

Conceptualizing Poverty: Across the Experience and Social Relation

Altaf Hossain*

1. Introduction

The prevailing representation about poverty is to signify the misery of poverty so that it will be eliminated through many ways, for instance, food, education, house, etc., which are directed by national and international policymakers. Green (2006) revealed that poverty is the outcome of historical and social realities. Sahlins (1972) also argues that poverty is a social relation rather than absolute condition; however, it reveals the socio-cultural practice that is responsible for further creation of poverty in one's life. This paper has tried to show that poverty is expressed through everyday experience rather than defined by concepts discussed in the development literature. In order to conceptualize 'poverty' as a concept, Green (2006) attracts our concentration to emphasize on social experience that is inscribed within varied social interactions. This paper has aimed to reveal the peoples' perceptions about poverty through their experience, and has divulged that per capita income and expenditure are not the only criteria to define poverty.

This paper is divided into two sections. Poverty is not a homogeneous and rigid social phenomenon, it has multi-dimensional aspects such as vulnerabilities, social sufferings, inferior position, lack of social network, etc., which have been presented in the first section. This section has also covered the literature review focusing on multiple aspects for perceiving and illustrating poverty as a concept. Perceptions of poverty through social relations and experiences have been discussed in the second section. Moreover, in this section, people's livelihoods which are inseparable for perceiving poverty in both rural and urban contexts of Bangladesh have been illustrated. Here some cases have been presented from my research experiences in two areas - Jhilpar slum in Dhaka, and Sarabaria village in Natore, Bangladesh. Urban slum and rural village have been researched for focusing the perceptions of poverty

* Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, Rajshahi University, Bangladesh
E-mail : alt.hossain@gmail.com

in urban and rural, respectively; however, anthropological research methodologies (Participant Observation, Semi-Structured Interviews) have been applied for collecting informants' worldviews about poverty. It is needed to state that this paper's intention is not to discuss poverty as a discourse discussed by the postmodern thinkers. Instead, it has focused only on the people's own perception through their everyday experiences.

2. 'Poverty' as a Concept

Poverty, as conceptualized by development practitioners, is mostly based on quantitative data, such as: amount of food, count in calories, nutrition and income, etc. Poverty-elimination is seen as a prime goal and measure of development nowadays and we scrutinize effortlessly the seriousness of development discourse that endeavor for defining poverty and searching ways of elimination (policies). The definitions of poverty and poverty-reduction policies are not designed by poor. More roughly, perceptions of poverty and poverty reduction policies are constructed by development professionals. Robert Chambers (2006) argued that development professionals represented the expressions of "our" education, training, mindsets, experiences and reflections. However, poverty cannot be measured by quantitative methodologies. This concept (poverty) can be clearly conceptualized through people's experiences: deprivations, vulnerabilities, social exclusion, powerlessness, etc. More qualitatively, many dimensions of poverty can be identified, they may be physical, material, social and psychological, and can be experiential (Chambers 2005).

In *Poverty and Famine (1981)*, Amartya Sen also interrogated the presumptions of poverty. He said, "In some traditions, this is done very simply by just counting the number of the poor, and then expressing poverty as the ratio of the number of the poor to the total number of people in the community in question" (Sen 1981:10). Therefore, conventional measurements of poverty which relate household's per capita income or expenditure are unable to reflect the subjective perceptions of well-being or ill-being (Greely 1994),

and "there is no particular reason to suppose that the concept of poverty must be clear-cut and sharp" (Sen 1981: 13). Moreover, Hastrup (1993) described the state of poverty through the qualitative way, famine, for example, is not only the sum of starved people but also the qualitative dimensions of experience, which are shaped by age, class, individual experience and gender.

Broch-Due² shares her experience: "When I first came to the study of poverty in the early nineties and was browsing through the available literature on the topic, I was struck by how 'thinly' it was framed". She argued that economist's poverty discourse dominating development research and this type of study revealed categorization of the areas, populations and their needs. Through the representation of poverty one may not find the social complexities constituted by political, social and cultural processes. She indicates the politics of wealth and wants are anything but "thin". She revealed that poverty, as a social phenomenon, needs "thick description"³ (consisting of a multiplicity of detailed and varied interpretations). "If we approach poverty as a total social phenomenon, we are more able to grasp the various dynamics which is at work. Poverty is not just an economic fact but a whole social and cultural universe", Broch-Due said. Therefore, the universe is composed by and within social experience, certainly. According to Broch-Due, an individualized approach to poverty disguises how structures of power based on class, race, and gender, etc. are producing and perpetuating poverty. Finally, she does not take large scale generalization of poverty but thick description of poverty discourses, which goes under the banners of 'civilization', 'modernization', 'development', and 'globalization'. Therefore, we hardly say that working (theoretical as well as applied) on perceptions of poverty or policies on poverty cannot clarify without spotlighting the issues related with globalization, civilization, modernization and development.

Rahnema (1992) argued that poverty has many perceptions and countless words. As Rahnema has pointed out:

"For long, and in many cultures of the world, poor was not always the opposite the rich. Other considerations such as falling from one's station

of life, being deprived of one's instruments of labor, the loss of one's status or the marks of one's profession (for a cleric, the loss of his books; for a noble, the loss of his horse or arms), lack of protection, exclusion from one's community, abandonment, infirmity, or public humiliation defined the poor" (Rahnema 1992:158).

Rahnema (1992) has drawn attention to four dimensions of poverty:

- i) *The materialities*: The lack of material resources and things (food, cloth, home, water) that are concentrated for conceptualizing poverty and deprivation. Material factors include discrimination, inequality, political or other forms of oppression and domination, absence of entitlements, non-availability of the minimum of necessities required for economic or biological survival. Moreover, other forms of deprivation are destitution, hunger, malnutrition, homelessness, ill health and exclusion from educational possibilities are also focused for illustrating poverty.
- ii) *The subject's own perception of his poverty*: Perception of poverty is personal and socio-cultural affair. More precisely, person feels poverty according to her/his worldviews and it is needless to say that worldviews rooted in the person's interaction with socio-cultural settings. Sometimes people view their poverty by metaphysical causes: God's will, one's *karma* or *kismet*⁴.
- iii) *How the others view the poor*: Perceptions of poverty of poor are not independent or uninfluenced by others. Poor's predicament is inevitably affected by how others perceive or view them. The poor and poverty are considered as abnormal situation and need remedy.
- iv) *Spimes (socio-cultural space-times) affecting various perceptions of poverty*: Perceptions of poverty are being shaped and constituted through time and space. As Rahnema has given an example:

"...Helena asked a young Ladakhi where the poorest houses were. 'We have no poor houses in our village', was the proud reply. Recently, Helena saw the same Ladakhi talking to an American tourist and overheard him say, 'if only you could do something for us; we are so poor!'" (Rahnema 1992:161).

There is worldwide approach on poverty reduction as overriding goal of development policy, but not on the definition of poverty: the monetary approach; the capabilities approach, social exclusion approach, and the participatory approach (Laderchi, Saith & Stewart

2003:11). The monetary approach identifies poverty with a shortfall in consumption (or income). The capability approach defines poverty as failure to achieve certain minimal or basic capabilities. The capability approach emphasizes on the public goods⁵. The social exclusion addresses the multiple faces of deprivation by social inequality, social structural characteristics by which groups are marginalized (e.g. ethnic minorities or the landless). The participatory approach aims to understand peoples' participation and decisions about what it means to be poor and the magnitude of poverty. Defining poverty, participatory approach relates to local people's own perception of wellbeing and ill-being and reflects in the way poor analyze their realities. The review of the different approaches makes clear that there is no unique way to define and measure poverty (Laderchi, Saith & Stewart, 2003:34).

In development arena, eliminating poverty is the central objective of development activities and processes. In this sense, the cornerstone matter is that what poverty is, who asks the question, how it is understood, and who responds (Chambers 2006). He has pointed out five clusters of meaning of poverty from this perspective. The first is *income-poverty* that means consumption-poverty from economists view. The second cluster is *material lack or want*, which focuses on lack of or little wealth or low quality of other assets such as shelter, clothing, furniture, personal means of transport, radios or television and income as well. The third cluster is derived from Amartya Sen's (2000) *capability deprivation*. It refers to what we can or cannot do, can or cannot be. This includes but goes beyond material lack or wants to include human capabilities, e.g.; skills and physical abilities, self-respect in society, etc. A fourth cluster tends for focusing *multi-dimensional* view of deprivation. Chambers significantly sheds light on the fifth cluster, through which he emphasized the various meaning of 'poor'. As he has pointed out: "The poor", that is people who are in bad condition, are variously described as poor, marginalized, vulnerable, excluded or deprived" (Chambers 2006:4).

Behavior and Poverty in Bangladesh (1988) is the great contribution of Clarence Maloney for understanding poverty beyond economic and population problem. He pointed out the behavioral causes of poverty. He identifies the hierarchical relations: “when two people meet in daily intercourse they commonly establish relative rank one way or another; it may depend on wealth, lineage, education, rank of employment, or even a small difference in age. In daily intercourse a person accorded higher rank than another is accorded the right to extract service and respect from him, and he provides some patronage in return. Thus, in the moral order reciprocity is expected between the “big” and the “little” people” (Maloney 1988:40). Through such behavior people get authority to buy the labor power and get docility of poor people who can not get chance to use resources and can not own the resources. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the structure of ownership (Sen 1981). Maloney pointed out the behavior between ‘beggar’ and ‘donor’, which is not understood by western concepts; *fakir* (beggar) entitled to a little distribution of goods, which she should receive as a blessing from the donor. Donor or rich people should bless the *fakir* because of his (donor) social responsibility and religious duty (help the poor); that is why donor say *maaf koro* (forgive me) when they are unable to give goods or money to beggar.

In the ‘*Rural Poverty in Bangladesh (1990)*, ‘Like-Minded Group’⁶ offered an alternative conceptualization and analysis of poverty in Bangladesh. Two sets of questions were addressed in this study: “first, what is the present configuration of rural poverty in Bangladesh and how have conditions changed over time? Second, what have been the patterns of development assistance and within the context of national policies and programs, how and to what extent has this assistance affected the lives of the rural poor?” (Like-minded Group 1990:3). This research was completed by multidisciplinary approach: economics, sociological and anthropological perspectives. Their main attention was not only focusing on dimensions of poverty through analyzing socio-cultural

settings of rural, but also applying concentration on the facets of poverty changes over the time. This group emphasized on the unequal distribution of the resources and polarization of poor by social relations. This Group spotlighted on the contextualization that poor exist in a relation with a proportion of the population which not poor and within a given population segments of population are less able to control or to access the resources than other. Definitely, they have focused on inequality and social structures in which a segment of people are created as poor and some are non-poor.

Like-minded Group described the conceptualization of poverty as a combination of quantitative and qualitative factors. Poverty indicates forms of deprivation including social and psychological and economic dimensions. The Group gives emphasis to the resources nexus on impoverishment because resources are controlled and accessed by complex social and political process. Poverty is outcome of structured inequality in country. The rural elites participated in the process of policy making for reducing poverty and consolidated their interests than support the interests of the rural majority. The Group significantly showed inequalities within class and gender. Males are generally considered as productive members but women's activities are thought income-generating and supplement of other family income. That is why men have social arrangement to increase capabilities and efficiency more than women. Through this conception, one can easily find out that social arrangements are being biased to men; however, they are the consequences of existential social structure through which women play supporting roles in the complex resource nexus. And, it crafts the ways in which women's labor are marginalized and do not participate directly in market (market does not refer only a place; rather it refers the space or scope where all participate with their labor and economic activities).

In rural area, land transfer process is a very vital aspect for analyzing poverty; sharecropping and wage labor relationship cannot be understood in isolation. Hossain (2005) pointed out the elite (the local elite and the national elite)⁷ perceptions of poverty in

Bangladesh. Local elites stressed the importance of land ownership and vulnerability for defining poverty. The single most common term used by local elites to describe was 'living hand to mouth' – a summary description of the difficult struggle for survival (Hossain, 2005:32). By contrast, the elites' perception of poverty is shaped by their access to official concepts and debates around poverty and development and they feel comfortable with the indicators and tools of international development discourse such as poverty line⁸. They emphasized on lacking basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, health, education); vulnerability; dependency; low income; lack of access to education and lack of access to health care⁹. In the *Elite Perceptions of Poverty in Bangladesh (2005)*, Hossain pointed out that local elites perceive poverty from their experience because local elites tend to have everyday contacts and enduring relationships with poor people than national elites. Local elites most often organized *shalish* (local and informal court where different types of conflicts, factions, and social problems are solved through the mediating of local elites: school masters, *imam* (religious leader), chairman, wealthy and members of high descendant family).

3. Perception of Poverty through experiences

In this section, the people's perceptions of poverty have been presented. Their experiences and social interactions have symbolized their poverty: vulnerabilities, deprivations, social sufferings, social exclusion, etc.

Seasonal work, seasonal earnings: In Sarabaria, it was observed that the wage laborer do not get land based work throughout the year. Among the laborers, those who have good relationship with the rich get work quickly. Major seasonal work is for *irri* (paddy) field. After paddy cultivation they have to wait till vegetable season. Mostly male laborers are hired in both cases.

Poor female are hired by rich household for doing dusting, washing clothes and cleaning. Rich households have big and open yards which need cleaning and smearing by thick paste made by cow-dung

and mud. On occasions, such as marriage ceremony and religious ceremonies, females are hired for washing big cooking-pots and for cooking the meal as such works are not found throughout the year. Earning comes when laborers work. If they work less, earnings decrease. In the slum (urban), the causes of poverty are not lack of work but low payment which obliges them to live like poor.

Case Study 1: Babu (18), rickshaw puller.

Babu came to Dhaka from Manikgonj with his mother. His mother grinds spices (turmeric, capsicum, onion) for wedding cooking. His elder brother works in a steel industry and he is a painter. Babu studied up to class 5. As his father left them, his study has stopped. His mother could not afford the expenses of his studies and the other things. When his elder brother got a job in the steel company, he married and now lives alone with his family. He has no relation with his the elder brother. He (elder brother) cannot help them (Babu and his mother) by his low income.

If Babu had money, he and his mother could make a house in the area and reduce some expenses. Now Babu is sick. He has a pain in his stomach but cannot go to the doctor. He went to a public medical hospital. They gave him some medicines to relieve pain but some those are so expensive (taka 15 per capsule) that he could not buy them. His mother is saving money for his medication. As he is sick he cannot work, so he stays in house.

Babu says with grief that if his father would stay with them he could continue his studies and they have not stayed in slum in Dhaka. They have a small house in Manikgonj but they do not have any land. In Manikgonj, they have no work, so they do not want to go back there. When he was asked that, if the slums are no more where will they go? Babu replied that there is no way to live but footpath. He thinks that owning a land is a factor. If they had a land they would make a house and do farming. In Dhaka the salary is not so good. If he had studied or had a piece of land he would not suffer like this.

Lack of food: Informants were asked about their thinking about the poverty or poor; how they define or try to define a poor. A woman in Sarabaria gave an instant answer: s/he is poor, who do not have food to eat; no house to live; and no money to buy necessary things. Poor are unable to eat three times a day i.e. breakfast in the morning; lunch in the afternoon and supper at the night. They expect to have meal as food-item in three times; however, rice is the staple food in Bangladeshi people. The woman says:

“Poor people hardly have meal three times a day. S/he has to manage rice for supper after taking rice at afternoon as lunch. Most of the poor of our village eat two times a day. We normally eat rice three times but sometimes it is impossible to have meal three times. Just look at our next house. There is an old woman living alone. The only earning member of that house was her husband who had died. Her only son is living in another district, Pabna. The son does not take care of her old mother. Therefore, mother begs door to door. Most often she takes food one time a day. We visit her house and give her some rice and curry”.

Rural people define their poverty in terms of meal, (particularly rice), and times: how many times they take meal in a day. Nutrition is not a issue while they take food. They emphasize on good food. Good food refers to fish, meat, egg, milk etc. which are comparatively expensive.

In the case of Jhilpar slum, they live in slum by paying the house rent to the owner of house. House workers have better chance to get good food than other people in slum because most of the house workers work in rich families in the urban area, who generally arrange good food than slum people. Sometimes they (house worker) are given good food by the employers while working in their house; moreover, they are given extra food on the occasion of marriage ceremony, birthday, religious festivals, and other special days.

Acquiring Knowledge about Nutritional Food: Among the respondents, perceptions of poverty varied based on age, sex and socio-economic status. They acquire knowledge and information

from education and media (news from television and radio) about the nutrition of food. That provides the awareness about nutrition and malnutrition to a large number of people. The aspect of nutrition as well as malnutrition cannot be avoided while we conceptualize poverty. Not all but some people are aware of nutrition of food. Shop-keepers, van drivers, and rickshaw pullers spend a long time in local bazaar. In Sarabaria, a salesman mentioned the two kinds of foods: 1) some foods are good for filling the stomach, and 2) some foods are good for sound health. According to his conception, vegetables and rice are eaten for filling the stomach while one is hungry; these kinds of food are available in village. Poor women can easily collect the greens from their surroundings, c.g., in the fields, edge of the ponds. On the other hand, meat, fish, apple and orange are full of quality. These foods give energy and keep health well. Therefore, respondents have knowledge and information. They think about the nutritional value. Receiving and considering the information about food, they judge the quality of food and believe poor people do not have access to get quality food. However, respondents define poverty in terms of not only amount of food they frequently take but also quality of food which refers receiving energy and keeping physical condition healthy. According their understandings, they produce their food habits in different forms for the members of household. For example, the fact that parents are concerned to provide milk for their children, no matter what amount they afford, shows their ideas about nutrition. In fact, they believe that more income provides more nutrition. Undoubtedly, more income creates the opportunities to make 'good food' available.

Less Possibility of bargaining: The conception of poverty is not merely running towards food and money, but towards the scope of bargaining while they deal with employer for getting work and sufficient wages. In Sarabaria, a number of respondents (both male and female) work through the agreement between employer and employee. Working as a day wage-laborer (*kamla*), they are bound to finish the work within a particular time and particular amount of money, which are fixed by the employer. Since employer has

opportunity to offer the work to poor, poor as employee has little chance to bargain strongly with the employer about duration of works and amount of money as payment. Rich employers, for example, owners of crop field and pond, need laborers to harvest and to catch fishes. Generally, the rich do not directly work in field to cultivate or to harvest in the field. More precisely, they do not involve themselves with the manual labor in agriculture. Instead, they hire day-laborers for growing paddy, jute, mustard, potato, chilly and so on. Since day-laborers have less opportunity to ignore the scope of work, they agree with amount of money the employers offered.

In Sarabaria, it is the common scenario that most of the people who do not have own lands to cultivate. They are hired by land owner from the distance place. They usually go to Pabna (the nearest district) and other villages in Natore district. An interview was taken of a *kamla*, half of whose body was sunk in the canal while he was separating the fibers from rotten jute. There were five persons in the canal discussing the deal between them and employer. They were unhappy with the payment and duration of work. One of the workers says that 'it is totally impossible to separate and to wash the fibers in a single day'. The stories about unpleasant deals have been found in both the rural and urban contexts. Those are as follows:

Case 1: Borhan in village

Borhan and other four co-workers had been recruited in the field to sow the paddy seeds within five days. He and other four sowers couldn't complete within five days. Bending the body forward for the whole day, Borhan had got pain in the waist. He requested the land owner to give him two more days. He did not agree. Then he requested him to increase their wage. The land owner refused that request as well. He warned Borhan to complete within agreed time; otherwise they would not be paid. They completed that work in six days but got payment of five days according to the agreement. Borhan had nothing to do because no other work was available works in the village.

Case 2: Din-Islam in slum

Din-Islam varnishes the furniture in the next building. There was a housewife who hired Din-Islam to varnish almirah, wardrobe and dining table within three days. He completed the varnish within the exact time. He claimed five hundred taka for that labor. Although she agreed at first, she denied paying that amount of money. Her objection was that, five hundred taka is too much for three days. Two months have been gone but still she has not made the full payment. She gave three hundred taka only. Her husband and son threatened Din-Islam so that Din-Islam would not claim that the due amount of money.

Therefore, poverty does not mean lack of goods, rather social need must be considered. Socio-economic status creates the social arrangements, through which wealthy people can occupy poor's time and wage. Since rich-poor relations are based on inequality, poor do not have enough chance to bargain with employers in order to achieve their own interest. Moreover, poor employees have risk to lose work while bargaining with the employers.

Poor is the Opposite Form of Rich: It is informed that poor is the reverse form of rich equally in urban and rural places. They feel comfortable to define poorness by taking richness in opposite, i.e., richness is antonym of poorness. The form of antonym does not exist not only in literally, but also in conceptualization through experience, however, poverty is faced by poor. A respondent of Sarabaria says: poor do not have huge income like rich. A poor do not have land like rich. They do not have brick-built houses like rich. A poor do not have well cloths like rich.

Less Chance for Savings: Economic crisis is not the benchmarks to define poverty but economic conditions, e.g. low income; low savings, are the important criteria for understandings material poverty. An informant of Sarabaria said about savings: "If I do not have work or do not go to work for two or three days I must go into starvation because of lack of savings". This research does not want to refer that starvation which is created through famine, but some people often experience starvation due to the absence of savings.

Saving denotes not only bank balance or amount of money in stored form, but also something which can be used when they do not have income; for example, rice, vegetables, unripe fruits which can be cooked in crisis period.

In Sarabaria, a housewife said that a tree with papaw is very helpful while work is not available and for those who live on hand to mouth. She remembered her bitter experience that she had to collect greens for meal. She and her husband had taken only bottle gourd curry and unripe papaw with salt and chili. Some neighbors helped them a lot by providing rice. In her case, unripe papaw and bottle gourd are savings. In the slum, savings are also prioritized with the purpose of facing poverty. According to this conception, one may agree that low saving is one of the most important symptoms of defining poverty. Now, the question: who is rich to poor? They generally mark him/her rich who have large amount of lands, big house, trees, fruit trees and money. In particular, the one who will not be faced hunger if s/he does not go to work for a week.

Rich Persons are seemed to be Poor: Perceiving poverty, we need to consider how a person perceives other's poverty through their formation of thoughts and experience. A case from Sarabaria helps us to realize the view of poverty.

A girl of poor family came to her rich husband's house after marriage. She was treated in husband's house as from poor family. Her family could not give dowry or gifts to her husband she was indirectly teased. That rich family did not take serious responsibility while the girl (bride) was sick; her mother-in-law, father-in-law and even husband thought that poor bride does not need treatment because she was not used to taking medical treatment. Moreover, rich people thought that it is useless spending money for the poor bride.

Therefore, conceptualization of poverty will not be completed by focusing only material components (e.g., land, money, trees, crops, big house), but also spotlighting the non-poor's behavior to poor. A shop keeper at Jhilpar slum defined poor in terms of their activities.

His view was that educated people can become poor. Even if they are educated, their engagement in unsocial works, makes them poor. He emphasized that poor do not have money. Thus they commit crime, for example, stealing, taking and giving bribe, etc. He thinks rich people are also poor because they earn huge money by corruption and bribing.

Lack of Social Networks: Lacking of social networks, poor do not have continued connections with influential persons and institutions. They cannot increase capital, assets and networks by their poorness. On the other hand, people have access to favorable capital when they live in better socio-economic condition. Generally, poor have fewer connections with *thana* (police station), court, school and with the influential leaders e.g., chairman, teachers, and doctors who support their livelihood. Therefore, they do not get information for increasing and improving economic condition. One of the respondents of Sarabaria accused the complex legal systems. He does not know to get services of *adalot* (court). In his own words:

“I am not a literate person. I cannot read and write; how will I talk to the advocate to help me that Moksed (villager) occupied my father’s land? My father cultivated that land and we knew that land is mine. Moksed is rich and have good connections with chairman and police. I do not have anyone who is influential and educated for helping me with the purpose of getting back that land”.

The common picture of Bangladeshi village is that illiterate persons depend on school teacher or knowledgeable persons to understand persons. To illiterate-poor, it is hard to understand the vocabularies of any official letters or papers. Moreover, sometimes knowledgeable persons are biased to rich persons who provide them some opportunities. In this situation, poor people have less scope to create strong social network.

Conclusion

This paper emphasizes on how both rural and urban people perceive poverty through their everyday life experiences. For this reason, rural

and urban people's ideas, behaviors and reactions to poorness are described. The philosophical or abstract discussions about 'poor'; 'poverty'; and discrimination are being talked about by academicians, development professionals but the poor have own ideas and perceptions of life, wealth, poverty policy, etc. Academicians, development professionals and policy makers understand poverty and poor, generally, through official documents. Furthermore, monthly income, monthly expenditure and poverty line are given criteria for conceptualizing the relentlessness of poorness. The ways in which poverty is measured quantitatively and that tendency are avoided consciously in this paper. This paper emphasized to catch how people perceive and experience poverty through everyday-life's actions, reactions, and social interactions. Finally, people do not exactly borrow the concepts that are used in poverty-definition by development professionals; instead they use their own concepts, e.g., good food, nutritious food, etc. These terms are not merely linguistic terms, but these denote their experienced deprivation and vulnerabilities in society. However, lack of work-scope, unexpected wage, lack of bargaining, least degree of making social network as well as least accessing into it are prime factors to understand poverty.

Notes

¹ By "our", Chambers means to development professionals as well as policy makers in the field of reducing poverty.

² See www.uib.no/povertypolitics/news.htm

³ For more details, see Geertz, Clifford (1973)

⁴ *Karma* = work and return for work, *Kismet* = luck.

⁵ See Caterina Ruggeri Laderchi, Ruhi Saith & Frances Stewart (2006).

⁶ This book is written by Like-minded Group (Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden). This Dhaka-based representative decided for researching on rural poverty in Bangladesh in 1984. They found out the complex dimensions of rural poverty in Bangladesh in

⁷ Community leaders (*matbar or dewan*) are local elite in the rural Bangladesh. The national elite, in generally, are those peoples who sit in Parliament, own factories, edit newspapers, direct NGOs and preside over government departments.

⁸ See the Chapter three (*Separate Worlds? How the Elite Perceive Poverty and the Poor*, in Hossain, Naomi (2005).

⁹ See the Table 3.2: *Elite definitions of poverty*, p.32, in Hossain, Naomi (2005), where we can see some characteristics, definitions are given by local elites and national elites, moreover, Table 3.3 shows the main causes of poverty in Bangladesh, pp -33.

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