

BRAC Research Report

April 2009

Polli Shomaj and 100-day Employment
Generation Programme: Measuring the
Targeting Effectiveness in Beneficiary
Selection

Md. Abdul Alim
Munshi Sulaiman

***Polli Shomaj* and 100-day Employment Generation
Programme: Measuring the Targeting Effectiveness in
Beneficiary Selection**

**Md. Abdul Alim
Munshi Sulaiman**

April 15 2009

Research and Evaluation Division
BRAC Centre, 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh
E-mail: altamas.p@brac.net, www.brac.net/research
Telephone: 88-02-9881265, 88-02-8824180-87

For more details about the report please contact: alim.ma@brac.net

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the role of BRAC's *polli shomaj* in targeting effectiveness in beneficiary selection of 100-day employment generation programme (EGP). Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in this study. The process of selecting beneficiaries by the *union parishad* chairmen and ward members was more or less similar despite the presence of *polli shomaj*. Nepotism, bribery, vote bank and poverty were the criteria to select the beneficiaries. The quantitative findings show that there was no significant difference in the targeting effectiveness in beneficiary selection between areas with and without *polli shomaj*. These results were also consistent with the findings from national data. There were many reasons for this. Firstly, the characteristics of *polli shomaj* as a group such as membership, frequent interaction, interlocking roles, leadership, collective perception and interdependent goals were important but few of these were found in them. Secondly, group cohesiveness was essential to achieve the goal of *polli shomaj*, but the necessary factors for group cohesiveness were lacking in *polli shomaj*. In addition, the neglect of proper policy to form *polli shomaj* and lack of fostering them efficiently were considered as constraints for the *polli shomaj* to succeed in beneficiary selection. Thirdly, corruption of the EGP authority was found as a prime hurdle for not including the *polli shomaj* as targeted beneficiaries.

INTRODUCTION

Social safety nets for poverty reduction have become an important tool for achieving poverty alleviation and have proven to perform well in several developing countries. However, broad-based growth through appropriate economic policies is needed to benefit short-term poverty alleviation programmes designed through social safety nets (Coady 2004). Depending on the objectives of social safety nets in developing countries, they can be classified into six types; income transfer through cash; food related transfer programmes; price subsidies; human capital related social safety nets; public works programmes; and micro credit and informal insurance programmes (Babu 2003). This report, however, mainly focuses on cash transfer through employment generation programmes. This programme attempts to provide assistance to poor households to reduce the risk and vulnerability of falling into a poverty trap. Tabor (2002) defines these programmes as the provision of assistance to the poor that could be used in periods of crisis or as a short-or medium-term poverty alleviation measure.

The Government of Bangladesh has taken a special nation-wide social safety net programme called 100-day employment generation programme (EGP). Its principal objective is to bring unemployed ultra poor and unskilled labour in touch with a safety net to protect them falling into a poverty trap. This programme has special focus on vulnerable areas such as monga-stricken (severely poverty stricken areas), river-erosion areas, char land¹, and haor-baor (open water body). Generally, the people in these areas remain unemployed for about five months a year due to lack of work opportunities. Therefore, the government is trying to provide them with employment during this slack period to improve their food security status.

Ensuring targeting effectiveness (both inclusion and exclusion error) in beneficiary selection is a real challenge for any safety net programme. Targeting is an issue that has received wide attention in designing safety net programmes to reduce leakages and increase the effectiveness of the programmes reaching the intended beneficiaries (Coady 2004). Experience from development interventions shows that unless the programme is designed specifically for the poorest through a targeting mechanism, the poorest will either be missed or they will exclude themselves (Morduch and Haley 2002). Even when the poorest are targeted through targeting methods such as individual assessment, self-selection and tagging or categorical (classified by Grosh, 1994), there is a tendency of creeping towards the top of the target population (Navajas et al. 2000). Therefore, the poorest have the least chance of getting assistance from development programmes, even though they require it the most. The fair allocation of resources is the most important conceptual issue of targeting (Wachter and Galiani 2003). This may be achieved through self-selection targeting process. In self-targeting mechanism, a programme is designed in such a way so that only those who really need assistance will choose to participate (Ferreira *et al.* 1999). This mechanism has the advantages for the individuals to choose to participate or not and creates the possibility

¹ Sandy islands in river where hardly any crops can be grown

of being more flexible to unobserved household shocks than other mechanisms (Sumarto *et al.* 2000).

Substantial evidence suggests that community participation i.e., self-selection targeting can lead to improved project performance and better targeting (Baland and Platteau 1996; Isham, Kaufmann and Pritchett 1999; La Ferrara 1999; Narayan and Pritchett 1999; Wade 1988). A survey of dozens of country experiences with social safety nets conducted by Subbarao *et al.* (1997) for the World Bank contends that programmes that involve communities, local groups, and non-government organizations (NGO) can achieve better targeting outcomes.

BRAC as an NGO has been forming ward-level forum of poor people called *polli shomaj* – better consider as a group - since 1998 that voluntarily participate (i.e., self-selection) in different safety net programmes. It was assumed that *polli shomaj* played an important role in the targeting process to make better selection in this EGP. The reason behind this is that this type of group in the rural areas could ensure good practice through which a better selection process of the government services could be conducted. In other words, government could engage this group for effective selection, and implementation of the different development projects at a bottom level. With this in mind, the objective of this study was to look into whether *polli shomaj* plays any role in targeting the beneficiaries for the 100-day EGP.

100-DAY EMPLOYMENT GENERATION PROGRAMME AND *POLLI SHOMAJ*

Among the extreme poor people, a lot of seasonal poverty exists, especially in Monga prone, river erosion and Char areas in Bangladesh. In these areas, the poor remain unemployed for three months during September to November and a further two months from March to April, totaling five months a year. These ultra poor people are leading extremely vulnerable lives because of their reduced earning capacity resulting from unemployment on the one hand and recent price hikes on the other.

Some poor people are brought under social safety net through different programmes such as cash for work, food for work, test relief, vulnerable group development (VGD), vulnerable group feeding (VGF), and old age and widow allowances. However, no specific programme was outlined specifically for the extreme and unemployed poor. As such a programme was planned for the rural extreme poor especially for the capable unemployed to create employment, increase purchasing power, create wealth, and develop and maintain small scale rural infrastructure and communication which was known as the 100-day employment generation programme (EGP).

All of the 64 districts of Bangladesh were under this programme with priority given to river erosion, flood- affected Monga prone, haor-baor and Char areas. These areas were selected on the basis of the poverty map in consultation with the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (MFDM), Finance Division and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). The concerned *Upazila* Nirbahi Officer (UNO) prepared ward-wise numbers of beneficiaries based on the concentration of poverty and unemployment, and the amount of *Upazila*-wise cards issued by MFDM. Extreme poor, permanent capable

residents and marginal farmers who were eager to work but unemployed and unskilled were qualified to be beneficiaries. One person from each family, irrespective of sex, aged between 18 and 50 years, who did not receive benefits from other on-going social safety net programmes were selected to get work under EGP.

For implementation of the programme a union-wise appointment of supervising officer was selected by the UNO, who finalized the list of works/projects and labour and ensure the involvement of NGOs working in poverty alleviation of the concerned areas. Notice for registration was sent to the heads of schools/colleges, offices, bank managers, community chiefs, respectable persons, and also hanged in open place. The interview committee was formed with *union parishad* members, teachers, religious leaders and respectable persons. The entire selected person had come to UP office for registration and union disaster management committee recommended the list of beneficiary and projects to the UNO. The daily wage rate was Tk.100 under this programme but if a registered person would not be given any work within 15 days he or she would be paid unemployment allowances of Tk. 40 for the first thirty days and Tk. 50 for the rest of the period.

Polli shomaj/group on the other hand is a ward-level organization that consists of representatives from several village organizations (VO)² and external poor. It serves as a forum through which poor people can work to claim their rights and entitlements and preserve their dignity. In general, the role of *polli shomaj* is to fight all forms of corruption or injustice that affect members' daily lives; cooperate in the implementation of local development activities; give institutional form and a wider purpose to VOs; build strong, democratic, and accountable people's organization; develop leaders among the poor; mobilize public resources and services through collective action and; give a political voice and thereby representation to poor women in local bodies. There are currently 12,370 *polli shomaj* throughout.

In each ward, representatives from between 2-9 VOs and from among other poor people within the community constitute a *polli shomaj*. Each general body consists of 15 to 27 members, from whom a management committee is elected for a term of three years. The committee meets monthly with the facilitation of a BRAC programme organizer (PO), who is responsible for social development. Seventy percent of the committee members usually need to attend the meeting to be quorum. Apart from emergency meetings, each *polli shomaj* holds four special meetings a year to be attended by all members.

Since its inception PS has had some striking success in mediating conflicts related to land and family matters, resisting social oppression through collective social action, asserting their rights and entitlements. Specifically members succeeded in securing 45,028 VGD cards and gaining 29,137 old age allowances and 17,613 widow allowances for the local elderly and widowed poor respectively (BRAC 2007). Similar to the success in other social safety net programmes mentioned above, *polli shomaj* itself was expected to have a role in beneficiary selection in the 100-day EGP.

² Village organization is a group of poor people who have less than fifty decimal lands and sell labour 100 days in a year continuously. It consists of 25 to 45 members headed by a president. It has three committees.

METHODS

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in data collection. For the quantitative section, the study leveraged on an existing baseline data-set collected for the Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction (CFPR) study in 2007. This survey included detail socio-demographic information of all groups of households.

The CFPR survey was conducted in 40 branch locations of BRAC in 13 districts covering all households living in over 1600 TUP (Targeting ultra poor) spots³. Out of 848 spots 319 spots were selected based on presence of *polli shomaj*, and the rest were without *polli shomaj*. The second group had been used as comparison group. The information on whether there were any *polli shomaj* in the spots was collected from BRAC POs.

Later, all the TUP spots in each branch were visited to match the households surveyed in the CFPR baseline with the members who were selected for 100-day EGP. The list of selected beneficiaries in those areas was collected from *union parishad*. *Polli shomaj* members who were proposed for EGP but not selected and the members who were selected were identified in the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) list.

Targeting effectiveness was assessed by the relative poverty status of the beneficiaries and the non-beneficiaries in those communities. The analysis was done by comparing the level of targeting between the areas where *polli shomaj* were present and areas without *polli shomaj*.

The quantitative analysis would be able to reflect on the effectiveness of *polli shomaj*'s engagement in selection process of the programme. This was, however, constrained by the survey being conducted only in CFPR districts, and thus this study could not tell whether the scenario would be similar in other districts. A nationally representative survey was conducted to assess the EGP. That study, on the other hand, had been able to reflect on this issue of *polli shomaj*'s role in national context. This also allowed us to compare whether *polli shomaj* could be equally effective in CFPR and non-CFPR districts.

On the other hand, in a retrospective fashion the qualitative part documented the selection process of the beneficiary and how *polli shomaj* might have had a role for self-selection and to improve targeting.

The technique of data collection in the qualitative part was focus group discussion (FGD) with *polli shomaj* members, in-depth interview with the selected beneficiary, *union parishad* members and chairman. In total, eight FGDs, 26 in-depth interviews with the selected *polli shomaj* members and 17 POs were conducted, in addition to 30

³ Among other steps for targeting ultra poor selecting village is bit final stage of this process. Once the villages are selected, several participatory wealth-ranking exercises are conducted to cover all possible locations of a village where extreme poor live. These sub-village level locations are known as spots, which typically constitute 100–150 households.

female and male ward members and 10 *union parishad* chairpersons being interviewed. Laxmipur branch was purposively selected to conduct in-depth study to look into the role of *polli shomaj*, as there were *polli shomaj* in majority of the villages of this branch where TUP baseline was conducted.

The role of *polli shomaj* in beneficiary selection for the 100-day EGP was determined by how they gained knowledge of EGP and how they had been able to convince the ward members and in some cases UP chairman to get them selected. In other words, how much had the *polli shomaj* been able to put pressure to the UP chairmen and ward members to get the *polli shomaj* and other external poor nominated for EGP. Moreover, the nature of beneficiary selection by ward members and chairman was also taken into consideration to evaluate the role of *polli shomaj*. The reasons for the better or worse role of *polli shomaj* in beneficiary selection was also explored based on an analyses of the *polli shomaj* as a group and their cohesiveness including the previous activities (i.e., three years before data collection period) such as meeting conduction, VGD, VGF, elderly and widow allowance acquirement, participation in *shalish* (Informal justice system), and human rights violation protested.

BENEFICIARY SELECTION PROCESS

As per of the government policy, the beneficiaries for the EGP should be selected from the community through a rigorous process by ensuring the involvement of the people themselves in the community. Ahmed *et al.* (2008) stated that there were two dimensions of local politics to understand how targeting, selection and the distribution of benefits take place in practice. These are political expectations and poor people lobby.

Political expectations

There is strong moral and political pressure on local elites, whether as patrons, community leaders, or as politicians, to provide for the poor. The strength of this expectation is likely to vary between social contexts, but local leadership appears to be substantially crafted on the ability to deliver, regularly demonstrated (Hossain 2005).

Poor people lobby

There is evidence that poor women are more successful at gaining access to safety nets if they do the political work involved in laying claim to them (Matin and Hulme 2003; Ahmed *et al.* 2004a).

Conning (2002), on the other hand, has mentioned several advantages of involving community in targeting the beneficiary for safety net programme. There may be lower costs of administration simply because community agents, living in low-cost rural areas, do not need to be paid as much as educated bureaucrats. Involving community groups as stakeholders may lead to better screening, monitoring and accountability. Community people also have better information for identification of needs; therefore, households may in turn have less incentive or opportunity to provide false information on assets, income or shocks. Through this process, disadvantaged groups who may be empowered and become better are able to articulate and press demands.

Despite those advantages, Conning also found some disadvantages engaging communities in targeting beneficiaries. Community-based targeting may lead to, or increase, conflict and divisions within the community; it may also be subverted to serve elite interests. It may impose high opportunity costs on community leaders.

Selection process of *Union Parishad* chairmen

The selection of the intended beneficiary for the EGP by ward members and the chairmen often showed the number of disadvantages than the advantages of the community-based targeting process. The UP chairmen divided the total number of beneficiaries to be selected among the ward members based on the population size, number of voters, and poverty status of the wards, although, the demand for

participation in EGP was far more than the supply from the government. The chairman mostly did not follow the procedure that government set in the beneficiary selection. The chairmen decentralized the selection processes among the ward members in most cases, and even then the chairmen had the executive power on selection.

Like other safety net programmes, the chairmen selected his relatives (either close or distant), friends, nearest persons, people who campaigned during his/her election, and who gave him/her money as beneficiary. Similar observations were made by Ahmed *et al.* (2008) as follows,

A social safety net programme may be used as part of the resources with which local political elites reward their clients within their patronage networks. In practice, local political leaders may siphon off resources intended for poor beneficiaries directly into their own pockets or those of their supporters. Or they may select their own factional supporters, relatives or political activists as beneficiaries of programmes, including those who are not poor.

To remain guiltless, the chairmen conducted a lottery in front of people at UP office to select the targeted number of beneficiaries, however, it was found to be nothing but a way of defrauding the people. Some of the selected beneficiary said:

“Without money there was no work. Lottery was nothing but a show. Who had given money, were in the lottery contest. On the other hand, who did not give money were the relatives of ward members and UP chairman.”

In order to stay away from the deceitfulness of the chairmen and ward members, and for better targeting, an army led committee was formed to select the beneficiaries as well. An announcement about EGP was made by in catchments areas where interested villagers were asked to be present to participate. The chairmen and ward members were advised to exclude the persons who were already receiving government facilities such as VGD and VGF cards, and elderly and widow allowances. Then the army officer selected the person as beneficiaries who were not well dressed and not healthy. The remaining in the line was excluded by the committee. This selection process was not applauded by the community people as some of the fairly well-off were selected. Moreover, despite this rigorous process the chairmen and ward members had been able to manipulate the beneficiary selection process. The persons who were the beneficiary of VGD and VGF were selected for EGP with the help of the chairmen and ward members.

Ahmed *et al.* (2008) also mentioned that leakage, corruption and the use of safety net resources for patronage are the main problems of government safety net programme especially food security programme for the poor. In some areas the daily income of the poor from daily labour or pulling rickshaw or van was found higher than the EGP, and as such people in that region were not interested in this programme. A person mentioned, “We did not want to be involved in EGP for three reasons: lower wage, irregular wage and percentage of wage to be given to the member in some areas.” In that case the chairmen and members brought many beneficiaries under EGP, who were VGD and VGF card holders, and receiving cash through widow and elderly allowance.

Moreover, the number of beneficiaries listed in the document was different from the people who were working in the field. The respondents reported that there was a list of 60 beneficiaries in master roll, but only forty-two were working. The chairmen and members admitted that their expenditure was much higher and therefore they counterfeited the number to minimize the loss.

The chairmen and their associates in some areas selected the beneficiaries for EGP without involving their ward members. Besides, beneficiaries were also selected from municipal areas. A local man reported, "The chairman prepared a list of beneficiaries of which 50% were not found in reality." Ward members in this UP were given little chance to be involved with any development activities let alone the 100-day programme.

Female ward members in most cases were not considered as an important part in beneficiary selection process in almost all areas. Some of them were also not interested to be involved in this kind of activity as the society and their family did not inspire them. However, in northern region of Bangladesh female ward members were involved in the selection of beneficiaries, although their numbers were lesser than the male counterparts. A larger number of beneficiaries in each UP were selected by the male ward members. Mentioning the reason in this regard the chairman said:

"As female ward members are unable to supervise the labourer they were excluded to be involved in the beneficiary selection process."

The chairmen complained against the government policy. A lot of expenditure took place in administering the whole process of targeting, selecting and implementing the social safety net programmes but there were no sources of fund to meet those costs.

Ward members' selection process

Ward members prepared a list of beneficiary to be selected for EGP. However, the members sought help from village defense police, their close associates, village elites, and school teachers to prepare the list of beneficiary for EGP. Similar to the chairmen, ward members also emphasized some decisive factors such as relatives, their closest friend/neighbours, bribery, economic condition of the supposed beneficiaries, and number of voter for their last/future election to select the beneficiaries.

However, bribing to the ward members was the main motivating factor at play to select beneficiaries. A selected beneficiary mentioned:

"One day I met with the chowkidar (village defense police) who asked for money for the ward member to get selected for this programme. I was reluctant to give bribe to get selected since I was poor. Chowkidar replied that without giving money you would not get selected. I then borrowed money on high interest for the member."

A lot of evidences of bribery of ward members were brought to light by the villagers. A villager stated, "A UP member bought a brand new motorcycle after 15 days of EGP. The economic condition of that member was not so well-off to buy a motorcycle within this short period of time." Ward members received Tk. 500 to 1,000

from each of the selected beneficiary through broker or in some cases, themselves directly from the beneficiary. The broker or the members made a deal of the amount of money with the intended beneficiary.

A female ward member reported two types of corruption had taken place. Firstly, members received money from each of the beneficiaries and secondly, members withdrew the salary from bank against 80 workers for example, while, in fact, there were only 60 workers working in the field. In other words, members siphoned off Tk. 2000 everyday. Witnesses also mentioned, “What the chairman and members had not been able to earn in five years they earned in two months.” Members also selected non-poor people in this programme. They also selected more than one person from a household such as husband and wife, although it was the violation of selection procedure. The beneficiaries wished to give bribes calculating the cost-benefit of participating in this programmes. Their income was much higher than their ‘hush’ money. Thus they preferred bribing the members than to remaining jobless.

In some cases the ward members ignored the name of the poor people in the community as they were identified as opposition party supporters. The community people proposed their names, however the members removed them from the list arguing that they were only able to select a limited number of beneficiaries. On the other hand, an interviewee mentioned that villagers who did not vote for that member were crossed off the list. Disputes between members and villagers were also the reason of non-selection in this programme. Female ward members were also found to be corrupt by receiving bribe from the beneficiaries. A beneficiary mentioned:

“Shefali (ward member) selected the beneficiary on the basis of two criteria - close relative and money. She selected one fourth of her targeted beneficiaries from her relative and from her own ward. And the rest of the beneficiaries of the other two wards got selected by bribing her Tk.500 each.”

To remain above suspicion the ward members showed the list of the beneficiary in a meeting where the Imam (Religious leader), village elites, UP chairman and villagers were present. They finalised the list of the beneficiaries when all of attended village elites and villagers agreed to select him or her. But the members changed many names of beneficiaries in that list before submitting it to the chairman.

Exploring the role of *polli shomaj* in beneficiary selection

There were two dimensions in discussing the role of *polli shomaj* in beneficiary selection for EGP. Firstly, whether *polli shomaj* competed for being beneficiary and thus selected or not selected; secondly, there was no role of *polli shomaj* in beneficiary selection. Rather other factors appeared to have played significant role in selecting beneficiaries for EGP.

Table 1 shows that there is no significant difference in targeting effectiveness between with and without *polli shomaj*. In terms of poverty likelihood, those who were selected from areas with *polli shomaj* have a slightly lower likelihood (1.8%) of being poor. Again in terms of total asset value no significant difference was observed between the difference of asset value of participants and non participants in areas with

and without *polli shomaj*. Similar findings were observed at the national level in targeting effectiveness of the beneficiaries selection in with and without *polli shomaj* areas (Appendix 1).

Polli shomaj proposed the names of the poor to the ward members and, in some cases, to the chairmen. Some of them were selected as beneficiary for the 100-day EGP in different branches. *Polli shomaj* members, especially the *polli shomaj* president and the concerned programme officials of BRAC considered their grand success in targeting the genuine beneficiaries. Official programme data show that out of the total number proposed more than half of the beneficiaries got selected in this programme from different categories (for example A, B, C based on their performance) of *polli shomaj* (appendix 2). It seems that the *polli shomaj* had a role, to some extent, in beneficiary selection but the selected and not-selected beneficiary of EGP explained this success differently.

Proposing and bargaining to the ward members and the chairmen were the pathways to get selected for EGP. None of the *polli shomaj* except one, in an organized way, was reported to have proposed the list of the beneficiaries to the ward members. Rather, in most cases *polli shomaj* members, for their own interest, contacted the ward members to get selected. Although few of the *polli shomaj* members were selected but ward members denied them selecting as *polli shomaj* members. In this regard a ward member mentioned, “I selected them not as PS members but as poor neighbour.” The chairman also expressed similarly that he did not know about PS and its activities. He selected them for EGP as they were poor.”

The acceptance and status of the *polli shomaj* was very low to the ward members and chairmen. Therefore, *polli shomaj* members were reproached when they contacted for EGP to the ward members including chairmen. For example, a *polli shomaj* president stated, “When I proposed the list of beneficiaries for EGP, the ward member reproached me and stated, “You are not in a position to recruit people and I will not accept any list from you. If you need work I will give you.” I proposed him money but member refused to take it saying,” If I receive money I will receive from other people not from you.” *Polli shomaj* members were also reproached previously when they asked for VGD cards. *Polli shomaj* members stated, “Ward member insults us saying that which governments you are that you have brought list? Why do I give you cards?” Therefore, *polli shomaj* members were not interested to go to ward members for EGP this time. Sometimes, PO motivated the *polli shomaj* members to claim the rights, i.e., their inclusion in EGP but in reaction *polli shomaj* members mentioned, “If we go to ward member we will be beaten by his shoe. If you want to be beaten you can go with us.”

Table 1. Comparison of poverty likelihood between *polli shomaj* and without *polli shomaj* household by selected variables

Variables	<i>Polli shomaj</i>			Without <i>polli shomaj</i>			Diff in diff	t-value
	Selected	Not selected	diff*	Selected	Not selected	Diff		
Max education in the HH (average)	4.4	5.6	-1.3	4.1	5.5	-1.4	0.151	1.075
Earner-non earner ratio	37.5	37	0.5	39	38	1	-0.5	-0.078
Female headed HH	0.05	0.1	-0.05	0.07	0.1	-0.03	-0.02	-2.392**
% of School going children (6-17years)	62.16	67.3	-5.14	56.5	67	-10.5	5.36	2.7*
% of NGO members in the HH	38	35	3	35	33	2	1	0.35
% of daily labour in HH	73	42	31	73	43	30	1	0.819
% of members staying abroad	1	2	-1	0	2	-2	1	-0.227
% of house wall brick or tin	28.11	42.58	-14.47	19.9	37.12	-17.22	2.75	1.724*
% of HH having separate kitchen	67	75	-8	69	76	-7	-1	-1.15
% of household remaining sanitary latrine	36.83	51.43	-14.6	27.27	45.07	-17.8	3.2	1.95*
% of HH remaining electricity connection	13	23	-10	8	19	-11	1	0.087
% of HH remaining cultivable land	19.9	40.53	-20.63	19.54	42.18	-22.64	2.01	1.22
% of HH remaining cow	26.97	40.41	-13.44	28.72	42.54	-13.82	0.38	0.233
% of HH remaining table	50.34	63.66	-13.32	47.63	63.18	-15.55	2.23	1.406
% of HH remaining mobile phone	2.7	13	-10.3	2.6	12.17	-9.57	-0.73	-0.659
% of HH remaining television	3.5	11.41	-7.91	2.4	10.6	-8.2	0.29	0.338
Asset value (average)	65028.14	243527.9	-178499.76	60576.6	250473.2	-189897	11396.84	0.555
Poverty likelihood (poverty scorecard)	61.68	44.33	17.35	66.47	47.29	19.18	-1.83	-1.656*

** Statistically significant at the 5% level, and * at the 10% level respectively, HH= Household head. *diff=difference

The beneficiaries in this study reported to have been selected not because of *polli shomaj*'s role but different factors such as bribery, nepotism, needy and vote bank. Similar findings were reported in the study of Hossain and Osman (2007). They mention:

Relief goods and safety net resources distributed by UP roughly followed a formula of distribution to each of the following: a) needy eligible people, b) eligible poor or vulnerable people with good political connections or vote bank potentials, and c) ineligible, often wealthy people with local political influence or relations.

A female ward member who was also a *polli shomaj* president selected most of the beneficiary from non-targeted group and claimed this as a success of *polli shomaj*. As a *polli shomaj* president she described the success of the *polli shomaj* as such, "We are successful in selecting the beneficiaries of EGP in terms of number, as 9 out of 15 were selected and 8 of them from *polli shomaj*." But almost all of the selected beneficiaries were from her kin group. The remaining members were selected by giving money to the *polli shomaj* president. The *polli shomaj* members who were unable to give money were excluded, although they were very much eligible for the programme. A *polli shomaj* exclaimed, "We as the *polli shomaj* voted the *polli shomaj* president to make her ward member so that we may easily get support from union parishad but she has been corrupted."

Some of the *polli shomaj* members were selected as they were poor neighbour of the ward member. Other *polli shomaj* members were selected as they worked in ward member's land; some other was member's relatives; and some campaigned in favour of the member during the last election. On the other hand, the selected *polli shomaj* members reported their ignorance about the proposal of their husband's name to the ward member. Most of the *polli shomaj* members personally contacted the ward member to get them selected but they were ignored. The *polli shomaj* members who were selected were to give Tk. 500 each. The money was given on installment basis in cases.

Personal relationship between village elite and the selected beneficiary played a role for the *polli shomaj* members to get selected for EGP rather than the role of *polli shomaj* as a whole. *Polli shomaj* members were nominated for EGP by a village elite as they had a working and personal relationship. Selected members knew about the programme while working in an elite's home. A *polli shomaj* member mentioned signifying the personal and working relationship, "The role of the members was salient to get my husband selected. I was not informed about this programme from *polli shomaj* and I also did not know anything about proposing my husband's name by PS."

Lack of detail information about EGP was also a general predicament for the *polli shomaj* especially the eligible candidate. In this regard, majority of selected beneficiary came to know from different sources such as ward members, villagers, shopkeepers, chamcha (flatterer), and chowkidar, although it was claimed that *polli shomaj* members and programmes of BRAC first provided the information on it. Even, sometimes *polli shomaj* members contacted the ward member but the selection of beneficiary had already been over.

REASONS OF FAILURE IN PLAYING ROLE IN BENEFICIARY SELECTION

Previous activities of *Polli Shamaj*

To determine the strength of *polli shomaj* which might have an impact in beneficiary selection for EGP their previous activities such as their meetings, protesting human rights violation, and obtaining VGD and VGF cards, widow and elderly allowance, and their participation in *shalish* (Informal justice system) were reviewed.

Regardless of *polli shomaj* categories a good number of meetings were reported to have been held last year (Appendix 3). However, there were different views towards the number of meetings held between *polli shomaj* members and the official record. A *polli shomaj* member stated, "I am the nearest of *polli shomaj* president. I live next to her home. As *polli shomaj* member my name is written in the register but for long time no meeting was held." Other *polli shomaj* member mentioned, "There was no meeting held in my *polli shomaj* since flood (in 2008)." In cases, irregular meetings were held and most of the *polli shomaj* were unable to show the meeting register. In response to this information the concerned official mentioned, "*polli shomaj* members are illiterate, so they can not provide information properly. They also cannot remember everything."

Although there were *polli shomaj* meetings, including EGP, the presence of *polli shomaj* members was low. Members reported to have many reasons for their low presence in meeting such as business in their personal jobs; internal dispute between *polli shomaj* president and secretary; restriction from family members especially husband; and unable to get any incentive. The first and foremost reason of their absence in the meeting was that no material help from BRAC was received, although they were aware of the goal of the *polli shomaj*. A member stated, "We have become member of *polli shomaj* to get VGD, VGF, etc. from BRAC."

Polli shomaj was reported to have played better role in protesting the human rights violation (HRV) and participating in *shalish* (Appendix 4). But members reported that an attempt was made to stop child marriage by *polli shomaj*, which was considered as successful case, but finally they failed to do this for certain reasons. Firstly, if the marriage was broken the *polli shomaj* member could not take the responsibility of managing such a bride. Secondly, if the police were informed, the parents of the child would have to face court. Thirdly, the money that was already spent for making arrangements of marriage ceremony would be difficult to be managed again. *Polli shomaj* members also took the matter into consideration that they would have to live together in the community and needed peace rather than conflict among them. Instead of *polli shomaj*, the PO, in another incident, mediated a problem to be solved related with verbal divorce. He managed to convince both the party about the impact of verbal divorce and finally resolved it.

Polli shomaj members reported to have not participated in *shalish*, rather they were viewers. The reason behind the reluctance in participating in *shalish* was that their status was not as high in the community as to conduct or participate in *shalish*. Besides their ignorance about the law related to the problems that were solved in the *shalish* was a constraint for successful participation. In addition, *polli shomaj* were unable to protest the injustice done in *shalish* as they had to depend on the head of the *shalish* for various reasons. Therefore, they were not interested to take part. There was an exception in a *polli shomaj* in which a *polli shomaj* president who was a HRLS *shebika* alone provoked to arrange a *shalish* had been able to convince the head of *shalish* to solve the dispute according to her argument. No other PS members were present in that *shalish*.

Polli shomaj members were reported to have been more successful in obtaining VGF cards compared to other social safety net programme (Appendix 5). However, *polli shomaj* president and members were unable to tell how many of them were from *polli shomaj*. Similar to EGP, corruption and leakages were taken place in the selection of the beneficiaries for VGD and VGF. A *polli shomaj* member mentioned, “When I proposed the ward member to get selected for VGF she demanded Tk. 1000. As I was unable to give money I did not get that card.” *Polli shomaj* members and other poor were to pay money to the ward member to get selected for elderly allowance.

Polli shomaj members were also refused to be selected for VGF, as they were unable to pay bribes to the ward members and the chairmen. The chairmen reproached *polli shomaj* members when they contacted for VGF as such, “He is not going to receive any list from you for VGF. Am I doing a job for *polli shomaj*?”

Constraints faced by the *polli shomaj*

The virtuous objective of BRAC to form *polli shomaj* is to encourage local councils to allocate resources to those in need. However, this forum is facing several types of constraints in availing their rights and entitlements. These constraints can be divided into two: internal and external. The internal constraints include lack of group characteristics and group cohesiveness of the *polli shomaj* and lack of monitoring to the *polli shomaj*. The external constraints include the attitudes of the villagers and village elites towards the *polli shomaj*, lack of proper policy to monitor the local council, and dependency on the elite. The external constraints may affect the internal characteristics of the *polli shomaj*.

***Polli shomaj* as a group**

Before going into the discussion of constraints faced by *polli shomaj* as a group it is necessary to understand what the group is. Brodbeck (1958) simply defines group in the following way:

A group is an aggregate of individuals standing in certain descriptive (i.e. observable) relations to each other. The kinds of relations exemplified will, of course, depend upon, or determine, the kind of group, whether it be a family, an audience, a committee, a labour union, or crowd.

However, like Broadbeck other sociologists and social psychologist have different approaches to define group and based on their approaches Cartwright and Zander (1968) have summarized a list of attributes that impressed various theorists as being especially important features of groups. It seems likely, then, that when a set of people constitutes a group, one or more of the following statements will characterize them: a) they engage in frequent interaction; b) they define themselves as members; c) they are defined by others as belonging to the group; d) they share norms concerning matters of common interest; e) they participate in a system of interlocking roles; f) they identify with one another as a result of having set up the same model-object or ideals in their supper-ego; g) they find the group to be rewarding; h) they pursue promotively interdependent goals; i) they have a collective perception of their unity; j) they tend to act in a unitary manner toward the environment.

If we consider each of the attributes to explain the *polli shomaj* as a group disappointment may emerge. For example, it was not found in most of the PS to have frequent interaction among members because the meeting in most *polli shomaj* was not regularly taken place. Despite meetings, the presence of members was not adequate as it should be.

It is not true that any arbitrary collection of people constitute a group. To qualify as a group they must be related to one another in some definite way. In other words, membership of a group is essential (Cartwright and Zander 1968). This point of view has been developed further by Lewin (1948) who considers a collection of individuals as group who have relations to one another that make them interdependent to some significant degree. We take the members of a family as an example in which they express a high degree of interdependence with respect to a variety of matters of great importance to them all. *Polli shomaj* members were found to have membership to the group but the property of interdependence among their constituent members was seldom noticed. To obtain or participate any of the government safety net programmes and to protest any human rights violation *polli shomaj* members were not found to have such feeling.

Frequency of interaction is one objective criterion of a group which help define the interacting persons themselves as 'members' i.e., that they have patterned expectations of forms of interaction which are morally binding on them and on the other members but not on those regarded as 'outside' the group (Merton 1957). The persons in interaction will be defined by others as belonging to the group. *Polli shomaj* members did not have any patterned expectations or forms of interaction and interlocking roles which would help them develop as a strong group. Besides, *polli shomaj* members were recognized as BRAC beneficiaries rather than as *polli shomaj* members in the community.

The distinctive thing about a group is that its members should share norms about something whether it may be great or small (Newcomb 1951). *Polli shomaj* members in most cases were found to have less interested to share about the common interest for example EGP which would affect their livelihood.

Scheidlinger (1952), on the contrary, describes that group formation occurs when several individuals have used the same objects as a means of relieving similar internal

conflicts. Furthermore, leader might be an object of identification on the basis of the group members' love for him/her, or fear of him/her – an object of the group member's love or aggressive drives or both. As a result of these common ties to the leader, all of which might operate together in any one group, the affective bonds among the individuals come into being. Unfortunately, in most cases, the efficient leadership who would really be benevolent and would be able to keep the members united and active was missing in *polli shomaj*.

The gratification that members derive from belonging to the group is reported to be important. It is argued that unless a collection of people, in their relationships, provides some degree of satisfaction to each member, the collection will not remain a distinctive social entity (Bass 1960). *Polli shomaj* members to an extent were not satisfied with their groups as this entity was unable to provide the service they expected. Since members did not get their entitlements such as VGD, VGF, EGP, etc. as a *polli shomaj* they sought other ways to get that.

Smith (1945) illustrates the group as a unit of consisting of a plural number of separate organisms (agents) who have a collective perception of their unity and who have the ability or tendency to act and or are acting in a unitary manner toward the environment. *Polli shomaj* as a group seldom acted upon in a unitary manner pursuing any kind of rights and entitlements or even solving social problems they faced.

Group cohesiveness and other factors

One of the main objectives of the *polli shomaj* is to have collective action against injustice and other social problems. The main condition to do this by *polli shomaj* is to have group cohesiveness. The group cohesiveness is the result of two sets of components forces acting on members to remain in the group – those arising from the attractiveness of the group and those deriving from the attractiveness of alternative memberships (Festinger 1954). Certain conditions are important to have group cohesiveness. A person's attraction to a group is recognised as vital factor for remaining group cohesiveness. Attraction to group for a given individual will depend upon his assessment of the desirable and undesirable consequences attendant upon membership in the group (Cartwright and Zander 1968). A person's attraction to a group is determined by four interacting sets of variables as a whole: a) his/her motive base for attraction, consisting of his/her needs for affiliation, recognition, security, money, or other values that can be mediated by groups; b) the incentive properties of the group, consisting of its goals, programmes, characteristics of its members, style of operation, prestige, or other properties of significance for his/her motive base; c) his expectancy, the subjective probability, that membership will actually result in beneficial, or detrimental, consequences for him/her; and d) his/her comparison level, or the quality of outcomes s/he believes s/he deserves from group (ibid).

Thibaut and Kelley (1959) analyze the attraction to group in terms of the rewards and cost to an individual that are entailed by group membership. In other words, an individual will be more attracted to a group the more favourable to him/her are the outcomes he/she expects to derive from membership. *Polli shomaj* members reported to have not received almost any sorts of rewards from PS for being involvement with it. Whatever they gained from ward members and chairman, for example government

safety programmes were their own endeavour, bribery or for any other reasons. Therefore, members were less attracted to the *polli shomaj*.

Dittes (1959) shows that a group whose atmosphere is as such that members feel accepted and valued within and outside group will have attraction for its members. The status of the *polli shomaj* to the community leaders especially elites and elected body were not recognised as they expected. Rather they always had been devalued by the leaders. As it was a group of poor and women with majority they were considered as lower and unaccepted by the community norms and values. Moreover, *polli shomaj* members themselves did not consider as organized. Expressing the inability to maintain group cohesiveness a *polli shomaj* member stated, “We are not Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) or Police to whom chairmen and ward members get frightened and will obey whatever we will propose.”

Besides, socioeconomic security of the group members is important to have attraction to the group. But *polli shomaj* members felt insecure economically and socially if they were organized against the village elites, ward members and chairmen. In other words, their livelihood might collapse if they were involved in a disputing with them. A *polli shomaj* member said, “As my husband works in chairman’s land it is difficult for me to bargain with him to get selected for EGP or for other social safety net.” Furthermore, *polli shomaj* members might be sidelined during seeking help in social issues such as marriage ceremony of daughter or son or for other social problems if they bargained with the leaders.

Lewin (1948), White and Lippitt (1968) and others indicate that a group’s attraction is influenced by the nature of its leadership. An individual joins a group because he/she places a high value on the purposes of the group. If s/he comes to believe that the chances of achieving this ends are slight – perhaps because of inefficiency in the group, poor leadership, friction, or any number of reasons – s/he will become less attracted to the group (Cartwright and Zander 1968). The inefficient, corruption and conflict between leaders were the main reasons of having no cohesiveness in *polli shomaj*. There were few leaders who were inefficient in speaking to the chairman, ward members and government officials. Some of them were too old to organize meetings and other jobs for *polli shomaj*. A few of them also had restrictions from their family to go outside home.

The *polli shomaj* leader was found to be involved with corruption in some cases. They received money from the PS members to get them selected for EGP or helped the ward members to get bribe from the beneficiary. On the other hand, friction between *polli shomaj* leaders damaged cohesiveness of the *polli shomaj* members. Deutsch (1968) has found the possibility of attractiveness is greater in the people who are cooperatively interdependent than they are in competition. *Polli shomaj* members were divided into two groups when the incompetent and less popular *polli shomaj* leader was replaced by a competent leader. The members living in the previous leader’s neighbourhood did not attend any *polli shomaj* meeting and also did not propose for EGP as *polli shomaj*.

Zander and Havelin (1960) indicate from different studies that similarity with respect to values, interests, attitudes, and beliefs among members heightens attraction

to the group. Group cohesiveness also comes from the number and strength of mutual positive attitudes among the members (Lott and Lott 1965) and increasing the frequency of interaction among them (Homans 1950). But regardless of the poverty some non-targeted beneficiaries got selected as *polli shomaj* leader who had differences in values, interests, attitudes, and beliefs from the general members regarding the attraction to the *polli shomaj*. In some cases the wife of the chairman and ward members were the leader of the *polli shomaj*. They were not only less motivated to work for the *polli shomaj* members but their attitudes and beliefs were also not congenial to the *polli shomaj* to be organized.

Proper policy of *polli shomaj* formation was also ignored which resulted the inability of *polli shomaj* to reach their goal. *Polli shomaj* members should represent the whole ward and thus members and its executive body were to be formed from all over the ward. But members reported to have less representation of the ward. Rather the density of the members was mostly found around the president's or secretary's domicile or in same neighbourhood.

A democratic form of group that encourages wide spread participation in decision-making appears generally to induce more attraction to the group than does one in which decisions are centralised (Lewin 1948; White and Lippitt 1968). But in *polli shomaj* its president, secretary, and cashier were selected, not elected by the members, and also sometimes changed the executive body without the consent of all members. Furthermore, the executive body was selected from the same neighbourhood and even from same household. For example, a brother's wife was found as a *polli shomaj* president and his sister as secretary. In cases, a mother-in-law was the president and her son's wife was the secretary. In other words, all observed *polli shomaj* was neighbourhood centered rather than the representation of the ward of a UP.

Lack of proper monitoring of the *polli shomaj* assumed to be a constraint to the success in their activities. The inconsistency was found with regard to the information about *polli shomaj* shared and record keepings regarding those by PO and *polli shomaj*.

Hossain and Osman (2007) mentioned that as the chairmen and ward members were responsible for the selection of beneficiaries, allocation of cards and delivery the services there were wider scope for corruption by this group. Given this context, BRAC formed *polli shomaj* to protest against the corruption of this group in providing government safety net programme. Therefore, members reported a little negative attitude of UP leaders against BRAC in beneficiary selection and implementation of the government safety net programmes. The chairmen and ward members considered BRAC as an outsider and did not like it to interfere, whether it was latent or overt, in any of their UP activities. They were observed to have admired blatantly BRAC's programmes or projects such as *polli shomaj* formation but they did not receive this group cordially when they (PS members) claimed their rights and entitlements. When *polli shomaj* members bargained for EGP the chairmen and ward members reproached as such, "As you are BRAC members, go to BRAC to get work." These hindered the members from being attracted to the *polli shomaj* and thus resulted of their low cohesiveness.

In addition, the bias and corruption of the chairman and ward members including their associates, if s/he might be UP or *upazila* staff, in beneficiary selection and programme implementation of EGP were the most important constraints for *polli shomaj* to succeed. *Polli shomaj* members did not protest their corruption for two reasons. Firstly, they would never get justice from the ward members and chairmen including other elites, or any government agencies. The similar observation made by Hossain (2007) in her study in which she mentioned, “There are no realistic alternatives to this political class (UP chairmen and ward members) at the local level, nor is there an effective administrative apparatus that reaches this far down into the society to stop corruption and bias.” Secondly, as BRAC is not being able to do anything but providing advice, they remained silent and complied with the local elites (UP chairmen and ward members).

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION

Heintz, the president of Rockefeller Brothers Fund (2006) has mentioned three primary roles of NGOs in advancing modern societies. Firstly, NGOs provide opportunity for the self-organization of society. NGOs enable citizens to work together voluntarily to promote local initiative and problem-solving by empowering citizens and promoting change at the “grassroots”. Secondly, NGOs preserve a unique and essential space between the for-profit sector and government. As a third sector NGO helps fulfill the common good. BRAC as a third sector has fashioned the concept of PS to change at the grass roots through active participation of its members. But lack of shared norms, social capital, effective leadership, and interdependence among group members hindered their successful inclusion in EGP and other government social safety net programmes.

NGOs can play vital role for the awareness of the people but its intrusion to UP activities may have complicated the relationship between NGO and the concerned authority. Therefore, promoting group like *polli shomaj* by BRAC may have been ineffective policy rather than making collaborative endeavour between them. The group that BRAC has promoted and still promoting is injected group rather than voluntarily formed. Besides, as women are the main agents of this group that are against the community norms, values and beliefs the acceptance of the *polli shomaj* as a group, therefore, by the community may be rather harder than the group of a male.

Finally, different agencies of state can only ensure the services to its citizens if they function properly. But the accountability and transparency of the agencies of the government are not ensured and along with the above limitation the political pressure adds further burden to deliver the service efficiently to the people who are badly needed.

Therefore, certain measures need to be taken to overcome the constraints discussed above. Suggestions that should be adopted to win over the constraints can be divided as such: firstly, government agencies/departments must ensure their transparency and accountability in their responsibilities. Whatever projects or safety net programmes are taken, procedure to implement must properly be followed. Government itself must have to take initiatives first. It is known to all that transparency and accountability of the various departments can be the hardest ever to ensure. However, NGOs can create pressure groups together with the affected poor and benevolent elites.

Secondly, on the other hand, as the government agencies are biased forming group like *polli shomaj* as a complementary way out, must be backed by BRAC further. The group characteristics and its cohesiveness must be ensured. Competent leadership must be promoted while non-target group must be avoided. To increase the presence of members in the meeting sub-committee should be active and mobilized them to remain united. The interested person from every corner of the neighbourhood should be selected for the existing committee of *polli shomaj*. Strong initiatives to be taken by the

polli shomaj and awareness to be raised among the poor against the corruption of the ward members and chairman in the distribution of government safety net programmes including other injustice and biasness rather than favouring them. PO needs to be more responsible to take care of the *polli shomaj* to be self-motivated. Higher authority of SD programme also needs to ensure the responsibilities of concern officials to be properly followed. The communication of PO with ward members, chairmen and other government official should be increased to build an intimacy and to spell out the philosophy of the *polli shomaj* to them.

Finally, economic preference is the prime priority of *polli shomaj* members to remain attached with the *polli shomaj*. Mostly *polli shomaj* emphasized their economic security and if it was ensured they would be able to pay attention to social problems that affected them. The problems mentioned in the objectives of *polli shomaj* somehow and someday affected the *polli shomaj* members' livelihood but as it happened occasionally and had an impact on individual *polli shomaj* members did not consider those seriously compared to economic precedence. So, considering the context BRAC should kick off or create an opportunity to get *polli shomaj* members involved in income generating activities including micro credit through which *polli shomaj* members could get economic security. Afterwards, *polli shomaj* members would hopefully be self-motivated and presumed to establish their rights and claim the entitlements.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Comparison of poverty likelihood between *polli shomaj* and non- *polli shomaj* household by selected variables

Variables	<i>Polli shomaj</i>			Without <i>polli shomaj</i>			Diff in diff	t-value
	Selected	Not Selected	diff	Selected	Not Selected	diff*		
HH education (average)	1.02	2.37	-1.35	1.21	2.37	-1.16	-0.19	-0.825
Max education in the HH (average)	3.61	5.34	-1.7	4.38	5.52	-1.1	-0.590	-2.23*
Income earner ratio	55.63	53.56	-2.07	57.13	58.88	-1.75	0.32	2.05*
Female headed HH	24.78	12.33	12.45	17.78	15.26	2.52	9.93	2.3*
% of School going children (6-17years)	67.15	70.78	-3.63	74.83	71.91	2.92	-6.55	-1.08
% of house wall brick or tin	29.97	43.94	-13.97	38.16	47.2	-9.04	-4.93	-1.24
% of daily labour in HH	77.2	44.53	32.67	83.62	44.49	39.13	-6.46	-1.71
% of HH remaining separate kitchen	37.46	61.43	-23.97	59.04	72.11	-13.07	-10.9	-2.85*
% of household remaining sanitary latrine	83.86	85.49	-1.63	85.31	87.91	-2.6	0.97	0.351
% of HH remaining electricity connection	12.10	29.22	-17.12	24.37	36.32	-11.95	-5.17	-1.42
% of HH remaining cultivable land	10.09	27.83	-17.74	15.08	35.58	-20.5	2.76	0.801
% of HH remaining cattle	26.51	36.58	-10.07	40.86	50.03	-9.17	-0.9	-0.226
% of HH remaining rickshaw/van	9.51	12.13	-2.62	5.99	8.91	-2.92	0.3	0.133
% of HH remaining mobile phone	4.9	24.65	-19.75	9.99	29.37	-19.38	-0.37	-0.117
% of HH remaining TV	3.46	16.3	-12.84	6.79	19.45	-12.66	-0.18	-0.07
% of HH remaining radio	2.88	14.51	-11.63	5.69	13.37	-7.68	-3.95	-1.636
% of HH remaining sewing machine	0.29	2.58	-2.29	0.7	2.84	-2.14	-0.15	-0.145
Poverty likelihood (poverty scorecard)	54.39	41.83	12.56	48.5	36.63	11.87	0.69	0.333

* Significant at 5% level, *Diff=Difference

Appendix 2. Percentage of selected beneficiary in 100-day programme by category of *polli shomaj*

Category of PS	100-day programme		P value
	No. of <i>polli shomaj</i>	% of achievement	
A	28	51.03	ns
B	48	55.65	ns
C	29	52.39	ns

ns=not significant at 10% level

Appendix 3. Average number of meeting held last year by category of *polli shomaj*

Category of PS	No. of <i>polli shomaj</i>	Meeting held last year (avg.)
A	28	8.43
B	48	7.98
C	29	8.48

Appendix 4. Percentage of HRV incidents protested and *shalish* participated by category of *polli shomaj*

PS category	No. of <i>polli shomaj</i>	HRV %	P value	No. of <i>polli shomaj</i>	<i>Shalish</i> %	P value
A	6	41.67	.06	21	80.35	Ns
B	8	83.33	ns	36	72.87	Ns
C	1	100	ns	14	72.71	ns

Appendix 5. Percentage of selected beneficiary in different government opportunities by category of *polli shomaj*

PS	Components											
	NPS	VGD	P	NPS	VGf	P	NPS	EA	P	NPs	WA	P
A	25	42.98	ns	24	60.49	.07	23	36.68	.03	21	36.30	.01
B	44	44.25	ns	37	57.17	ns	34	21.11	ns	32	14.11	.03
C	25	30.32	.01	23	43.02	.002	21	23.40	ns	21	21.89	Ns

NPS= Number of *polli shomaj*, WA=widow allowance, EA=Elderly allowance

References

- Ahmed AU, Rashid S, Sharma M and Zahir S (2004a). 'Food aid distribution in Bangladesh: leakage and operational performance', IFPRI Food Consumption and Nutrition Division discussion paper no. 173, Washington DC: International Food Policy Research Institute.
- Ahmed SM, Rana AKMM, Hossain N, and Zahra N (2008). Small scale old age and widow allowance for the poor in rural Bangladesh: an evaluation. Dhaka: BRAC.
- Babu SC (2003). Social safety nets for poverty reduction in South Asia –Global experiences. *Sri Lankan Journal of Agricultural Economics* 5 (1):1-2
- Baland JM and Platteau JP (1988). Wealth inequality and efficiency in the commons, Part II: The regulated case. *Oxford Economic Papers* 50(1): 1-22.
- Bass BM (1960). Leadership, psychology, and organizational behaviour. New York: Harper.
- BRAC (2007). BRAC Annual report, Dhaka: BRAC
- Broadbeck M (1958). Methodological Individualism: definition and reduction. *Philosophy of Science* 25:1-22.
- Cartwright D and Zander A (1968). Group dynamics: Research and theory. NY, Evanston and London: Harper and Row Publishers.
- Coady DP (2004). Designing and evaluating social safety nets: theory, evidence and policy conclusion. Discussion paper 172, Food consumption and Nutrition Division. Washington D.C.: IFPRI.
- Conning J and Kevane M (2002). Community-based targeting mechanisms for social safety nets: A critical review. *World Development* 30(3):375-94.
- Copesake J (1992). The integrated rural development project. In R. Cassen (Ed.), Poverty in India. Bombay: Oxford University Press.
- Dittes J (1959). Attractiveness of group as function of self-esteem and acceptance by group. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 59:77-82.
- Deutsch M (1968). The effects of cooperation and competition upon group process. In D. Cartwright and A. Zander (Ed.), Group Dynamics. New York, Evanston, and London: Harper and Row publishers
- Heintz S (2006). The role of NGOs in modern societies and an increasingly interdependent world. Paper presented in annual conference of the institute for civil society, Zhongshan University, Guangzhou, China, January 14,2006.
- www.rbf.org/usr_doc/The_Role_of_NGOs_in_Modern_Societies_and_Increasingly_Interdependent_World_pdf. (Accessed on 22.02.2009)
- Homans G (1950). The human group. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
- Hossain N (2007). The politics of what works: the case of the vulnerable group development programme in Bangladesh. CPRC Working Paper 92. Chronic Poverty Research Centre: Institute of Development Studies.
- Hossain N and Osman F (2007). Politics and governance in the social sectors in Bangladesh, 1991-2006. Dhaka: BRAC
- Hossain, N. (2005). Productivity and virtue: elite categories of the poor in Bangladesh. *World Development* 33:965-77.
- Isham J, Kaufmann D and Pritchett LH (1997). Civil liberties, democracy, and the performance of government projects. *World Bank Economic Review* 11(2): 219-242.
- La Ferrara E (1999). Inequality and participation: theory and evidence from rural Tanzania. Harvard University and IGIER, Bocconi University.

- Lott AJ, Lott BE (1965). Group cohesiveness as interpersonal attraction: A review of relationships with antecedent and consequent variables. *Psychological Bulletin* 64:259-309.
- Matin I and Hulme D (2003). Programmes for the poorest: learning from the IGVGD programme in Bangladesh. *World Development* 31: 647-665.
- Merton RK (1957). *Social theory and social structure* (Rev.ed.). Glencoe, Ill: Free Press
- Morduch J and Haley B (2001). Analysis of the impact of microfinance on poverty reduction. Working paper series No. 1014, NYU: Wagner.
- Narayan D and Pritchett L (1999). Cents and sociability: Household income and social capital in rural Tanzania. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 47, 871.
- Navajas S, Schreiner M, Meyer R.L, Gonzales-Vega C and Rodrigez-Meza J (2000). Microcredit and the poorest of the poor: theory and evidence from Bolivia. *World Dev*; 28(2):333-46.
- Scheidlinger S (1952). *Psychoanalysis and group behaviour*. New York: Norton.
- Smith M (1945). Social situation, social behaviour, social group. *Psychological Review* 52:224-29.
- Subbarao K, Bonnerjee J, Braithwaite S, Carvalho K, Graham C, and Thompson A (1997). *Safety net programs and poverty reduction: Lessons from cross-country experience*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Sumarto S, Asep S and Lant P (2000). *Safety Nets and Safety Ropes: Who Benefited from Two Indonesian Crisis Programs—the “Poor” or the “Shocked?”* Policy Research Working Paper No. 2436, Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Tabor SR (2002). *Assisting the poor with cash: design and implementation of social transfer programmes*. Social safety net primer series, The World Bank Institute. Washington D.C.: The World Bank.
- Thibaut JW, Kelley HH (1959). *The social psychology of groups*. New York: Wiley.
- Wachter S De and Galiani S (2003). *Optimal income support targeting*. Department of Economics, Discussion Papers Series no. 41, University of Natal.
- Wade R (1988). *Village Republics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- White R, Lippitt R (1968). Leader behaviour and member reaction in three ‘Social Climates’. In D. Cartwright and A. Zander (Ed.), *Group Dynamics*. New York, Evanston, and London: Harper and Row publishers
- Zander A, Havelin A (1960). A social comparison and interpersonal attraction. *Human Relations* 13:21-32.