

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Planning Commission
General Economics Division

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the NSSS Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Committee

Date and Time : 04 March 2019, 2.30-4.30 PM
Venue : NEC Committee Room -1, Planning Commission, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka
Chairperson : Dr. Shamsul Alam, Member (Senior Secretary),
General Economics Division (GED), Bangladesh Planning Commission
Participants : Appendix 'A'

The chairperson inaugurated the meeting with a note of heartiest welcome to the participants, followed by a round of brief self-introduction. The chair then thanked the members of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Committee for their contribution in overseeing the implementation progress of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS). He remarked that the feedback and recommendations of the committee would play a crucial role in materialising the vision of the NSSS to build up a lifecycle based inclusive social protection system in Bangladesh. The Chair appreciated the relentless efforts and contributions of line ministries and divisions in the implementation of NSSS aiming at the poverty reduction and sustainable development of the country.

2. Enquired by the Chair, the National Project Director of the SSPS Programme informed that the main agenda of the meeting was to share and discuss inception reports of three studies as contracted out to the South Asian Network Economic Model (SANEM) Bangladesh. The studies were: a) Cost benefit ratio study on effects of social protection cash transfer; b) Implication of changing demographics and effects of social protection in Bangladesh; and c) Long term effect of livelihood promotion types of social security programmes.

3. The chair requested the representative of SANEM to make brief presentations on the inception reports of the assigned studies. He also requested the members of the committee to actively take part in the discussion, ask relevant questions for clarification, and make suggestions for improvement of the studies. Afterwards, Mr. Bazlul Haque Khondker, chairman, SANEM presented the inception reports of the three studies.

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PRESENTATIONS

Presentation-1: Inception report on the Cost-Benefit Ratio Study on Effects of Social Protection Cash Transfer

4. During the presentation on this topic, Mr. Khondker mentioned that the overall objective of the study was to examine the value for money of the social protection programmes and their impact on expanding programme coverage in using cash transfers and food exchange as a means of social protection. The presenter apprised that there were three research questions in the study. Those were as follows:

- a. Understanding the greater value for money and impact on expanding programme coverage or increasing transfer size;
- b. The measurement of the cost-benefit of cash transfer based social security programmes; and
- c. The cost-benefit analysis of food based social security programmes.

5. It was informed that for collecting qualitative information, desk review and key informant interviews would be done. For estimating cost-benefit of the schemes, the research would follow two approaches: a) use a cost-benefit-ratio framework, and b) use a micro-simulation model for assessing impact of coverage and transfer. The data source would be HIES 2010 and HIES 2016. Micro-simulation model would be used for estimating poverty impacts of social protection schemes. For that end in view, Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) would be developed and used.

Presentation-2: Inception report on the Implication of Changing Demographics and Effects on Social Protection in Bangladesh

6. The second presentation was about the effects of changing demographic pattern on social protection in Bangladesh. The presenter elaborated that the overall objective of the study, as suggested by the title, is to examine the implications of Bangladesh's changing demographic pattern on the upcoming social protection programmes. It also intended to assess how the upcoming change in youth population base and shifting age composition would affect both the demand and supply sides of the social protection.

7. The presenter described that, based on the research objectives, the study would evolve upon two specific research questions, such as, (a) how the changing demographics in Bangladesh were affecting the Government of Bangladesh's financial, operational, and programmatic responsibilities in relation to social security; and b) what effect the changing demographics would

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have on the nature of upcoming social security programmes, and whether the current portfolio of programmes would meet the needs of the people.

8. The presenter briefed on the study methodology which included desk review and key informant interviews with relevant officials from related ministries/institutions and development partners. The demographic projections of different data sets, including those of the HIES 2010 and 2016 would be used for collecting demand side data. For assessing the status of the supply side, the research would resort to the data of social protection budget of Finance Division. It was also reported that the study team had already completed the literature review and started key informant interviews.

Presentation-3: Inception report on the Long-term Effect of Livelihood Promotion Types of Social Security Programmes

9. It was informed that the overall objective of this study was to examine how the livelihood based social security programmes in Bangladesh would have impact on the long-term welfare of the citizenry and on the decisions of the government, and if they provided a better value for money over direct cash transfers. The study had envisaged to get answers to two research questions. It would specifically try to find out information about the ratio of participants falling back into poverty after they exit the programmes. The second question pursued to evaluate whether the beneficiaries were better or worse off than someone receiving a smaller, but continuous cash-transfer.

10. The presenter informed that the research methodology of the study would include desk review, key informant interviews, focus group discussion, and sample survey. Comparative analysis would be done using HIES 2010 and 2016 data. Propensity Score Matching (PSM) would be used as the microeconomic method where individuals of similar attributes (with or without social security benefit) would be matched on relevant parameters.

Discussion

11. The Chair requested the participants for their feedback and queries on the above-mentioned presentations. The Additional Secretary of Finance Division commented that the methodologies and objectives of the studies were very logical and rational. He then remarked that it had been very conventional to identify the benefit of the social protection in terms of mere change in income. He noted that the social security should have more impact on overall well-being of people such as, entitlement of health and nutrition, social empowerment, education etc.

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12. Additional Secretary of Ministry of Social Welfare commented that all the studies were well-designed and would have significant impact on policy-decisions regarding management of the social protection programmes. He emphasized that the efficient and time-bound implementation of the studies were very important.

13. Deputy Secretary of Governance and Innovation Unit at PMO observed that the study on demographic implications should use the full version of the latest HIES data. Moreover, the latest HIES has a separate module on social protection which would offer a rich analysis. He also suggested that interaction with some social protection beneficiaries at the grassroots level would reflect the real-life scenarios in the studies. He added that BBS-data for population projection was used during the formulation of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS), so the study should be aligned with the population projection data provided by the BBS. Moreover, he commented that the indicators of the study on the Implication of Changing Demographics and Effects on Social Protection in Bangladesh should be aligned with the objectives of the Vision 2041 and the upcoming 8th Five Year plan.

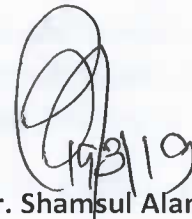
14. The participants endorsed the methodology and approach of the three researches and viewed that these would reflect the real scenarios of different aspects of social protection practice in Bangladesh. The Chair appreciated the efforts of the research teams and urged that the studies should be completed within stipulated time.

Decisions/Recommendations

- a) The meeting endorsed the scope and the methodologies of the studies;
- b) The appointed firm, SANEM, should make efforts to complete the studies within stipulated time; and
- c) The study methodologies would uptake required sample size to ensure representativeness.

15. There being no other issues for discussion, the meeting was concluded with the vote of thanks from the Chair.

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(Prof. Dr. Shamsul Alam)

Member (Senior Secretary)

General Economics Divisions (GED)

Bangladesh Planning Commission

Appendix "A"

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