

A country without poverty

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At the time of Bangladesh's independence, the poverty rate was 80 percent. And according to BBS calculations in 2022, the general poverty rate of Bangladesh is 18.7 percent and the extreme poverty rate is 5.6 percent. Our progress against poverty has surprised the world. Bangladesh is now a role model for the world in poverty alleviation. Keeping this progress in poverty alleviation, the government has set a target of making Bangladesh poverty-free by 2041. Vision 2041, set by the government, aims to eradicate extreme poverty (less than 3%) by 2031 and elevate Bangladesh to a high-income country by 2041, with poverty at its lowest (less than 5%). The government aims that by 2041, all working citizens will be able to maintain a minimum standard of living with the income they receive from their employment, and that those who cannot participate in the labor market due to old age or physical incapacity will be brought under the social safety net. Adequate funds will be provided by the government for the purchase of materials required to maintain the minimum standards. The challenges in achieving this are vast and the risks are many.

Rural and urban poverty is decreasing rapidly in our country. Extreme poverty is decreasing more rapidly than general poverty. However, poverty is still higher in the south-western region than in the eastern region of the country. The rate of poverty reduction in Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions is low. Dhaka and Chattogram infrastructural development, movement of labor and goods, health and education opportunities are much higher than other regions of the country, so the poverty rate is low here. The number of households benefiting from foreign remittances is also high. At the national level, rural-to-urban migration within the country helps alleviate poverty. This creates job opportunities for immigrants and more income opportunities. However, due to unplanned urbanization, the capital Dhaka and its surrounding districts, especially Narayanganj, Gazipur and Narsingdi, have been under pressure. There are other infrastructure issues including housing, transport, water supply, sanitation and sewage. The government is already taking the necessary measures to alleviate poverty. It has not been possible to develop urban services in the cities of the western region. Padma Bridge is one such strategic investment that is accelerating development and will play an important role in alleviating poverty in the region along with creating employment. The government has planned to send one thousand workers abroad from each upazila per year, considering the development of all regions of the country. Thus, the flow of remittances will spread to all regions of the country. The number of families receiving remittance benefits will increase, which will play an important role in poverty alleviation. In the last five decades, 1.3 million workers have gone abroad from Bangladesh. Most of them are from the eastern part of the country.

Climate change and natural disasters have a negative impact on poverty. Poverty rates are higher in districts affected by climate change and disaster prone districts. The people of these districts are deprived of the opportunity to participate in the labor market due to lack of education, training and information. Also, it is not possible for the people of these districts to carry out the high cost of migration. As a result, the desired level of poverty alleviation is hindered. Most of the country's 15 poorest districts are vulnerable to climate change, including deforestation and river erosion. Employment in agriculture is decreasing day by day. Here, technological progress and mechanization are increasing production, reducing costs. On the other hand, real wages in agriculture are increasing which is playing an important role in poverty alleviation. Increasing off-farm alternative employment and income is increasing rural income, which is playing a significant role in improving the quality of life of the poor. The garment sector is playing an important role in poverty alleviation. Some other such labor intensive manufacturing sectors are playing an important role in poverty alleviation. Skilled manpower in these sectors needs to keep pace with

changing technology and employment structures. For this, the necessary skills must be mastered. The most difficult will be to turn the poor population into human resources. The government has already taken necessary steps to extend the benefits of the city to the villages. The government has given highest priority to ensure balanced development of the country. Special importance is being given for the development of the regions which are lagging behind due to geographical location and environment of the country. Efforts are being made to alleviate poverty by creating employment through infrastructural development and elimination of labour-intensive industries. Attention is being given to ensure that marginalized people do not get caught in the trap of poverty. Necessary steps are being taken to combat income inequality. It is an ongoing and long-term process. The government has special plans to improve the quality of life of the marginalized communities of hill districts, Hijra communities, ethnic minorities, disabled people, sex workers, street children, Bada communities, slum dwellers etc. who are outside the mainstream. In past plans, the development of the most vulnerable sections of the society was looked at from the perspective of social protection. In Vision 2041, no one will be left behind to achieve prosperity, everyone must move forward. By 2041, Bangladesh will be a developed country, with a per capita income of more than \$12,500. Bangladesh will be a golden Bangladesh, where poverty will be a thing of the distant past. And the people will be the beneficiaries and they will be the main driving force of the growth and transformation process.

The current government is working towards building a developed and prosperous Bangladesh free from hunger and poverty. Bangabandhu's dream was that the country would be self-reliant. People's education, nutrition, employment and housing will be guaranteed. The country is now on it's way. Having successfully overcome a critical period of the Covid-19 global epidemic, Bangladesh is moving forward to achieve it's goals according to it's own plan. Bangladesh will be a poverty-free country in 2041, Bangladesh is moving forward with this goal.

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