

THOUGHTS AND INITIATIVES

2. INDIVIDUAL APPROACH OR ORGANIZED APPROACH?

Many of us are involved in individual efforts with the expectation that these efforts will alleviate the conditions of poverty of the people of Bangladesh. In doing so, we affect the lot of a few people by providing them with a permanent source of income or by comforting them temporarily in one way or another. What do these endeavors mean on a national scale? The following is a trivial, but important calculation presented in a "dramatic" way which attempts to provide an answer to this question.

Let us consider a Bangladeshi who is contributing about two million dollars (two million and seventy five hundred dollars, to be exact) yearly to a Bangladesh village with a population of 10,000. As a result of the contribution, the daily average per capita income of the villagers increases to \$1.00 from the current daily national per capita income of \$0.45. The question we are asking is: how does it affect the national income, if this contribution does not influence any other economic activities in the country?

Definition of the symbols used:

P = Total population of Bangladesh

I_d = Average daily per capita income

I_n = $P \cdot I_d$ = Total daily national income

P_g = A group (number) of people receiving individual help

I_g = Increased daily per capita income for the group

I_e = $(I_g - I_d) \cdot P_g$ = Total daily individual contribution to the group

I_y = $365 \cdot I_e$ = Total yearly individual contribution to the group

I_i = $P \cdot I_d + I_e$ = Increased total daily national income

I_a = I_i / P = Adjusted average daily national per capita income

The example:

$$P = 110,000,000$$

$$I_d = \$0.45$$

$$I_n = \$0.45 * 110,000,000 = \$49,500,000$$

$$P_g = 10,000$$

$$I_g = \$1.00$$

$$I_e = (\$1.00 - \$0.45) * 10,000 = \$5,500$$

$$I_y = 365 * \$5,500 = \$2,007,500$$

$$I_i = 110,000,000 * \$0.45 + \$5,500 = \$49,505,500$$

$$I_a = \$49,505,500 / 110,000,000 = \$0.45005$$
$$= \$(0.45 + 1/20,000)$$

That is, after spending more than two million dollars yearly, the contributor has added only one-twenty thousandth of a single penny to the daily per capita national income (Note that the per capita national income is a good scientific measure of the national well-being). Individual "contained" efforts may appear attractive, but that is, in fact, an illusion. Because of this, BDI undertakes projects that may potentially affect aspects of national policy. We encourage others to do the same for the long-term benefit of Bangladesh. We emphatically note here that the above calculation is applicable only to "contained" individual efforts. Many individual undertakings do influence and spawn other activities, including national level activities, and are, therefore, encouraged.