

About Child Poverty- A Bangladesh's Perspective

av

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Akademisk avhandling

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Abstract

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Taking child poverty into account as an enormous concern on the pathway to human development, the present dissertation aims to examine child poverty’s extent and characteristics, poor children’s views on this issue and their policy recommendation to reduce it.

The research questions are: 1) what are the extent and characteristics of child poverty in Bangladesh? 2) What is child poverty? Why and how do children experience it? 3 (a) To what extent and in what respect does child poverty differ between Bangladesh and China? 3 (b) What are the reasons for the differences in child poverty over time between the two countries? 4) What is needed to reduce child poverty in Bangladesh according to its principal victims? The present dissertation is based on research mainly with young children aged up to 14 years.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative studies’ inclusion is a strength of this dissertation, which further offers to look at child poverty from different perspectives. For quantitative studies (Chapter 5 and Chapter 7), the empirical materials consist of microdata from: a) Bangladesh HIES for the years 1995 and 2000; b) Chinese data from China Household Income Project (CHIP) of the years 1988, 1995, and 2002. For qualitative studies (Chapter 6 and Chapter 8), data from five focus group discussions—conducted during 2005 and 2006 with 30 participants—are used. The methods for data analysis in quantitative studies are: i) descriptive and multivariate analysis; ii) decomposition framework. A grounded theory approach is applied to analyse the data for qualitative studies.

Nine chapters constitute this dissertation. Chapters 1 to 4—based on secondary data—introduce background information, theoretical discussion, methodological issues and overviews of forthcoming chapters. Chapters 5-8 contain four empirical studies. The conclusion draws some broad inferences in Chapter 9.

The dissertation mainly finds that Bangladesh’s children make up the greater share of the population where almost half of the poor are children; child poverty rates are—similar to China’s—higher than the adults’ and more extensive than in China (Chapter 5 and Chapter 7). Child poverty plays a vital role in the prolongation of developing, expanding, extending and transmitting poverty on to successive generations; three different interlinked stages—encompassing multidimensionality, spending life in distress, and having intergenerational and gendered dimension—are disclosed in this progression (Chapter 6).

Additionally, the effectiveness of growth and income inequality do affect—but not always—child poverty differences across time and countries. Other demographic factors are revealed to play vital roles (Chapter 7). Household head’s education demonstrates strong negative association with child poverty (chapters 5-8).

Participants recommended a combination of policies to enhance the capability of poor children and their caregivers (Chapter 8). Policy interventions need to give further attention to: reduce parental poverty and income inequality, sustain economic growth, ensure access to education and health care, expose corruption and hidden costs of these services, and eliminate mistrust of the recipients to speed up the extent of child poverty’s reduction in Bangladesh.