shocks and stresses, and take advantage of new opportunities, whether physical, social, political or economic.

**Adaptable:** can respond to identified current and predicted future impacts of both risks and stresses, and has the capacity to adapt to these changes to and navigate future uncertainty. Women and men are then able to protect and/or transform the ways they make a living to adjust to known and unknown risks.

**Voice:** enables a greater and more influential voice in decisions that affect their livelihoods, enhancing rather than undermining the voice and empowerment achieved by others in the same area or community. This leads to more access to and control over resources and the social and political conditions affecting them.

**Health and Wellbeing:** enhances and protects the health of its operator, facilitating greater access to quality, affordable and relevant health services so that more time and resources can be invested in building a thriving, sustainable livelihood. This allows people to live with dignity, without compromising their health.

## Resilient Livelihood Options in the HTR Areas

Bangladesh has opted for a coordinated approach to achieving high growth in the medium term with a major shift in its development planning process for equitable and inclusive social development. The Vision 2021 and the Perspective Plan have prioritized poverty alleviation, social safety Net and DRR are key areas of actions, which may contribute to addressing extreme poverty in the rural areas and in the city slums. The present government in its election manifesto adopted a set of development goals under 'Vision 2021' reflecting the long-term objectives of the country and covering both the economic and social sectors. The SDGs goals 1, 2 and 3 are

concerned about poverty alleviation, reducing hunger and livelihood security.

The consultation of resilient livelihood has identified the following recommendations:

- Reform of the fiscal policy to improve income distribution
- Spending on health and education for quality of life and skilled human resources targeting the extreme poor in the HTR areas
- Improve skills and employment for the poor in rural and urban setting
- More social protection and safety net for the extremely poor
- Climate resilient livelihood and disaster proofing in the HTR areas
- Improve communication and infrastructure
- Resource transfer and technologies for the poor, and
- Small enterprise development and market linkage.

The following sections suggest location and ecosystems specific livelihood options.

**Coastal Area:** Saline tolerant paddy and vegetable gardening, hanging and floating gardening, integrated fish culture, crab fattening, boat and net marketing, tailoring and making sweet-meat packets, goat, pig and lamb rearing, bee rearing and honey collection

**Riverine Charland:** Small agriculture, short duration crop, flood tolerant deep water paddy, crop suitable for sandy soil like pumpkin and watermelon, cow and goat rearing, poultry, growth centre and market promotion.

Non-agriculture include duck hatchery, bamboo basket making, boat making, fish trap making, fish drying and processing, tailoring, duck poultry, livestock rearing

**Haor:** Duck, poultry, livestock, fish drying, processing and marketing, rice husking and trading, small business and trading, basket making, cane work.

**Barind tract:** Horticulture, drought-tolerant paddy and vegetable cultivation, integrated fish, poultry livestock and vegetable. Non-agriculture: microcredit and resource transfer, access to land, water bodies and productive resources, tailoring for the women, training and skill development, health service for reducing risk from heat stresses and cold

**Chittagong Hill Tracts:** Horticulture, environmental friendly Jhum cultivation, livestock, pig, goat, cow, hand looming, duck and hen rearing

**Urban slum:** Microcredit and resource transfer, skill development for business and trade, promoting employment promotion through skill development, skill training for waste to energy, improving WATSAN, health, access to food and energy, increasing safety net etc.

#### References:

Chambers and Conway (1992): Implementing the sustainable rural livelihoods approach. Chapter 1 in D. Carney, editor. *Sustainable rural livelihoods: What contribution can we make?* Department for International Development, London, UK.

Christian Aid (2012): Programme Practice: Resilient Livelihoods Framework, UK.



## BANGLADESH CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

House 10, Road 16A, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh  
Tel: (88-02) 9848124 – 27, 9852904, 9851237; Fax: (88-02) 9851417  
E-mail: info@bcas.net Website: www.bcas.net