

Food Accessibility of the Rural “Hardcore Poor” Households: An Assessment of Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) Programme

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Problem

Direct targeted transfers and public works programmes are safety nets measures that have been used in Bangladesh for the past 35 years (N. Carlo Del, July 2000). These self-targeting programmes have been widely used to fight poverty by providing low-wage work, in cash, kind or a combination of the two, to those who need it. These are programmes aimed at supporting the income and consumption of the most vulnerable groups in society and they are designed to protect a person or household against chronic poverty and transient poverty (Subbarao, et. al., 1997). Chronic poverty arises from the chronic inability (due to mental/physical disability, prolonged illness or old age) to work and earn, while a decline in the capacity to work and earn results in transient poverty. This decline can be due to economic shocks, poor harvests or even the death of a bread-earner.

Bangladesh boasts a wide array of targeted food assistance programmes that strive to achieve a number of important developmental objectives. Findings from the 2000 Household Income and Expenditure Survey suggest that these programmes are reasonably well-targeted towards the poor. Most of the pro-poor targeting is due to targeting the poor within communities rather than central actions to targeting poor areas.

In Bangladesh, there is several targeted food distribution programmes aimed at increasing the income and the level of food consumption of beneficiaries financed by govt. and various donor agencies. A good example of a targeting programme in Bangladesh is the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme, in which, the beneficiaries are directly identified. VGD beneficiaries are poor women who are selected directly by program administrators and they receive an income subsidy in the form of grain. While this method allows for the needy to be chosen as beneficiaries, the involvement of officials in the selection process leaves the scope for less than efficient targeting.

Food is a basic human need and plays a crucial role in the agro-based economy of Bangladesh, where a large proportion of the income of the population is allocated to food. The first and foremost responsibility of the State is to ensure an uninterrupted supply of food to all people at all time. According to the Article-15(a) of the constitution of Bangladesh, it shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State to secure its citizens to the provision of basic necessities of food. As per Government's Allocation of Business, it is the duty of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management to establish a dependable food security system for the nation.

The goal of the first national food policy, which was adopted in 1988, was to achieve food security for all people by increasing food production and attaining self-sufficiency. The Government of Bangladesh, in accordance with the World Food Summit Declaration of 1996 and the Millennium Development Goals (2000) has set its target at reducing the number of poor people to half by the year 2015.

Achieving this target will require addressing all aspects of food security: (i) greater efficiency of domestic agriculture and enhanced availability of food, (ii) assistance to attain increased food access by the food insecure, (iii) sustained increase in the incomes of the poor and the distressed to enhance their access to food, iv) adequate supply of safe food, and v) appropriate programs to reduce malnutrition through increased effectiveness and proper utilization of the consumed food.

Food policy in the Bangladesh context is a multi-sectoral issue involving several ministries and agencies, who through their respective programs and strategies, aim to achieve the common goal of establishing a dependable food security system. In this way, attaining food security will be possible through a coordinated implementation of the programs of all concerned ministries and agencies (as set in the national plan of action for food security framed in association with all concerned ministries in the light of the approved national food policy).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Now-a-days, traditional security issues have turned into a new dimension like non-traditional security. Non-traditional security issues in Bangladesh are threats to societal security, threats to economic security, and environmental security. Threats to economic security include poverty and food security amongst others. Therefore, food security interventions should be targeted to the extremely poor people whose primary concern is food. These are people who spend most of their income on food and who would otherwise remain trapped in a situation of chronic food crisis.

“Target group oriented programs and projects” like “Microcredit”, “Small farmer development projects”, “VGD” and “RD” can increase access of disadvantaged groups to inputs and services (S. Ahmed, 2000). Therefore, it is evident that these types of poverty alleviation programmes are planned in such a way that the mechanism allows the govt. and the donors to channel funds towards specific poverty alleviation activities according to their priorities and preferences as well as the driven demand from the beneficiaries.

Food security interventions should target extremely poor people whose primary concern is food. These are people who spend most of their income on food and who would otherwise remain trapped in a situation of chronic food crisis. It is these people that WFP tries to target through food-assisted programs such as the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD). In these activities, food acts as a life vest to lift up and keep otherwise destitute Bangladeshis above the chronic poverty line. Food meets their immediate nutritional needs and relieves them from a situation of food distress and allows greater opportunities for participation in development-oriented activities.

1.3. Illustration of the Problem

Today's acute world food situation is shaped by volatility of food prices, low growth in agricultural productivity, and severe constraints on access to investment capital for agriculture. Countries like Bangladesh are, even in normal times, vulnerable to pressures applied by donors of aid like the United States, and more so when they are faced with the prospect of natural or manmade famines, and when the aid sought is food. Such pressures have generally been related to specific issues of economic policy, though no doubt having political implications. Therefore, any food crisis, whenever occurs, the most sufferings goes to the vulnerable groups who have no purchasing power existing in market.

The recent economic recession, started in 2007 caused inflation rate higher (In Bangladesh, during 2008 it reached to double digit) result in excluding the poor from the market. The sharp rise in global food prices in 2007–08 severely undermined the nutrition security of the poor, provoked social and political instability, and increased competition for already limited natural resources. Therefore, overcoming the world food and agriculture crisis through policy change, it is the responsibility of the govt. to ensure food accessibility of the vulnerable groups.

Adolfo Brizzi, World Bank Sector Manager for Agriculture & Rural Development (according to the World Bank report on April, 2008) talks about the need for a revival of agriculture in South Asia. Brizzi believes that while it is important to mitigate the impact of higher food prices on poor consumers, this situation also brings to the forefront an opportunity to revive the agriculture sector so as to generate the needed supply response for enduring food security by taking more government programs for feeding the vulnerable people. That is why, to ensure the accessibility of food by the hardcore poor govt. must have some initiatives as well as reforming food and agricultural policies.

The primary objective of WFP's food aid programs in Bangladesh is to attain sustainable improvements in food security and nutrition for ultra-poor households. For example, food-for-work beneficiaries were found to have a higher calorie intake than cash-for-work beneficiaries (2488 compared to 2183 kcal/cap/day), and a VGD beneficiary was found to consume 1624 kcal per day compared to a non-VGD beneficiary from a similar income group who consumed 1513 kcal per day (World Food Program,2003).

A number of studies conducted in Bangladesh and other developing countries suggest that the poor tend to have a higher marginal propensity to consume food (MPC) out of food transfers than cash transfers or increased cash income (Ahmed 1993; Ahmed and Shams 1994; Bouis and Haddad 1990; Del Ninno and Dorosh 2003; Edirisinghe 1987; Garcia and Pinstrup-Andersen 1987). For example, a study in Bangladesh by Ahmed and Shams (1994) found that the MPCF (Marginal propensity to consumption of food) out of cash transfers from the Rural Maintenance Program was 0.48, while the MPCF out of income transfers in wheat from the Food-for-Work program was 0.61. These studies also show that income transfer in food is more effective in improving household food consumption than cash transfers.

1.4 Significance of the Research

With a population of 144.4 million living in an area of only 147,570 square kilometers (56,977 square miles). About 75 percent of the country's population lives in rural areas. Although the agricultural sector continues to dominate the economy, the share of agriculture in gross domestic product (GDP) declined from 31.9 percent in 1986 to 19.5 percent in 2006 (World Bank 2007). The agricultural sector is the largest employer, involving about 48 percent of the total labor force in 2003 (BBS 2006).

Hardcore poor people have less access to even agriculture. This is why they are most vulnerable and has no other means to develop their economic condition. According to HIES 2005, it was indicated that 27 million of the population i.e 19.5% are living below the poverty line. Amongst these the rural level condition is the most severe where almost 19 million people i.e 17.9% are living in the rural areas.

So, govt. has to be responsible to feed these poor populations. Various types of food and other programmes are being running in the Upazila level. The government has been following a combination of direct and indirect safety net programs for poverty eradication addressing both human and income poverty. However, despite having a large number of programs under the safety net, the rate of poverty reduction has not been satisfactory. It is thus crucial to scrutinize the impact of the existing safety net programs on poverty reduction in Bangladesh and identify the kind of programs that would be more suitable to the socio-economic condition of the country.

VGD is one of the most well-known programmes running to feed these extreme poor people. Therefore, the significance of studying on this programme is much more required to identify the impacts of this programme.

The dramatic rise in food prices during the last two years and recent natural disasters, including cyclone Sidr in the southern coastal districts, the rodent plague in south east of the country and recurrent monsoon floods, pose a serious threat to Bangladesh's national food and nutrition security. The increase in prices of basic food commodities and fuel has exposed the poorest segments of society to severe pressure with concerns of a worsening food security in regions with higher concentrations of chronic poverty and food insecurity prior to the shock.

According to the recent FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission, an additional 7.5 million people have joined the ranks of the hungry because of high food prices, bringing the number of people who consume less than 2,122 kcals/person/day to 65.3 million. A staggering 34.7 million people now consume less than 1,805 kcals/person/day, up from 27.9 million prior to the food price shock.

WFP estimates that approximately 56 million of the 65.3 million food insecure population is likely to receive assistance through Government or non-government programmes. This implies that approximately 9.3 million food insecure people are currently without assistance. WFP plans to assist approximately 5 million or 54 percent of this un-covered population through this Emergency Operation (EMOP) including in areas affected by cyclone Sidr, the rodent plague and monsoon floods.

1.5 Survey Design and Sampling

1.5.1 Survey Site: The survey was conducted in 3 Union Parishads in Chatkhil Upazila in Bangladesh. The UPs were: Parokot, Noakhola and kamalpur.

The union is the lowest administrative level in the VGD programme. Thus a union was taken as the Primary Sampling Unit (PSU). Each union was selected as a purposive random basis. To minimize the hardship in contacting sample respondents scattered over the whole union, one or two wards were selected at random. From these randomly selected wards, the sample was drawn.

Purposive random sampling was followed. Sample size was 50 as a whole. Out of 50 samples, 30 will be the beneficiary of VGD programme, 20 was the members of the committees responsible for selecting VGD cards.

1.5.2 Hypothesis

Income generating social safety net programs like VGD can increase purchasing power of the hardcore poor for ensuring food accessibility.

1.5.3 Sources of Data:

The data for this study will be collected both from primary and secondary sources. As primary source data was collected through survey and the secondary sources of the facts and data drawn from the existing literatures like news paper reports, seminar papers, reports on the programme and analysis of current documents, evaluations and reports.

1.5.4 Data Collection Technique:

A questionnaire survey with

- VGD beneficiaries
- The members of the committees responsible for selecting VGD cards

The questionnaire administered to women participating in the VGD program covered the VGD selection process, their participation in the program and a detailed allocation of the grain they receive. And another questionnaire was covered the VGD selection committee.

1.6 Field Operations

Based on the sample size distribution, the field survey was carried out by the researcher herself. Following the plan, the researcher had to take interview three households per day and the survey was completed in 20 days. It was in the middle of March 2010 and severe summer heat was observed throughout the country. Researcher had to stay almost whole day to scrutinize the disbursement of wheat in the selected areas. However, the researcher took the opportunity to take in depth interview from the beneficiary who was waiting for a long time to receive their allocated grants.

1.7 Problems Encountered in the Field

As already been mentioned, the field conditions were very difficult due to “Kal Baishakhi Jhar” and due to far distance from one union to another. Also, in two Union Parishads there were a schedule to disburse the grants at 12pm but it was started at 3pm. Again, some Union Parishads change their disbursement schedule without any prior notice and the card holders had to wait almost whole day for receiving grants.

1.8 Data Processing and Analysis

Results from the survey were processed using MS Excel and SPSS software. Since the present survey objective was to assess the accessibility of food to the beneficiary in comparison to before their participation. Different statistical tools and methods have been used to analyze the quantitative data.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

International Food Policy Research Institute conducted a research on “Efficiency of Targeted Food Programs: An investigation of the VGD and RD Programs”, in 2000; where an assessment of the efficiency of these two large targeted food programs in Bangladesh (the VGD and the RD programs, of the World Food Program) were assessed in increasing the income and the consumption of grain of the intended beneficiaries. The research shows that these programs are not efficient in delivering food transfers, since the difference between the amount of resources allocated (in cash and kind) and the amount of resources (in cash or kind) actually received, referred here as leakage, is positive and sizable.

Microfinance, 2009 conducted a study on “Programs for the poorest: learning from the IGVGD Program in Bangladesh”; Imran Matin and David Hulme. Through an analysis of an innovative program that has sought to reach the country’s poorest people they explore the Income Generation for Vulnerable Group Development (IGVGD) Program. This program seeks to extend the outreach of poverty reduction initiatives beyond what are referred to in Bangladesh as the ‘moderate poor’ to the ‘hardcore poor’. The IGVGD experience confirms that programs combining elements of livelihood protection and livelihood promotion can reach deeper than purely promotional schemes and can benefit the chronic poor.

In 2007, a study was conducted under a contract between the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). This study examined the efficacy of food and cash transfers in enhancing food security and livelihoods of the ultra-poor in rural Bangladesh, with a focus on the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program: (1) Income- Generating VGD (IGVGD) and (2) Food Security VGD (FSVGD). These programs have an important role in helping ultra-poor households, but they cannot be the sole mechanisms for sustainable poverty reduction. Rather, they should be seen as one component of a portfolio of activities designed to eradicate poverty.

From the economic category, extreme poor or the "hungry poor" households have been more or less excluded from all types of interventions from the government agencies as well as from big NGOs (because of their group formation criteria). These "excluded poor" also include people affected by other dimensions of poverty such as destitute women, urban poor, environmental

refugees and tribal communities. These poorest of the poor have lack access (Habibur Rahman, 2000) to government and NGO resources and support systems. Not enough policies have been formulated at the state or NGO level to include these "excluded" people into the programme coverage. Against this backdrop, government and NGOs are not likely to make total success with their poverty alleviation efforts if they fail to provide institutional support to the most vulnerable groups of the poor.

Along with income and employment generation, NGO's (like BRAC) helps in forming organizations of the poor, awareness building awareness, raising gender equity and human resource development training. The logic of these^{*} programmes is the creation of an "enabling environment" in which the poor can participate in their own development and improving the quality of their lives.

As is well known and confirmed by numerous poverty studies, the realities of poor people include precarious and inadequate livelihoods, incapacitating hunger, unsanitary or non-existent housing, dangerous environments, unaffordable medical care and inaccessible education.

As the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights remarks, the "rights to work, an adequate standard of living, housing, food, health and education... lie at the heart of the Covenant [and] have a direct and immediate bearing upon the eradication of poverty".

Since food is the basic human rights, thus attention to human rights will help to ensure that the key concerns of poor people become, and remain the key concerns of poverty reduction strategies.

*According to A. Mushtaque R. Chowdhury and Abbas Bhuiyan in a paper on "The wider impacts of BRAC poverty alleviation in Bangladesh"; Journal of International Development. 16,369-386 (2004). In this article, they focused on the impact analysis (BRAC's Programme) wherein selected components like "human well-being" taken as the priority

The essential idea underlying the adoption of a human rights approach (Mohammad Habibur Rahman, 2000) to poverty reduction is that policies and institutions for poverty reduction should be based explicitly on the norms and values set out in the international law of human rights. Whether explicit or implicit, norms and values shape policies and institutions. The human rights approach offers an explicit normative framework – that of international human rights. Underpinned by universally recognized moral values and reinforced by legal obligations, international human rights provide a compelling normative framework for the formulation of national and international policies, including poverty reduction strategies.

Chapter 3: Scope and Objectives of the Research

3.1 Scope of the Study

Bangladesh possesses a wealth of institutional diversity and a wide range of experiences in providing assistance to the poor through social safety net programs. The country has both food- and cash-based interventions, and some programmes provide a combination of food and cash to the poor. Although the largest programs tend to be food-based, cash transfers have become increasingly important. Bangladesh has moved from a chronically food deficit country to the brink of food grain self-sufficiency through increased domestic production and market liberalization. Indeed, the challenge in achieving food security is no longer to achieve food availability, but rather to provide the poor with economic access to food and to improve the biological utilization to food.

The fieldwork and data collection for this analysis was carried out in a few locations during March-April, 2010.

The fieldwork for the analysis of the VGD program was held out in 3 Union Parishads (UPS) in Chatkhil Upazila.

3.2. Objectives of the Study

General Objective

Whether programmes like VGD can ensure food accessibility of the rural hardcore poor.

Specific Objectives

The specific purpose of this study is to get a general idea of whether this targeted programme can ensure food accessibility of the rural hardcore people

3.3 Research Questions

- Whether this target group oriented program can ensure food accessibility to the rural hardcore poor?

Characterization of Social Safety Net Programs in Bangladesh

3.4 What is Social Safety Net?

Social safety net is a measure taken by the government in order to prevent the vulnerable section of its population to fall beyond a certain level of poverty. Social safety net programmes (SSNPs) are designed with the aim to provide support for the vulnerable section of the society.

The government has been following a combination of direct and indirect safety net programs for poverty eradication addressing both human and income poverty. However, despite having a large number of programs under the safety net, the rate of poverty reduction has not been satisfactory. It is thus crucial to scrutinize the impact of the existing safety net programs on poverty reduction in Bangladesh and identify the kind of programs that would be more suitable to the socio-economic condition of the country.

Whatever argument exists related to whether safety net program should take the form of cash or kind, whether direct transfers are better than indirect ones, whether conditional programs help reduce poverty compared to unconditional programs, the success of any program would solely depend on how factors like cost effectiveness and efficiency, administrative capacity, market assessment, program objectives are suitable for the country where the program will take place. Impact of these programs solely depends on how well they can be implemented in the context of the relevant country. Success of the program will be measured by its success in alleviating poverty.

Poverty Situation of Bangladesh

Food Intake:

In Bangladesh, poverty is quantified on the basis of a per capita minimum diet of 2122 calories. The term "absolute poor" is used in Bangladesh for those who live below this poverty line [nearly 49 million (40 per cent) of the country's population]. "Hard-core poor" describes one who does not have a sufficient income to meet even an energy intake of 1,805 calories (WFP, 1997). Survey results show more than 25 million (20.5 per cent) are living in hard-core poverty

(Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1996). A new terminology, the WFP is currently attaching to identify the poorest of the poor, is "hungry poor". According to WFP, they are those poor in Bangladesh who live below the poverty line of 1600 calories- the most distressed segment of the population. It is estimated that 10-15 per cent of the country's population can be seen under this most malnourished group.

Absolute poor	Hard-core poor	"Hungry Poor"
Daily food intake between 1806-2122 calories, 40% population	Daily food intake between 1601-1805 calories, 20.5% population (within absolute poor group)	Daily maximum 1600 calories, 10-15% population (within absolute poor group)

Source: Mohammad Habibur Rahman, 2000.

During the last one and a half decade, Bangladesh has been growing at a pace of 5 percent per year. Between FY1991 and 1995 the average growth rate stood at 4.4 per cent which went up to 5.5 per cent between FY2001 and 2005. Though the country saw a faster pace of poverty reduction during the 1990s compared to the previous decade in terms of head count ratio, this reduction in poverty was accompanied by a worsening income distribution.

However, historically the rate of poverty reduction in terms of the Daily Calorie Intake (DCI) method remained stagnant during the period between 1988-89 and 1995-96 reducing from 47.75 per cent to 47.53 per cent. In 2000, 44.33 per cent people stayed below the poverty line while poverty rate reduced to 40.40 per cent in 2005 with an insignificant rise in the number of people living under the poverty line. Significant reduction in poverty has also been observed when calculated using the Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) method. Table below shows, between FY2000 and 2005, rural poverty has declined more compared to urban poverty while the DCI method suggests that poverty reduction has been more inspiring in urban area.

Table 1
Number and Percentage of Population below Poverty Line (CBN)

Residence	Year 2000		Year 2005	
	No in million	Percent (%)	No in million	Percent (%)
National	61.7	48.9	55.4	40.0
Rural	52.7	52.3	45.7	43.8
Urban	8.9	35.1	9.7	28.4

Source: Bangladesh Economic Review 2010 based on HIES 2005

Nevertheless, reduction in hardcore poverty has not been as successful during the period under discussion. Despite the fact that 0.5 percent of people could break out of poverty during the period 2000 to 2005, 2.1 million additional people were added below the lower poverty line. Though rural poverty during this period remained stagnant, the number of urban hardcore poor increased substantially during the period.

Table 2:
Number and percent of population below hardcore poverty line

Survey year	National Level		Rural Level		Urban Level	
	No in Million	Percent (%)	No in Million	Percent (%)	No in Million	Percent (%)
2005	27	19.5	18.7	17.9	8.3	24.4
2000	24.9	20.0	18.8	18.7	6.0	25.0

Source: HIES 2005

3.5 Types of Safety Net Programmes in Bangladesh

Formal social safety net programmes redistribute resources to poor people to reduce their economic hardship. They include any direct transfers to the poor, whether in cash or in kind, with or without a work requirement (Smith and Subbarao 2003). Bangladesh has a comprehensive portfolio of both food- and cash-based social safety net programmes. Currently, there are about 27 such programmes.

The safety net programs can be categorized in accordance with the specific objective that each program is designed to achieve. For example, programs may be designed to develop infrastructure, provide education incentives to the poor, mitigate disaster consequences, or provide livelihood support to disadvantaged groups such as the aged and the disabled. Using such categorizations, it is possible to group existing programs in Bangladesh into five categories.

- Infrastructure-building programs
- Training programs
- Education programs
- Relief programs
- Programs for other disadvantaged groups

Main types of safety nets in Bangladesh are as follows:

**Table3:
The Main Types of Safety Nets in Bangladesh**

Types of safety nets	Examples of Programmes
Cash Transfers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Old Age Allowance• Widowed and Distressed Women Allowance• Disabled Allowance
Conditional Cash Transfers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary Education Stipend Programme (formerly known as Food-for-Education)• Stipends for Female Secondary Students

Public works or training based cash or in kind transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Maintenance Programme • Food-for-Work • Vulnerable Group Development (VGD)
Emergency or seasonal relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) • Gratuitous relief Test Relief

Source: Hossain and Osman, 2007

3.6 Allocation for the Safety Net Programmes in the National Budget of Bangladesh

Trends in Safety Net Programmes of Bangladesh:

Obviously there is no answer to the question of what would be an optimum level of spending on safety nets. While this will be largely dependent on the poverty dynamics of a country and availability of resources, other concerns would be the efficiency of government in spending on growth oriented fields as well as the possibility of “leakages” or cost of delivering direct transfers. Smith and Subbarao (2003) argued that if the efficacy of other public spending on health, education or infrastructure is low, direct transfer becomes an important candidate.

Table 4:
Average Expenditure (allocation) on SSNPs

Crore Tk

Avg 1996-97 to 2000-01	Avg 2001-02 to 2004-05	Avg 2006-07 to 2007-08
1947	2270	7053

Source: WB (Bangladesh Development Series – Paper No. 9) and budget documents of GoB

In case of Bangladesh, in monetary terms, extent of safety net programmes is gradually increasing over the years. However, in terms of share of public expenditure, investment on safety nets has been falling since 1998-99, against the increasing number of people below the poverty line.

On an average, during 1996-97 to 2004-05 periods, Bangladesh has been spending on SSNPs to the tune of 0.8 per cent of the GDP and 5.7 per cent of the total public expenditure (based on World Bank assessment of Bangladesh safety nets). It is pertinent to mention here that actual expenditure data on SSNPs is not provided by the government. In the absence of such information, as in other literature available on SSNPs of Bangladesh, expenditure figures mentioned here represents allocations made by the government.

However, very recently, more specifically during the fiscal years of FY2007-2008, FY2008-2009 and 2009-2010 higher targets have been fixed for providing social security of the poor.

Chapter 4: Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) Programme

4.1 Background of VGD Programme

In the wake of the 1974 famine in Bangladesh the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) initiated the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) Program. This sought to reduce the chronic food insecurity of millions of extremely poor households by providing them with 30 kg of wheat each month for a two-year period. It is a classic livelihood protection scheme. The WFP maps food insecurity at the upazila level (this is an administrative unit that on average encompasses about 275,000 people) and allocates VGD cards to those upazilas where insecurity is highest. The VGD cards are then allocated to specific households by local government. They are intended to go to the most vulnerable – the poorest and female headed households.

4.2 Characteristics of VGD Households

However, according to the WFP, VGD cardholder women - aged between 18-49 - must be physically and mentally sound and are selected from the most vulnerable and poor households in the union.

The actual characteristics of VGD households are as follows:

- Women who are households head i.e household headed by a woman or and no adult male income earner in the family
- Housing conditions - material and sanitation facilities - of the household are very poor
- Women who are either widowed, divorced, separated, deserted or who have a disabled husband
- Vulnerability of women is measured by
 - ✓ landlessness or ownership of less than 0.2 hectares (.50 acres) of land
 - ✓ Chronic food insecurity, i.e. members of the households often skips meals due to insufficient food.

- ✓ Households survive on casual labor with low income and do not have any other regular source of earning.
- ✓ Irregular income or family income of less than Tk. 300 per month
- ✓ Lack of productive assets
- ✓ Women who are daily or casual laborers
- ✓ Priority is given to women who are physically fit, have the ability to develop their socio-economic condition and are interested to work in groups

Finally, women who have been selected once as a beneficiary of this project cannot be selected a second time and those who are already members of other organizations or other groups and enjoy the benefits of those projects are disqualified from being considered as beneficiaries of the VGD programme.

Chapter 5: Theoretical Framework

The World food Programme (WFP) through the implementation of its Country Programme (CP) 2007-2010 supports the Government of Bangladesh to achieve the MDG's by improving the food security, nutritional wellbeing and livelihoods of ultra poor households. CP activities include food distribution along with training, nutrition supplements, and school feeding and community asset creation.

Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), one of the main components of CP, aims to promote self-reliance among the most vulnerable women, by providing them with food assistance and training in an alternative livelihood. Through the VGD Programme, WFP, in collaboration with the Government, assists directly 750,000 extremely poor women VGD Programme is to target households who are chronically food insecure, have minimal or no land, very low income and the poorest housing conditions. Preference is given to female-headed households.

According to the WFP information, through its country programme, WFP is now implementing its 24-month VGD cycle that started from 1st January 2009 with new 750,000 ultra poor households. So, implementation occurs in the middle of the policy process. It results from the stages that precede it, policy formulation and adoption (by WFP, GOB, and NGO's), and it affects the subsequent stages: evaluation and redesign. Almost fifty years ago, Harold Lasswell (1956) raised the concept of the policy sciences and its usage of the policy process approach. He suggested that policy implementation was one of a number of necessary steps or stages in the policy process. In this perspective we can say that Country Program (CP) was a policy of WFP and based on this policy they started it as a program. It is implemented with some authoritative actions by the implementers.

Since the study of implementation examines those factors that contribute to the realization or non realization of policy objectives, this theory would be useful to assess the implementation of VGD Program. But the model of Van Meter & Van Horn involves actors and factors of implementation within a single organization rather it was not taking considerations of Organizational change, resource limitations, organizational control, leadership authority, managerial control, inter-institutional co-ordination, those are some important factors for policy implementation.

Again, authors such as Daniel Mazmanian and Paul Sabatier (1983), Robert Nakamura and Frank Smallwood (1980) proposed a series of institutional and commitment-oriented hypotheses that assumed (more or less) a command and control orientation, or what came to be known as a “top-down” perspective. In this manner, they brought an empiricist perspective to policy implementation, dedicated to finding the best way to move a policy proposal to its successful execution. This “top-down” approach can applicable to analyze this present assessment of VGD Programme implementation.

In particular, policy implementation has frequently been practiced as a top-down or governing-elite phenomenon and that its study and practice would be much better served were its practitioners to adopt a more participatory, more directly democratic orientation. Also, implementation theory should address more carefully the kinds of democratic processes that are called forth by varying specific conditions. According to Lester and Goggin (1981,1), "[P]ublic policy implementation continues to hold much practical interest for policymakers [both] because it is a major stumbling block in the policy process [and] ... one of the most heavily utilized areas of policy analysis."

Here more or less hypothesis can be useful to categorize the variable of monitoring and supervision and inter-institutional coordination.

In this study, it can be traced that the more the monetary and supervision the more the policy implementation will be successful and vice versa.

For implementing VGD programme, there are several inter-connected organizations like executing ministry of women and children affairs and implementing by the Department of Women Affairs (DWA). All these related organizations maintain the linkage with Upazila Offices for delivering the grants properly. Therefore inter-institutional coordination is required and the more the relationship with the organization the better service will be available to the beneficiaries.

From top to bottom there are various ladders of organizations working together for policy implementation. These organizations' transparency is very much needed. In this study it can be traced that the more the transparency exists the more the policy implementation will be successful.

But scholars like Michael Lipsky (1971 and 1980) and Benny Hjern (1982; Hjern and Hull 1983) proposed that street level bureaucrats were the key to successful implementation. From their view point, implementation occurred only when those who were primarily affected were actively involved in the planning and execution of these programs and argued that they were better able to capture the full range of implementation's intricacies. In consequence, they began to argue that implementation needed to be part and parcel of the policy formulation calculations. While policy could be defined in several ways, implementation moves from originally set political goals to results on the ground (service delivery). In fact policy success is in some cases attributable to redesign or customization of the original design during implementation, because the original policy designers did not or could not foresee specific complications at regional and local grass roots levels.

From this point of view we can relate that disposition of implementers can also be a successful indicator of shaping the VGD policy successful. Street level bureaucrats or the executing committees are much more responsible to draw a successful end as they know the ins and outs of the policy and they can adjust it in the phase of execution.

Top-down supporters see policy designers as the central actors and concentrate their attention on factors that can be manipulated at the national level. Bottom-up supporters emphasis target groups and service deliverers. Presently most theorists agree that some convergence of the two perspectives exists. This is exactly why there is a close relationship between policy implementation and service delivery. This means that the macro-level variables of the top-down model are tied with the micro-level bottom-uppers (Matland 1995).

A widely accepted model of the causal processes of implementation still remains, what Hargrove (1975) had called the "missing link" in social policy studies. It could be pointed out that:

Implementation research has been too restricted in time (i.e., an emphasis on cross-sectional versus longitudinal analysis), too restricted in number (i.e., an emphasis on case study versus comparative analyses), too restricted in policy type (i.e., an emphasis on single policy type versus multiple policy types), too restricted in defining the concept of implementation (i.e., limited to a single output measure versus multiple measures), and too restricted in approach (i.e., the utilization of either "top-down" or "bottom-up" approach versus both).

But institutions today scarcely dare advocate a top down approach to development or poverty alleviation. David Korten has linked the top down approach to “delivered development” and a bottom up approach to “participatory development”. Under ideal circumstances, in reality, these two approaches are complementary.

Khosa (2003:49) notes on a project entitled “Closing the gap between policy and implementation in South Africa”, that: “... the discrepancies between policy and implementation are largely caused by unrealistic policies, and a lack of managerial expertise. Another key finding is that policy implementation has suffered from the absence of a people driven process. Insufficient coordination of policy implementation is cited in virtually all sectors, and has significantly hampered the implementation of policies. In addition, insufficient staffing and capacity of all three spheres of government, as well as the linkages between them, have largely worked against the successful implementation of policies”. These findings would have an adverse effect on successful service delivery.

Lack of managerial expertise mentioned here as lack of **monitoring and supervision** by the implementers. He also mentioned the importance of inter-institutional coordination, adequate human resources as well as material resources for capacity building. Monitoring and supervision can be ensured by no of group meeting by stakeholders with beneficiaries and quality of food grants received by the beneficiaries. The rationale behind promoting a participatory M&E approach within the programme is that it complements the operating principles and it helps local administrators and beneficiaries to develop their capacity for management and problem solving.

Studies of programme plans and practice around the world have shown that commonly there are large differences between what is planned and what happens in the field. These ‘implementation gaps’ are often very great in developing countries (Grindle, 1980; Turner & Hulme, 1997). They arise for many reasons – a lack of administrative capacity, manipulation by more powerful individuals and social groups to capture benefits, local cultural contexts and the pursuit of organizational needs over program goals.

In the VGD programme, as in most programmes in Bangladesh (Wood, 1994), what happens during implementation is often very different from what is described in the official ‘operations manual.’ While this implementation gap often has negative consequences in terms of outcomes.

In this regard, **transparency of the institutions** is required. Transparency can be achieved if all the related agencies publish their financial report in every quarter, disseminate the update of information to all the coordinating departments.

“Implementation means transaction. To carry out a program, implementers must continually deal with tasks, environments, clients, and each other. The formalities of organization and the mechanics of administration are important as background, but the key to success is continual coping with contexts, personalities, alliances, and events. And crucial to such adaptation is the willingness to acknowledge and correct mistakes, to shift directions, and to learn from doing. Nothing is more vital to implementation than self-correction; nothing more lethal than blind perseveration” (Warwick, 1982: 190). Warwick clearly mentioned here the need for **inter-institutional coordination** which can be identified by asking questions to the VGD grant distributors whether they Receive grants(cash/kind) on time to distribute and stakeholders meeting with VGD beneficiaries

By definition, in the implementation process, there are multiple actors. Not only is implementation influenced by multiple actors, it operates at multiple levels. These actors have different objectives regarding the implementation. WFP had some principles of initiating and implementing the VGD Program, whereas the government of Bangladesh would have some other political objectives. Therefore, **disposition of implementers** are important as Scharpf (1978: 347) points out, "it is unlikely, if not impossible, and that public policy of any significance could result from the choice process of any single unified actor. Policy formation and policy implementation are inevitably the result of interactions among a plurality of separate actors with separate interests, goals, and strategies". The indicators here are willingness of the staff to implement the policy to attain its goal.

The Conceptual Framework

The key elements of the analytical framework used in this paper concern the identification of the rural hard-core poor, who are taking under the safety net programs like VGD; the relative roles of protection and promotion of food accessibility by this programme and the identification of the factors that hinders the poor people to enter into the programme i.e the concept of the implementation gap between policies and practices.

Operational Definition of “Hardcore Poor”:

In Bangladesh, the main focus has been on dividing the poor into the “moderate” and “hardcore poor” through their consumption levels. It is commonly assumed that the “hardcore poor” are also “chronically poor”. This is based on qualitative work, while such an assumption may be reasonable for Bangladesh and India (Mehta & Shah, 2001, 2003) it would be inappropriate in other contexts.

Those who experience the deepest deprivations and are the least likely to be able to overcome their poverty are defined as “hardcore poor”. Commonly in Bangladesh those falling between the upper and lower poverty lines are termed the ‘moderate poor,’ while those below the lower poverty line are termed the ‘hardcore poor’ (*Imran Matin and David Hulme*). The conceptualization behind the hardcore poor is that they experience extreme poverty and that, because of their lack of opportunities for upward mobility, their poverty lasts a long time or throughout their entire life.

Food Accessibility of the “Hardcore Poor”:

Food accessibility of the hardcore poor people is not determined by the market. Because, poor people have no or little purchasing power. This is why WFP concentrates in areas identified by Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping (VAM) of food insecurity and vulnerability. There is a considerable variation in food consumption between districts that ranges from 2470 k.Cal in Dinajpur to 1819 k.Cal in Bagerhat depending on VAM.

The task of food accessibility is seen ensured when a household meets its minimum material or physiological needs. From this materialist perspective a household's inability to meet such needs is viewed as being due to either: having a stable income that is below the appropriate income, consumption and expenditure of poverty line, or a sudden shock that causes a household's income, consumption or expenditure to drop below the poverty line.

Since VGD is implemented by multiple partners like WFP, Government of Bangladesh, and some other NGO's, therefore, implementation is not only simply a managerial or administrative problem, it is a political process, it is concerned with who gets what, when, how, where, and from whom. This interconnectedness of the variables creates both a challenge and an opportunity.

Poor people have steady incomes that are low and/or occasionally exposed to shocks. This income of the poor always fluctuates that are only partly predictable. Many people, perhaps most in some areas, experience transient poverty as their incomes and expenditure rise and fall depending on a host of factors – the climate, seasonality, crop prices, relationships with landlords, access to work in urban areas or remittances, health status, paying for funerals and weddings and other factors.

At the very least it suggests that assisting households to smooth their incomes, and thus reduce the severity of deprivation that is associated with deep troughs in income, should be pursued. This applies to the occasionally poor and churning poor (see Hulme & Shepherd, 2003) to stop their income from dipping under the poverty line, and to the chronic poor to reduce the level that their income falls below the poverty line. It also makes it important for program designers to try to understand the poverty dynamics of those they seek to help.

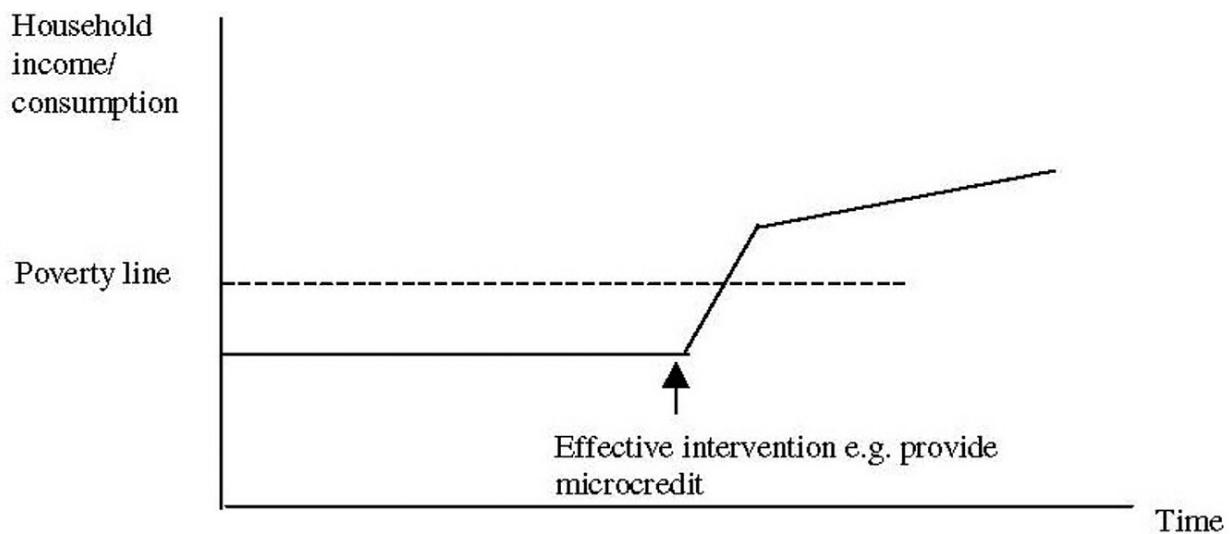


Figure1: Poverty reduction as a ‘one-step’ increase in household income.

Ref: Hulme & Shepherd, 2003

Another way in which the practice of poverty reduction has developed in recent years has been through attempts to identify and assist those who experience the greatest deprivations. These have been variously described as the poorest, the poorest of the poor, the ultra poor, the hardcore poor, the destitute, the extreme poor, the highly dependent poor and, in this volume, the chronic poor. While ‘common sense’ might suggest that these are all describing the same group of people a number of different criteria are used to identify these groups – the severity of poverty, the duration of poverty and the number of dimensions of poverty that are experienced. Commonly it is assumed that those who experience the severest poverty are also the long-term poor, but this is not necessarily the case.

Some people who are deeply income poor at a moment, in time, have experienced a severe shock but they can rapidly recover from this because of the human and social capital that they possess. Conversely, some who are only a little below the income poverty line may stay there throughout their lives as they are adversely incorporated, suffer other forms of deprivation intensely, and lack an asset base that would permit them to escape poverty.

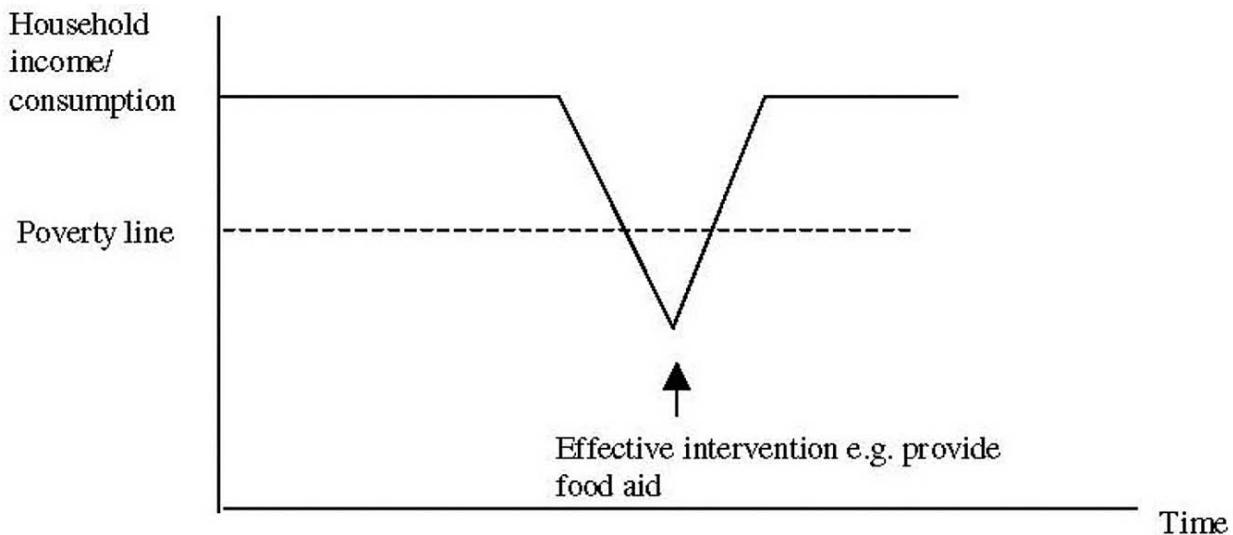


Figure 2: Poverty reduction as a ‘one-off’ grant returning household income to previous levels.

Ref: Hulme and Shepherd, 2003.

Theory of Livelihood Protection and Livelihood Promotion for Targeting Programmes Like VGD for Ensuring Food Accessibility of the Rural “Hardcore Poor”

Dreze and Sen (1989, pp. 60–1) distinguish two different, but related, goals and means for poverty reduction – protection which seeks to prevent a decline in living standards (and especially hunger and starvation), and promotion which aims to eliminate deprivation (commonly by raising low incomes).

In this study protection indicated by food grants provided by WFP by VGD programme. This food aid protects poor people from hunger and starvation.

Again, promotion identified by skills training and microcredit to promote the poor people’s living standard.

Devereux (2001) has extended these into the concepts of livelihood protection and livelihood promotion. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s there was a global shift away from protection approaches to poverty reduction and toward promotional approaches and ‘workfare’ (Peck, 2001).

Imran Matin and David Hulme developed a ‘two-step’ model of poverty reduction for the hardcore poor in their article.

The VGD Program can meet the needs of the extreme poor and it is an ‘entry point’ (in figure, food aid) to involve the poorest to some works and the donations provided a ‘breathing space’ for the poorest, and created a strong incentive for them to interact with development agencies, to build the capacity of such handouts to remove chronic poverty. The organization sought to combine food relief with its skills training program, to create a basis for enhanced household income in the future. In addition, participating households were to make compulsory savings of 25 taka per month during the period of their food relief to build up a lump sum for investment.

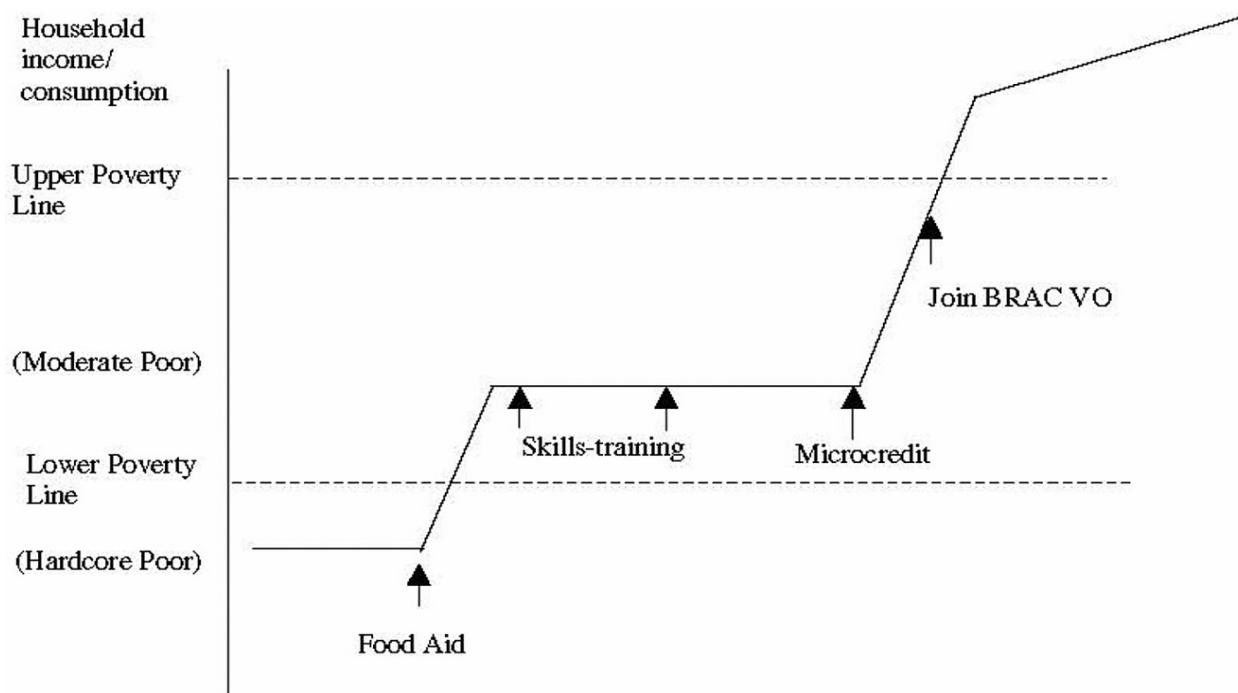


Figure 3: The IGVGD model: Poverty-reduction as a ‘two-step’ process of livelihood Protection and livelihood promotion. Source: Microfinance, 2009.

The three-pronged approach (food grant, skills training and microcredit) are the basis of VGD for the livelihood promotion component that result in, an increase in the household’s income. Therefore, the purchasing power of the poorest household will be increased for greater food

accessibility. In effect, it was developing a ‘two-step’ model of poverty reduction for the hardcore poor. In this study, this livelihood model is also applicable.

The Conceptual Framework of the Study is as follows:

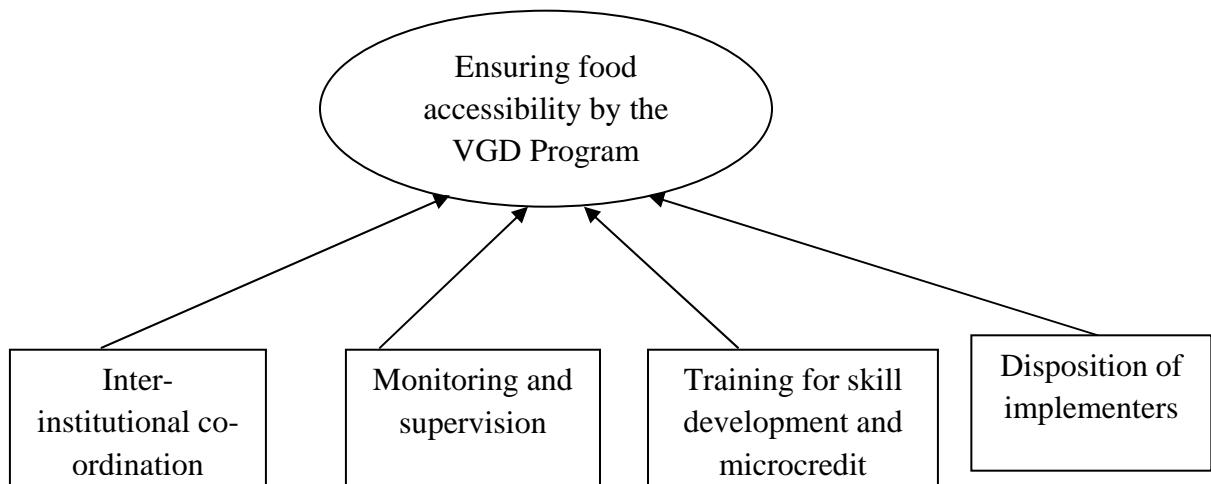


Figure 4: conceptual framework of the “food accessibility by VGD Programme”

Indicators of Independent Variables and Dependent Variables:

Policy implementation refers to the activities that are carried out in the light of established Policies (Adamoleskun, 1983). Usually implementation is a dynamic process which involved the interaction of many variables. In this paper five independent variables and one dependent variable is analyzed. These are as follows:

Independent Variables: Monitoring and supervision of the institutions, Inter-institutional co-ordination, disposition of implementers, training and skill development program.

Dependent Variable: ensuring food accessibility by VGD program.

Table- 5:
Indicators and Variables

Variables	Verifying indicators	Questionnaire Administered
Monitoring and supervision	No of group meeting with beneficiaries, quality of food grants	Implementing organizations, VGD beneficiaries
Inter-institutional co-ordination	Receiving grants(cash/kind) on time, stakeholders meeting regarding self-correcting feedback from monitoring and supervision	VGD card selection committee
Disposition of implementers	Willingness of the staff to implement the program properly	VGD beneficiaries
Training and skill development program	Availability of resources for training and credit	VGD beneficiaries and service providers
Food accessibility of VGD beneficiaries	No of eating occasions per day, incidence of sickness(specially women and children due to nutritional deficiency), starvation, dietary diversity	Beneficiaries and card distributors

Chapter 6: Analysis of Findings

Analysis of the VGD Programme:

Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) is one of the main components of Country Programme (CP) of WFP. It aims to promote self-reliance among the most vulnerable women, by providing them with food assistance and training in an alternative livelihood*. Through the VGD programme, WFP, in collaboration with the Government, assists directly 750,000 extremely poor women. Including the family members, a total of 3.75 million people across the country are benefitted from VGD.

WFP started its ongoing VGD cycle from 1st January 2009 with new 750,000 ultra-poor households. It is a 24-month programme and this cycle will be completed by December 2010¹.

Total allocation for the year 2009/2010 cycle of the VGD program was determined BDT 9975.00 lac². For implementing VGD cycle, WFP has long term as well as short term objectives. Long term objectives are: to improve the quality of life and to enhance the productivity as well as income generating opportunities of Vulnerable Group Development (VGD card holder) women. Short term objectives include: life skills training on Income Generation Activities and Nutrition, Primary health, Human rights, AIDS, Reproductive health, Gender and Environment issues.

In addition to the training to support VGD women through subsistence allowance, asset transfer and savings creation; they can engage in self employed income generating activities like 1) Strengthening the human resources of the Department of Women Affairs through provision of technical assistance and training. 2) Building the capacity of the Department of Women Affairs through provision of training, equipment and operational support. 3). Enhancing the capabilities of NGOs and local government organizations to implement and monitor sustainable life-improvement and income- generating projects through technical assistance, training, workshops and seminars.

*Alternative livelihood: According to the economics of subsidy, providing grants is ultimately an income subsidy to the beneficiaries. 1. According to WFP Programme in Bangladesh.. 2. Monthly implementation progress report of July 2009, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

The Allocation of Cards

In the 2009/10 cycle, the responsibility of central planning of the VGD projects and the distribution of resources was assigned to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA), the responsible body for preparing the necessary paperwork for the allocation of cards and the food distribution. At the Upazila level, it is the Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) who implements the program in the field while the executive responsibility remains with the Thana Project Implementation Officer (PIO). PIO works in collaboration with the Upazila Women's Affairs Officer in the 136 Upazila where there is a Women's Affairs Directorate (WAD).

WFP determines the number of cards allocated to each of the 483 Upazilla's³ according to the food insecurity and vulnerability map⁴, which has also been prepared by WFP in collaboration with the Planning Commission. Similar criteria are designed to address the different needs of each Upazila while maintaining a minimum allocation for every Thana. The allocation of cards to each UP is made according its vulnerability and population size.

Union VGD Women's Selection Committee prepares the actual list of the participants in the program. Subsequently, this list is then submitted to the Upazila's VGD Implementation Committee, which finalizes and sends it to the Chairperson of the District VGD Committee (the District Commissioner).

3. 483 Upazila upto 2010, according to the Economic review 2009.

4. Vulnerability map by WFP.

Illustrations of Survey Report in Chatkhil Upazila:

Profile of Chatkhil Upazila:

Noakhali district consists of 6 Upazilas. Chatkhil Upazila is located in Noakhali district. Chatkhil is an area of about 130.89 square kilometers. It was established in 1977 and was turned into an Upazila in 1983. The upazila consists of 9 union parishads, 113 mouzas and 136 villages⁵.

Map 1: Chatkhil Upazila Administrative Map



Source: www.mynoakhali.com

5. According to www.mynoakhali.com

Table 6:
Poverty Scenario of the Noakhali District

Upazila	% of poor under upper poverty line	% of extreme poor under lower poverty line
Begumganj	24.80	10.0
Chatkhil	17.50	6.60
Companiganj	41.00	19.4
Hatiya	48.7	25.5
Senbag	24.4	10.5
Noakhali sadar	44.3	21.6

Source: The World Bank (WB) and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS, HIES 2005) in collaboration with World Food Programme (WFP) produced the poverty estimates.

In Chatkhil Upazila, total VGD card holders are 535⁶. These cards are distributed through 9 Union Parishads. For analyzing this study, we have taken 3 Union Parishads as a purposive random sampling. Different Union Parishads have different allocation of cards according to Vulnerability Analyzing and Mapping (VAM) by WFP. Under the purview of the current field study, Mohammadpur Union has the largest card allocation (81 cards) under the whole Upazila. This is due to the relative vulnerability of the population of this Upazila. Again, according to the Upazila Women Affairs Officer, amongst the 9 Union Parishads, Mohammadpur has the highest population and this is why total card allocation is also the maximum.

6. According to the information provided by Chatkhil Upazila Woman Affairs Officer

Table 7:
Percentage of cards in the Union Parishads among the Upazila

Name of Up	No of respondents	Percentage in the UP
Mohammadpur UP	10	12.3%
Parokot UP	10	20%
Noakhola UP	10	16%

In Mohammadpur Union Parishad, 81 cards were allocated. Under this study, we have covered 10 beneficiaries as respondents who represented 12.30% in the total VGD cardholders of the UP. A total of 50 cards were allocated by the Parokot UP and 62 cards by the Noakhola UP and the respondents covered under this study represent 20% and 16% respectively.

Now, let us look at the some of the characteristics of the beneficiaries:

▪ **Average Age of the Beneficiaries:**

In Chatkhil Upazila, we have found that the average age of the VGD beneficiaries was 34.56 years (approx) years. The least age of the card holder was 20 years old whereas the most age was 50 years. It is evident from the WFP that VGD beneficiaries' should belong to age group of 18-49 years which needs to be matched from the field.

▪ **Earning Member of the Beneficiary Families:**

With a view to analyzing the main earning members of those families, we have categorized four types such as: the wife herself, her husband her son and others. From the field study, we have found that in case of 37% beneficiary families, women are the main source of income. But, interviewing with these beneficiaries we didn't find any mentionable job specification of those families. While replying to some related questions, the respondents expressed that most of them were working as a house maid as well as a day laborer in their neighboring solvent families. In some cases, the husbands of those families were mentally and physically disabled. Unfortunately enough, to some extent, their husbands were idle and they are not inclined to live with any work.

A remarkable portion of 33% of the respondents replied that their husbands are the main earning members of those families. I was not surprised although I found that most of them are unemployed. The proportions of agricultural employment were also reducing and even in the time of harvesting, these people are used to working as day laborer. While during the rest of their time, they live on different types of jobs like pulling of rickshaw and hundreds of other formal and informal sector related jobs of the economy.

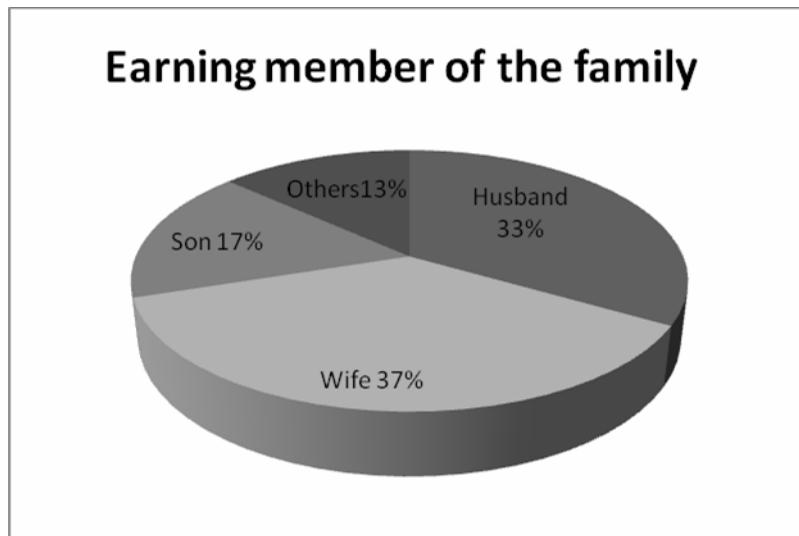


Chart-1: Proportion of earning member of families

The above chart illustrates the true picture of the study. According to the WFP, it is clearly identified that preference is given to families headed by women. Having similar reflection in the study, we can see that only 37% of the families are women dominated whereas proportion of husband dominated families is 33%.

Furthermore, 17% respondents replied that their son is the main sources of income of those families. In this case, others mean those women, who were separated, widowed and live in the house of brothers or any others relative's houses.

Therefore, to some extent, the mentioned selection criteria of beneficiaries might have some bias but the overall scenarios of these beneficiaries are matching as the policy defines. It became evident that among the 'poor' (as defined through the WFP criteria), there were further stratifications like; the extreme poor belonging to households headed by a woman (where there

was no male member or the male member(s) were disabled), households having neither land nor homestead, and the marginal or moderate poor who are better off than the extreme poor.

Average Monthly Income of the Beneficiaries:

According to the poverty estimates of The World Bank in collaboration with WFP and BBS, it is evident that Chatkhil Upazila has the least poor people in comparison with the five other upazilas. Almost 6.6% poor survive under the real hardcore poverty level in this Upazila.

From the field study, we have found that amongst the respondents, 41% respondents replied that they have an average monthly income is less than Tk.1000 (approx \$0.47). This amount indicates that their daily income is less than \$1 a day. Again, 31% of the respondents have an average monthly income of Tk. 1000- Tk. 1500 whereas only 28% families have an average income of more than tk.1500.

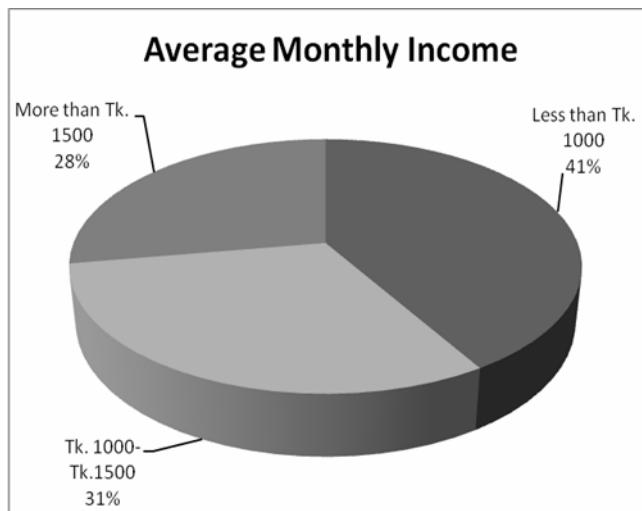


Chart 2: Distribution of income in the families

The above pie diagram illustrates the actual picture of the income range of the beneficiaries' family. However, those 41% people whose earning per month is below tk.1000 may constitute this 6.6% hardcore poor in the Upazila.

Main Expenditure of the Households:

Food expenditures are increasingly dominating household budgets after the price shock and food consumption patterns have changed. Indebtedness is on the rise and education is already being impacted. The poorest of the population are severely food insecure and are spending on average 86% of their household income on food.

In this study, almost 80% of the respondents replied that they had to spend a major portion of their income for food expenses. Almost all of their earnings had to be spent for purchasing food. The recent inflation and the global economic shock create an extra burden on these poor by leaving the price level very high. Inflation leads to lower the purchasing power and the increase in cost of living obviously in turn results inflation.

After food expenditure, these poor had to spend a small amount of their income for medicine. From the study, we have found that many of them have one or two full meals. These meals do not contain the diversified food for the needs of human body. Deficiency of vitamins, irons and other diets lead to several diseases to them. This is why, immediately after food expenses, they have to spend for medicine expenses.

In the middle of the interview, there were some of the beneficiaries who spent a small portion of their income for the education of their children. This is possible as primary education is free of cost and treated as basic need by the Government of Bangladesh. By interviewing we have come to know that they have no savings of their own.

Case 1:

Moni Begum: Future is Still Uncertain

Moni Begum, a VGD beneficiary, is approximately of 30 years of age. The main working member of her family is her husband. He is a daily laborer working in the cultivable fields of other villagers. The average monthly income of her family is tk1500 per month. According to Moni Begum, her husband is a very inoperative person and most of the times he does not go to his work. Before joining to the VGD Programme, she, along with her 5 children had no opportunity to avail breakfast. Moreover, whenever her husband did not go to the work and it became very hard for her to manage food once a day.

Last year her husband was able to manage a VGD card for her by requesting the UP chairman. She was saying that if Government could provide rice instead of wheat it would be better for her family. Now she is very happy to meet the demand of breakfast of her family. But, sometimes she couldn't manage a single meal for herself and family as well when her husband has no work. Now-a-days her husband goes to work rarely. She is facing much more difficulties as she has to feed her children. She asked the researcher what else she could do to manage her family. Two of her children seemed to be suffering from dehydration regularly. Another child is suffering by allergy in eyes. This lady told that she is very willing to do any productive work if she could manage microcredit. In this session of 2009-2010, we didn't find any training and microcredit programme in Chatkhil Upazila by the WFP under VGD programme. She was saying that she would not be eligible to get entrance once again in the VGD programme as there was no scope to get benefits after completion of the cycle.

She was in a very uncertain situation what she will do after completion of this cycle. She had to spend much on medicine and food. Two of her children went to the primary school where education cost is almost free but some other materials have to purchase for them.

She was saying that her husband would manage another type of card for her after completion of VGD cycle. It could be old age benefits card or any other programme run by Union Parishad. But the lady wants to find a stable type of income for her family. She did not even know what would happen in her future and said that there might be another such programme would come for them from the almighty Allah.

Field Survey: Relationship among the Dependent and Independent Variables

Inter-institutional co-ordination and food accessibility:

Measuring indicators: Whether receiving grants on time, stakeholders meeting

The more the institutional co-ordination exists, the more the policy will be successful; i.e food accessibility will be ensured. Different types of policies and programmes have been undertaken in the last few decades to mitigate poverty. There is a realization among different international and global bodies that poverty has to be tackled through ambitious plans for development. In 2000, United Nations organized and declared the largest programme known as “Millennium Development Goals (MDG)”. It is expected that by 2010 or earlier world leaders are pledged to work together to mitigate several leading issues. The first of these goals is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Similarly, the IMF and World Bank and WFP initiated the Poverty Reduction Strategy in 1999 that outlines a comprehensive country-based strategy for poverty mitigation. Under these initiatives, Vulnerable Group Development is one of those initiatives by WFP.

Though poverty usually meant to be deprivation of wellbeing, it results from the way a society's economic, political and social systems are organized. These systems create processes that interact with each other and produce deprivation among a group of people (World Bank 2001). That is why; social and institutional coordination is required to promote the overall condition of these poor.

Bangladesh is known for its innovative approaches (eg.Grameen Bank) to combat poverty. Her successful areas are such as micro-credit, primary education, health and family planning. Nevertheless, a serious level of poverty remains with a set of social indicators those including persistently low per capita income, low education level, high infant and maternal mortality rates etc. In order for improving the situation, government and other local and international organizations are working together throughout the country.

Under VGD, there are various institutions working in line with the requirement. These are as follows:

At the Central Level: The responsibility of central planning of the VGD projects and the distribution of resources assigned to the Ministry of Woman and Children Affairs (MOWCA). It also prepares necessary paperwork for the allocation of cards and food distribution.

At the Upazila Level: Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) is the high level official who supervises the implementation of projects. Project Implementation Officer (PIO) is in charge of relief operations and responsible for implementing subprojects. Presently Woman Affairs Officer (WAO) jointly shares the responsibility with the PIO for implementing the VGD programme in every Upazila throughout the country. NGO workers at the Upazila level are responsible for training. In every union there is a Tag Officer who is in charge of relief operations in each specific union. Upazila Food Officer is the controller of food who issues the delivery order of food for the union VGD committee to the officer-in-charge of the Local Supply Depot (LSD).

At the Union Level: Union Parishad Chairperson is responsible for primary selection of the VGD beneficiaries and the distribution of grains. Union Parisad Secretary also acts as the member secretary of the union VGD committee. Union Parishad member is responsible for distributing the grain.

In the field survey, all these institutions are found in a very organized way since the beneficiaries are getting their grants in time. The reason might be the compliance of the governance system by all the institutions. From the field survey, we have examined that the beneficiaries receive their grants on time every month. Distribution occurs in front of a Tag Officer* and there is a provision that every month the Upazila Women Affairs Officer had to go to 4 union for monitoring and supervision.

*Any one of several officers may be assigned as the Tag Officer at the Thana level (Thana Agriculture Officer, Thana Livestock Officer, Thana Fisheries Officer, Thana Health and Family welfare Officer, Thana Education Officer, Thana Food Officer, Thana Cooperatives Officer, Thana Social Welfare Officer, Thana Village Development Officer, etc

In every month, there is a meeting held in union council with participation of the members, secretary and chairman to discuss about the current condition of VGD. In the meeting, the implementers give emphasis to the issues that comes from the monitoring and supervision.

Table 8:
Inter-institutional Coordination among the Stakeholders

Verifying Indicators	No of Respondents	% of Respondents Answered “Yes”	% of Respondents Answered “No”
Receiving grants on time	20	90%	10%
Stakeholders meeting	20	80%	20%

Sometimes, it takes much time to distribute grants to the beneficiaries. If there is any delay, the beneficiaries are informed by the union parishad's members. Distribution can be delayed due to rigid bureaucracy system for delivering grants from the upazila food storehouse. Again, the union parishad members argued that sometimes central bureaucracy by nature has resulted in the development of lengthy procedures, rigid controls and management. The latest time of delay varies from 15 to 20 days and if it is 20+ days, beneficiaries get the grants for 2 months at a time.

Food accessibility by the beneficiaries is achieved due to a strong coordination among the institutions. Greater collaboration among government, local government and NGOs can become instrumental. Such collaboration may be based on cooperation and goodwill for promoting participation of people in poverty alleviation programmes. A congenial social set-up, democratic political environment and good governance are also the leading factors for the cause of poverty alleviation in the country. This is due to the empirical evidence shows that the collaboration between Government line agencies and NGO provides an alternative institutional approach to poverty alleviation. For better coordination among the institutions, an effective framework of poverty alleviation program should be centered on the following institutional interventions (aminuzzaman,):

- a. Enhanced institutional capabilities of the GOB agencies, the local government bodies and the NGOs;

- b. Effective and direct involvement of local government bodies;
- c. Strengthening the planning and implementation capabilities at the local level; and
- d. Developing and strengthening the relationship among the GOB agencies, local bodies and the NGOs.

Monitoring and Supervision of the Institutions:

Measuring Indicators: Number of group meetings with beneficiaries, quality of food grants

The more strength in the monitoring and supervision of the institutions, the more access to food is possible by the beneficiaries. The social structure of the country is dominated by traditional kinship pattern. More and more state intervention in the rural life is alleged to have developed dependency relationship among the central state, the local power elite and the rural poor, the local notables being the clients of the state and the rural poor as their dependent. In the situation, benefits of whatever administrative or local government reform the country initiated have not reached the poor. Both the rural and urban poor lack access to health, education, and other services provided by the central and local government. It implies there needs to have some monitoring and supervision mechanism in between the service delivery system. The problem of access into service delivery system lies in the very mechanism of patronage distribution. Resources and services are used by the central government as instruments of control, which mandate the poor to be dependent on the rich. This configuration helps central government to serve political interests. Even today, nearly a couple of decades after the return of parliamentary democracy in 1991, a somewhat fragile and undeveloped democracy contribute to continuing instability and deteriorating rule of law. Reforms in democracy and governance sectors in Bangladesh continue to fail to address these structural issues.

In this study we have considered two indicators to analyze monitoring and supervision of the policy implication. These are: no of group meeting with beneficiaries and quality of food grants.

The empirical survey examined that there are very few occasions when the selection committee held a meeting with the beneficiaries. Rather, sometimes the members maintain a relationship with the beneficiaries.

The quality of food grants provided to the beneficiaries as grants are not maintaining that much standard. Amongst 50 respondents (30 beneficiaries and 20 selection committee members), almost 70% replied that the quality of the wheat are not so good. Yet, the beneficiaries are happy as they have no other options to choose.

Gap between Allocation and Acceptance of Grants:

It was stated in the programme guidelines that, the allocation of wheat for each beneficiary was 30 kg. But, 43% of the respondents replied that they received 24-26kg of wheat as grants in kind from the programme while 36% argued that they receive 27-29kg as grants. Only a small proportion of them, which is 21%, replied that they receive 30 kg wheat as grants. None of them receive any cash from the programme. In this current session, we did not find anyone receiving any training from the programme.

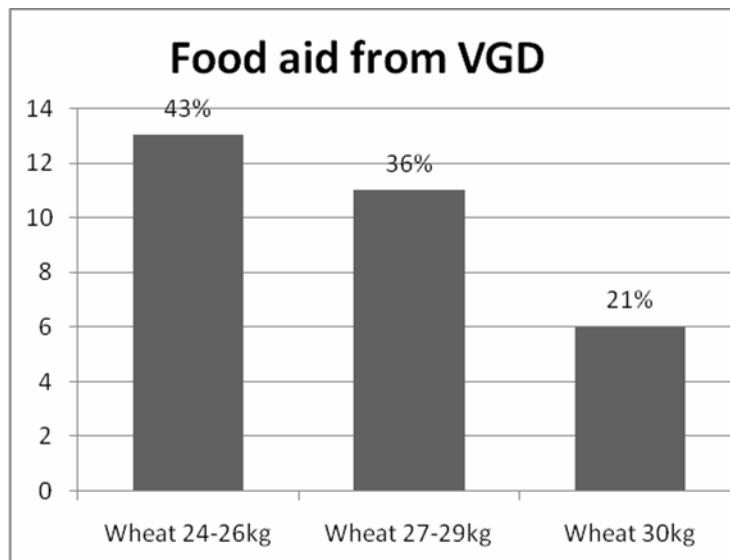


Chart 3: Distribution of wheat received by the beneficiaries

We know that the allocation of wheat for each beneficiaries were 30 kg. But almost 70% of the respondents replied that they don't receive 30kg of wheat always. While clarifying such difference, one of the UP Chairmen quoted, "Government does not provide us with the transportation cost and there are some leakages for carrying the wheat from storage to the board office (the distribution centre). All the card holders know that they are getting less than the allocation."

In Bangladesh, these sorts of poverty alleviation programmes are administered through numerous agencies, including many arms of Government, non-governmental organizations, international bi-lateral and multilateral organizations. Problems of leakage and misallocation often arise due to inadequate monitoring of the programmes. One way to reduce leakage could be to monetize benefits. Monitoring will be effective if consideration is given to minimizing the number of intermediaries in the safety net programmes.

Training for Skill Development and Micro-credit:

Measuring Indicators: Availability of resources for training, micro-credit

Training and skill development programme can enhance better livelihood to the poor and vulnerable people. In Bangladesh, livelihood and other skill development programmes are conducted by NGO's and development partners.

Training has some positive impacts on the beneficiaries. Now-a-days, almost thousands of NGO's are providing training for skill development to the poor and vulnerable people throughout the country. Basically, these types of training have been initiated by the NGO's aiming to help the very poor women to move out of poverty and attain more sustainable livelihoods. These programmes respond to the often overlooked differences between the poor, and to the fact that different interventions are needed for the poor according to the severity of the poverty they face. Therefore, while the "moderate poor" in Bangladesh can use conventional micro-credit packages very effectively, the ultra poor need a package that combines both protection and promotion of livelihoods/ livelihood strategies.

BRAC, the largest development organization, in collaboration of with Government and WFP was responsible for providing integrated development package meant to lead to the social and economic empowerment of poor households who are treated as beneficiaries under the VGD programme. It needs appreciation that a large number of NGO's are making efforts for the alleviation of poverty and overall socio-economic development of the rural poor. BRAC, as the largest NGO in Bangladesh, pursues an integrated approach and provides training, credit and logistic support to its beneficiaries. BRAC organizes the rural poor in small groups of about

twenty five persons (men and women separately) and provides them with fundamental education, and skill development training.

Along with income and employment generation, BRAC helps in forming organizations of the poor, awareness raising, gender equity, and human resource development training. The logic of these programmes is the creation of an “enabling environment” in which the poor can participate in their own development and in improving the quality of their lives.

Chowdhury and Alam 1998, defines “enabling environment” by achieving some factors such as: Gender equity, power to fight exploitation, entitlement to food and safety net, entitlement to assets (such as land), minimum income and employment, access to housing, access to health care, access to education, institutional mechanism for savings and credit, investible surplus etc. In this enabling environment, any deficiency of these factors leads to poverty. For achieving these factors the need for institutions like development institutions, NGO's and Government is obvious.

In the VGD programme, BRAC provides micro-credit to the beneficiaries selected by the programme and Government-NGO collaboration in poverty reduction efforts and to create an enabling environment for the beneficiaries.

NGO's success has been possible due to their appreciation for different magnitudes and dimensions of poverty. Now it is widely recognized (H. Rahaman, 2000) that NGO's are not only supplementing government's efforts in poverty alleviation, but also importantly, have emerged as an independent sector making visible and sustainable contribution in the social and economic development of the poor. In spite of these efforts and their successes, widespread poverty still persist in the country, particularly among the poorest of the poor who remained outside the state and NGO intervention.

At first, the beneficiaries are selected by fulfilling the criteria. As soon as the adequate number of eligible individuals shows their definite interest as an institution of the poor called ‘a Village Organization’, the Village Organization (VO) BRAC provides a programme to raise consciousness and awareness for compulsory savings. In each VO, members are trained by BRAC in different trades. Within a month of formation, VO members are allowed to apply for BRAC loans on an individual basis with collective responsibility.

Unfortunately, in this session we didn't find any training, skill development programme or micro-credit in Chatkhil Upazila. Previous experiences portray various successes of the women who have changed their economic condition assigning them under the VGD programme. According to WFP factsheet, there are numerous such success cases whereby enrolling into the VGD Programme, beneficiaries have changed their livelihood and became an example to others.

Therefore, we have gained experience about the policy implementation mismatch. In theory, training and micro-credit is there, but in this current session, as argued by the Upazila Women Affairs Officer, government fails to collaborate with BRAC.

Disposition of Implementers:

Measuring Indicator: Willingness of the staff to implement the program properly

Level of Satisfaction of the Beneficiaries:

Disposition of implementers can lead to successful policy implementation as the main objectives of such programme is to enhance some changes in the society. From the policy formulation to the successful implementation, the implementers have some norms so that some positive changes or improvements could be possible done by successful policy implementation.

From the beneficiaries' point of view, it is crystal clear that almost 70% of them are very satisfied to the programme. Most of them are saying that it is a gift for them from the Almighty Allah. Many of them give thanks to the government for these types of programmes. Several women were saying that government should provide rice instead of wheat as their demand for rice is much higher than that of wheat. We didn't find anyone dissatisfied under the programme.

The following pie chart shows the reality of what the beneficiaries think about the programme.



Chart 4: The satisfaction level of the beneficiaries to the VGD programme

Probably, the implications of these programmes are nothing but the disposition of the implementers. We can also say that, the satisfaction of the beneficiaries to the programme implementation express the impacts of successful policy implementation.

Case 2:

Mr. Babul: A Real Good Manager

Mr. Babul, a person near about 35 years of age, resides in Mohammadpur Union Parishad,. He has his wife and four other children. He has no permanent income to maintain his family. He is still quite eligible to work but with no valid reason he is unemployed.

We have found him in the UP board office. He told that he is helping the UP officers as a clerk without any payment. Only he can manage some snacks and tea on daily basis as he brings these refreshments for the officers.

He told that he was requesting to the members and the chairman to give a VGD card for his wife. His wife is now enrolling for a micro credit programme and working under a small cottage industry. Basically she is a housewife. He is also saying that if he is unable to manage any VGD card for his wife, he will manage a monthly old age benefit card for his wife while his wife is only 22.

Replying in another question, he told that there are two Union Parishad members who have a relationship with him. He was also told that what it is necessity to work, if it is possible to fulfill the family's food demand by different programmes.

Food Accessibility of VGD Beneficiaries:

Measuring Indicators: No of eating occasions per day, incidence of sickness (specially women and children due to nutritional deficiency), dietary diversity

Number of Eating Occasions of the VGD Beneficiaries: A Comparison

The four independent variables lead food accessibility implementation programme to be successful. Proportion of households consuming 2 or 3 full meals per day was identified in the survey area. The results are as follows:

Amongst the 30 respondents, 36.7% informed that they had one meal per day before joining the programme, whereas there were no beneficiaries who had only one meal after joining the programme. This is due to the impacts of the food grants received by the beneficiaries. From the very close interviews with the respondents, it is evident that almost 90% had no accessibility to breakfast before joining the programme. After joining the programme, those who had only one meal in a day ensure two meals in a day as they start getting wheat as grants which meet their demands for breakfast.

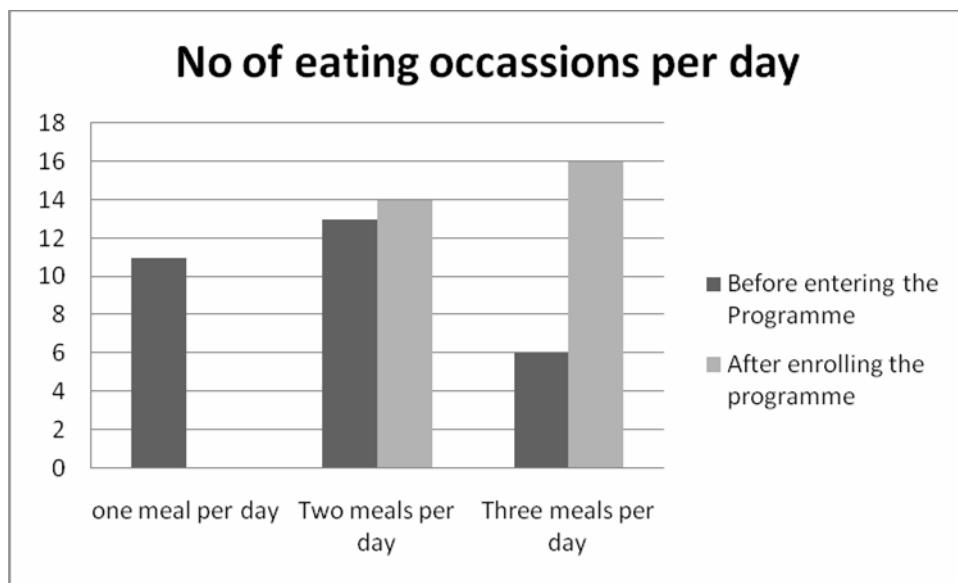


Chart 5: No of eating occasions per day by the beneficiaries

After joining the programme, the scenario has changed. Almost 47% of the respondents had the accessibility of food in two times a day whereas almost 54% had access to food three times a day which are demonstrated in the following tables:

Table 9: Meals before the programme

No of eating occasions	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 meal per day	11	36.7	36.7	36.7
2 meals per day	13	43.3	43.3	80.0
3 meals per day	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: The researcher's analysis of field data by SPSS

Table 10: Meals per day after joining the programme

No of Eating Occasions	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2 meals per day	14	46.7	46.7	46.7
3 meals per day	16	53.3	53.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: The researcher's analysis of field data by SPSS

Duration of Consumption by the VGD Grants:

Almost 50% of the respondents replied that they can consume 15 to 20 days with the wheat provided as grants by WFP. This wheat can meet only their demand of breakfast whereas almost all of them had no schedule of breakfast before joining the programme.

The following bar diagram shows the consumption pattern of the VGD beneficiaries by wheat they received. 30% can meet their breakfast demand more than 20 days whereas 15% people can meet less than 15 days in a month with these grants. One reason may be that these families have large family members.

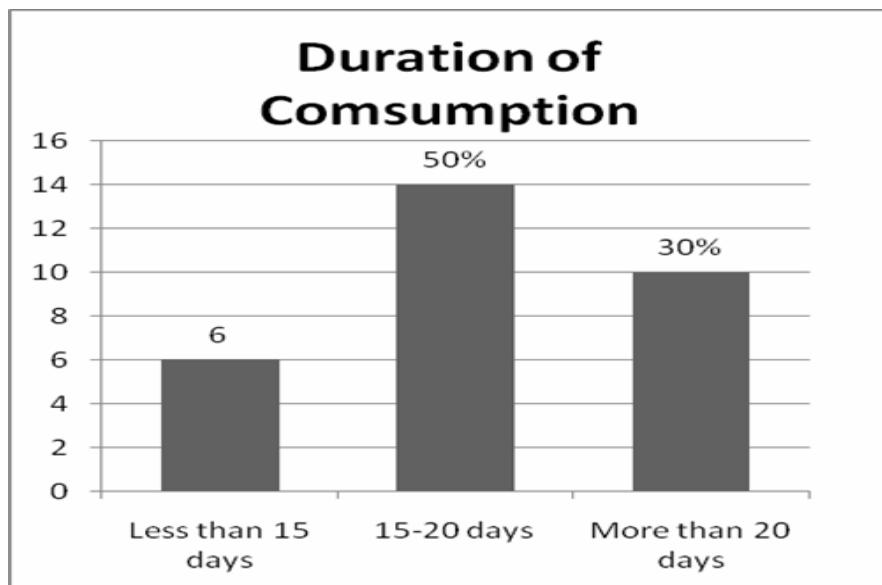


Chart 6: Consumption of wheat by the families

Now we can see that the following table is saying the same as the bar diagram depicts.

Table 11: Duration of consumption with VGD grants

Duration	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
less than 15 days	6	20.0	20.0	20.0
15 to 20 days	15	50.0	50.0	70.0
more than 20 days	9	30.0	30.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Analyzing the primary data by SPSS

Dietary Diversity of the Households:

The dietary chart of the beneficiary families are as follows. Almost 90% families have cereal foods in their daily dietary chart. It was possible due to the food grants, as replied by the beneficiaries. Again, vitamin A rich vegetables and some local fruits are available during different seasons. Almost all the people in the rural areas have some local vegetables garden and fruit trees surrounding their house. This is why, 76% poor have access to these vegetables. Meanwhile, those who have no land they can collect local green vegetables from the villagers garden at a very low cost. But, the true picture represents in the table is that food made up of milk products, oils & fats and iron rich meat and fish are found not in their dietary chart. Since

these foods are not cheap so that they can purchase from the market. Even, at present, due to inflation, prices of necessary food products become so high that not only the poor but also the lower and upper middle class families are facing severe problems. From the last few years, food prices touched almost double digits than the earlier years. So, it is no doubt that, the hardcore poor have least or no accessibility to these dietary intakes. Also, from the field study, we have found only 6.7% of the families having fish or meat in their diets, which may be once a month.

Table: 12
Dietary Diversity of the households

Description of Diets	Total no of respondents	%of beneficiary having the diet	%of beneficiary having no such diet
Cereals eg: bread, biscuits & others	30	89%	11.00%
Vitamin A rich vegetables & Fruits	30	76.60%	23.40%
Green Leafy vegetables	30	46.70%	53.30%
Milk Products & sweets eg: milk, cheese and others	30	13.30%	86.70%
Oils, fats & butter	30	83.30%	16.70%
Iron Rich organ meats & flesh meat eg: liver, kidney or other meats	30	6.70%	93.30%

Therefore, it can be said that without generating income of these families, it is not possible to have food accessibility to those people comfortably and continuously. For generating income, training and microcredit is must.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The prime objective of this study is to find out whether VGD programme can ensure food to the beneficiaries. We know, the primary objective of WFP's VGD programme is to enhance the food consumption and nutritional well-being of ultra poor people. From our survey, we have found that some improvements have occurred in poor house hold's access to food since their participation in VGD. Overall beneficiaries' food consumption reached a peak during their enrollment in the Programme.

But this improvement is not at a sustainable solution. As the programme is close, the beneficiaries will get back to their previous situation again. To sustain food accessibility of these poor, there should have some practical policies so that they can flourish their capability to generate their income through self employment or others.

The GoB initiative is seen as more a failure to create sustainable living provisions for the poor. It is observed that through VGD programme, the government follows a 'relief approach' rather than a 'development approach' to help the poor. The GoB programme components lack social awareness, human resource development and skill development training.

We know poverty cannot be eliminated but it can be eradicated by taking proper policies. Therefore, for better improvements of such policies more government supervision is required. If people go back to the situation, they were earlier then it can be said that there is no improvement happened by implementing such type of policies.

For achieving MDG's, development organizations and government should work in collaboration. But for getting true success or better output it is the responsibility of the population so that they can know that they are eligible to get entrance to these varieties of programmes. For these reasons, media can take much more responsibility to improve the awareness of this deprived population.

By visiting in the field we have an experience that WFP should provide micronutrients fortified flour and other nutrient foods to meet these poor peoples' calorie demand every day. Though WFP indicates that it is providing such but we have found that according to the beneficiaries of the survey area there were no such food and only wheat is being provided as grants to them. More unfortunately, the quality of this wheat is not up to the mark. So better quality should be ensured by WFP and should be supplied indicating their policy.

Of course, political will of the implementing local agents are more required. Low level of supervision has been observed in the survey area whereas it should be strengthening.

Finally, we can say that this is the largest food programmes prevailing throughout the country. Since it covers all over the country, there might have some self-correcting mechanisms which can be identified and eradicate by the implementers. So by improving the quality it will, no doubt, be one of the best food programmes in this country.

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Appendix 1: English Translation of the questionnaire

Set 1: questionnaire for the VGD Beneficiaries

Village Name:

VGD implemented by:

No	Implementing organization(s)	Training/skill development providing organization(s)

1. How many family members do you have?
2. Who is the main earning member in your family?
3. What is the total monthly income in your family?

		Tick(any one)	Go to Question
1.	Less than tk.1000		4
2.	Tk.1000-tk 1500		4
3	More than tk.1500		4

3. How much food did you get every month from the VGD program?
4. How much cash did you get every month from the VGD program?
5. Is it sufficient for purchasing food for your family members?

	Tick	Go to question
1. Yes		7
2. No		6

6. If not then how many days can you run your family by this amount of cash / kind?

		Tick(any one)	Go to Question
1.	Less than 15 days		7
2.	15-20 days		7
3	More than 20 days		7

7. How many times (number of meals per day) do you and your family members take food every day?

No	No of meals per day	Tick (any one)
1	Less than 2 meals	
2	Less than 3 meals	
3	More than 3 meals	

8. Please describe the foods (meals and snacks) that you and your family members ate during the day and night. Start with the first food eaten in the morning.

No	Dietary diversity/food group	Yes=1 No=0
1	Cereals: bread, biscuits, any other food made from maize, wheat or locally available grains.	
2	Vitamin A rich vegetables and fruits: pumpkin, carrots, sweet potatoes, ripe mangoes, papayas or locally available vitamin A rich vegetables and fruits.	
3	Green leafy vegetables: dark green leafy vegetables	
4	Iron rich organ meat and flesh meat: liver, kidney, heart or other organ meats or other blood-based meat, beef, chicken, goat, duck or other birds	
5	Eggs, fish like fresh or dried fish	
6	Milk, milk products and sweets: milk, cheese, yogurt or other milk products, sugar, honey, sweets and chocolates	
7	Oils, fats and beverages: oil, fats or butter added to cook food, coffee, tea, other alcoholic beverages	

9. Do you or your family members get sick occasionally?

	Tick	Go to question
1. Yes		10
2. No		11

10. What type of sickness you or your family members facing frequently?

No	Type of sickness	Tick (one or more)	Go to question
1	Seasonal fever and other seasonal diseases		11
2	Give details		11
3			11
4			11

11. What is the main source of expenses in your family? Give 1=top most exp
 2=2nd most exp
 3= exp. Next to fist and 2nd

No	Description of expenditure	Put rank (1 to 3)
1	Food	
2	Medicine	
3	Education	
4	Others	

12. Did you ever join any training provided by the Program?

	Tick	Go to question
1. Yes		13
2. No		16

13. Details of the training.....

No	Name/type of the training	Duration of the training	Training institute
1			
2			

14. After successful completion of training did you receive any loans from the organization?

No	Amount of loans	Duration of the loan	Interest rate	Organization of loan provider
1				
2				

15. After getting the loans and creating self employment is it now fulfilling you family food demand every month?

16. Did you have to pay to get enrollment to this VGD program?

	Tick	Go to question
1. Yes		17
2. No		19

17. How much did you have to pay?

		Tick(any one)	Go to Question
1.	Less than tk.500		18
2.	Tk.500-tk 1000		18
3	More than tk.1000		18

18. Who asked for this payment?

No		Tick(any one)	Go to Question
1.	VGD staff		19
2.	UP Chairman		19
3	Others		19

19. How would you rate your experience of VGD program as a tool of food accessibility to the poor people?

No		Tick(any one)
1.	Very satisfied	
2.	Satisfied	
3	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	
4	Dissatisfied	
5	Very dissatisfied	

Appendix 2: English Translation of the questionnaire

Set 2: Questionnaire for the VGD Selection committee

1. What are the criteria for selecting the individual beneficiaries?

.....

2. How do beneficiaries know that they are eligible for getting benefits from the programme?

.....

3. Did you face any pressures/ requests from the local elites for selecting the beneficiaries?

.....

4. Do you think that the selection procedure is bias free?

.....

5. Has the project fund been delivered on time?

.....

6. If there was a delay, at what level and why?

.....

7. Do you think the quality of food grants is maintaining that much standard?

.....

8. If you find any news of delivering the grants in delay do you disclose this to beneficiaries?

.....

9. What type of accounting system do you follow in your office?

.....

10. Do you think that the beneficiaries receiving grants from the program are adequate for their monthly need?

.....

11. What is the monitoring mechanism that you follow in the field level implementation?

.....

12. Do you have sufficient human and physical resources to provide training and skill development?

.....