Conceptualization of Sustainable Human Development in the Context of Bangladesh

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Abstract: This paper on Conceptualization of Sustainable Human Development (SHD) describes in brief, the response of Bangladesh to the problem of achieving sustainable human development in the 1990s in the context of (1) a conventional global effort towards prevention of environmental pollution and degradation and (2) a non-conventional approach of developing quantitative and qualitative human development indicators. As for the conventional approach, the paper shows that although the international perception in this area has been moving in the right direction, the desired progress has been slow primarily because the main actors (for environmental pollution and degradation) happens to be the more developed countries who are unwilling to implement the major recommendations most of which are against their economic interest. For a developing country like Bangladesh, therefore, the second approach, of moving towards identification of appropriate quantitative and qualitative indicators and implementing policy measures to implement these within the above constraints, has become more important. Initially, this approach was attempted in Bangladesh through a number of UN agencies led by the UNDP but soon the Government of Bangladesh identified its own preferred human development indicators both quantitative and qualitative. Further, Bangladesh found such initiative substantially consistent with its past planning efforts at the macro-level and more important, its political struggle towards restoration of democracy and moving towards good governance reinforced the above endeavour by throwing a number of innovative political indicators in the emergent political space in the 1990s. However, it remains to be seen whether the innovative home work done by the government of Bangladesh in the non-conventional approach through implementation of over due recommendations for prevention of global environmental pollution and degradation by the more developed countries without any further delay. One can only hope for the best.

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Introduction

This paper on “Conceptualization of Sustainable Human Development (SHD) in the context of Bangladesh” shows that the topic is being viewed in this country both in the background of conventional concern for protection and sustainability of global environment and from a somewhat non-“conventional” concern for more specific problems of human resources development in contemporary developing economics. At its initial stage, the conventional view (that sustainable human development primarily depends on environmental protection on global basis), was dominant. Subsequently, however, it was realized that the current environmental protection policies of the developed countries are not necessarily complementary to the interest of those of the developing countries and therefore, it might take a long time for a country like Bangladesh to get benefit from such an approach. As a result, it became necessary for policy makers at both international and national levels to find out what could be done in such developing countries in the immediate future that would protect environment and would promote substantial human development at the same time. Consequently, the non-conventional approach that gives more emphasis on sustainable human development gained momentum in the early 1990s. The most notable feature of this development has been the identification of a number of economic, social and political indicators for continuous monitoring and evaluation of progress in these fields. This approach is now being further developed and internalized in Bangladesh. More interestingly, in Bangladesh a number of parallel movements notably in the area of humanizing macro economic planning with an increased concern for holistic social development and a supportive democratic movement, have been reinforcing this development.
To understand the above development, this paper is divided into three main parts: in Part-I, the conventional approach to SHD mainly through sustainable environmental protection is briefly described with focus on its limitation particularly for the developing countries. In Part-II, the development of the new approach to SHD based on greater emphasis on identifiable human development indices mainly developed by UNDP is highlighted. In Part-III, the case of specific response of Bangladesh to such concept of human development in presented briefly in its historical context. This part is divided into three sub-heads such as:

(a) the early effort of Bangladesh for achieving SHD through its own variety of socialist reconstruction particularly in the macro-economic approach to development;
(b) the question of choice of human indicators for SHD development in Bangladesh within the framework of market economy thereafter and finally;
(c) the process of internalization of this new approach through development of a number of human freedom indicators in Bangladesh largely derived from its struggle for socio-political development that is giving new meaning to its future development.

In conclusion, however, it is pointed out that this development in the area of the non-conventional approach to SHD can at best be only a necessary condition but not a sufficient one. For sufficient condition the two approaches to development, the conventional approach to environmental protection and the non-conventional approach to SHD have to be synchronized through an increased concern on the part of the advanced countries for the welfare of the developing countries. This paper
finally raises the question if the world is now in a better position to move towards this synchronized approach with its renewed understanding of the value and precept of “sharing and caring” for global welfare as a whole. We do not have a ready-made answer to this question right now; we can only hope for the best. Let us first take up the case of conventional view on environmental protection and its implication for sustainable human development.

**Part-I: The Conventional View: Sustainable Human Development in the context of protection and sustainability of global environment**

Over the last few decades, a number of definitions of Sustainable Human Development (SHD) seem to have emerged mainly at the initiative of the contemporary advanced countries, which are showing increasing concern for the welfare of the people at large mainly through environmental protection of our planet. This is understandable from the fact that having seriously damaged the ecological balance through unplanned development, the advanced countries seemed to have realized, at least to some extent, that they have to cooperate not only with each other but also with the poorer countries to preserve whatever ecological balance is now left. In this connection we may note that Robert Repetto\(^1\) described the core of the idea of sustainability as “the concept that current decisions should not impair the prospect for maintaining or improving future living standards.... This implies that our economic system should be managed so that we live off the dividend of our resources, maintaining and improving the asset base.”
Brundtland Commission’s wide-ranging discussion of sustainable development had also asserted that \(^2\) “we come to see that a new development path was required, one that sustains human progress not just in a few places for a few years but for the entire planet into distant future. Thus “sustainable development becomes a goal not just for the developing nations, but for the industrial ones as well.” The Commission further observed that \(^3\) “economic growth and development obviously involve changes in the physical eco-system. Every eco-system everywhere cannot be preserved in tact” and therefore \(^4\) “a pursuit of sustainable development requires.. a production system that respects the obligation to preserve the ecological base for that environment”.

The above definitions of sustainable development implicitly concluded that the concern for the sustainable human development in both the rich and the poor countries could be substantially solved through joint actions. However, the follow up actions in subsequent periods showed that the richer countries were likely to pursue environmental policies that would continue to greatly benefit the poorer countries.

The above concern brought the concept of development options for the poorer countries in the forefront and along with this came the question who should decide what type of economic growth is needed and for whom? An integrated approach to environmental protection could mean two basic options: the developed countries could try to develop joint actions along with the developing countries with better understanding of the problems of the latter, while keeping the initiative of such development in their own hands or they (the developed
countries) could agree that the poorer countries should from now on keep the initiative of development in their own hands. The search for this answer gives us the background for the development of the non-conventional approach to SHD with the emphasis on a new kind of policy prescription specific to the developing countries. This development is presented in brief in Part-II.

Part-II: Conceptualization of non-conventional approach: Environment Protection through Sustainable Human Development.

To understand the implications of the new approach, we may note that, David Korten has pointed out in this connection that a failure to promote development options for the poorer countries could mean an accelerated move towards further disaster for the entire population of the world.

"Two things of fundamental importance to each and every one of us are now much at stake.... Will people and communities control their local resources and economics and be able to set their own goals and priorities based on their own values and aspirations? Or will these decisions be left to global financial markets and corporations that are blind to all values save one instant financial return?"

Further, "Will the life sustaining resources produced by regenerative capacities of our planet’s ecosystems be equitably shared to provide for the material needs of all of us who inhibit this bountiful
planet, as well as our children unto the seventh generation and beyond? or will we allow a global economic system that is now functioning on auto-pilot beyond conscious human control to consume and destroy the ecosystem and our social fabric in its insatiable quest for money?"

Such messages were reinforced by some other actors on the scene. The Annual Meeting of World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland around the same period, observed that:

- Economic globalization is causing severe economic dislocation and social instability.
- The technological changes of the past few years have eliminated more jobs than they have created.
- The global competition “that is part and parcel of globalization leads to winner-take-all situations; those who come out on top win big, and the losers lose even bigger”.
- Higher profits no longer mean more job security and better wages. “Globalization tends to de-link the fate of the corporation from the fate of its employees”.
- Unless serious corrective action is taken soon, the backlash could turn into open political revolt that could destabilize the Western Democracies.

Along with the above disturbing observation came some opportunities to take lessons on development priorities from the less developed countries and people. One such lesson was “that economics should be local rooting power in the people and communities who realize their wellbeing depends on the health and vitality of their local ecosystem”. A more important
observation in this connection was that millions of people are also making an important discovery that life is about living not consuming. A life of material sufficiency can be filled with social, cultural, intellectual, and spiritual abundance that place no burden on the planet.

The new action agenda called for a more self-reliant and a more radical approach among like-minded communities emphasizing that it is time to assume responsibility creating a new human future of just and sustainable communities freed from the myth that greed, competition, and mindless consumption are paths to individual and collective fulfillment. It will take millions of people around the world—linked together into powerful political coalition aimed at radical and economic reform to win the war that global capital is waging against us.

A parallel development somewhat in the above direction but far less radical followed particularly at the initiative of the UNDP. The emphasis here was on pointing out that much could still be done to reconcile the existing structural adjustment policies of the World Bank and the IMF with a human development agenda. This development was particularly important for Bangladesh which being a highly aid dependent country had to reconcile its human development policies with its existing structural adjustment reform policies.

The 1990 UNDP Human Development (HD) Report gave a new interpretation of the human development emphasizing that it is primarily a process of enlarging people’s choices. The most critical of these wide ranging choices are to live a long and healthy life, to be educated and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. Additional choices
include political freedom, guaranteed human rights and personal self-respect”. The Report further emphasized that "development enables people to have these choices" although "no one can guarantee human happiness and the choices people make are their own concern. But the process of development should at least create a conducive environment for people, individually and collectively, to develop their full potential and to have a reasonable chance of leading productive and creative lives in accord with their needs and interests”.

The 1990 UNDP Report, also developed a Human Development Index that included not only income but also life expectancy, literacy and command over the resources to enjoy a decent standard of living. More important, the index is claimed to have the "the potential for refinement as more aspects of human choice and development are quantified”.

The 1991 UNDP Report developed the human development concept, further. It highlighted, the role of national governments with focus on the question how they could generate resources to promote human development. The report concluded that "an enormous amount could be saved. (more than $ 50 billion a year) by restricting national budgets away from wasteful expenditure on the military and on loss-making public enterprises, for example, and towards more relevant priorities such as basic education and primary health care”.

The report suggested the use of four ratios indicating the proportion of national income committed to priority human expenditure. The ratios highlighted some disturbing anomalies: many developing countries spend more than 25% of their GNP
through the budget, yet direct less that a tenth of this expenditure at human priority development.15

The report further discovered that less than 7% of the total aid of the bilateral donors as a whole was going to human priority areas in developing countries. It concluded that16. “even modest restructuring could achieve a great deal: reallocating just a third of today’s aid could produce a four fold increase in the amount going to human priority concerns”

The report’s conclusion was clear and unambiguous: The lack of political commitment, not of financial resource, is often the real cause of human neglect17.

The UNDP report 1992, brought another dimension of human development in the forefront: people contribute to growth and growth contributes to human well-being. The definition of human development, therefore, has to be comprehensive enough to bring human being in the forefront of development.

It was observed that18 “human development concerns all activities from production processes to institutional changes to policy dialogues. It is development focused on people and their well-being. It is as concerned with the generation of economic growth as with basic needs as with the spectrum of human aspirations, as concerned with human distressed of the North as with the human deprivation in the South. Human development, as a concept is broad and comprehensive. But it is guided by a simple idea people always come first”.

This concern for “people first” led the 1992 UNDP report to have a hard look on the question of the “sustainability” of the
current development process. It was realized that although the world as a whole made tremendous economic and technological progress over the last two centuries, “the 23% of world’s people living in the industrialized countries of the North earn 85% of the world’s income. The strains of this level of economic activity are felt in the loss of forests and species, the pollution of rivers, lakes and oceans, the accumulation of greenhouse gases and the depletion of life preserving ozone.”

The situation gets further worsened by the incidence of high poverty in the rest of the world. “Some 1.4 to 2 billion of the world’s 5.3 billion people in 1991 lived in poverty.” They depend “on the oil for food, the river for water and the forests for fuel. Even though they need these resources desperately, the poor have little choice without assets or income but to overuse and destroy these resources simply to survive. In doing they threaten their well being and that of their of their children.”

The 1992 UNDP report, therefore, emphasized the interdependent nature of our planet. The developed countries must share their prosperity with the developing world. Most importantly, by the minimum requirements for achieving sustainable development in developing countries included:

- Elimination of poverty;
- A reduction in population growth;
- More equitable distribution of resources;
- Healthier, more educated and better trained people;
- Decentralized, more participatory government;
- More equitable, liberal trading systems within and among countries, including increased production for local consumption;
Simultaneously, the 1992 UNDP report raised the question of link between freedom and development. It observed that:

"It is true that and autocratic government can sometimes engineer fundamental reforms and promote social concerns. But is the difficult to establish durable connection between authoritarian rule and economic or social development. For every example of an authoritarian state that has other examples where authoritarian rule merely led to economic stagnation or complete economic chaos".

Admitting that the link between freedom and development is difficult to measure quantitatively, the report grouped political freedom into five broad clusters, reflecting values common to all cultures, all religions and all stages of development. These are: (a) personal security; (b) rule of low; (c) freedom of expression; (d) political participation and (e) equality of opportunity. The report also pointed out how these five clusters could be related to the main institutions of society that protect or abuse human rights. According to it, the legislature represents political participation; the executive branch has a critical role in equality of opportunity; the judiciary is responsible for rule of law and the physical integrity of individual; civil society and the fourth estate, are important
barometers of freedom of expression, including freedom of association and movement.

The UNDP Human Development Report 1992 was followed by its Human Development Report 1993 where it put renewed emphasis on people’s participation”.

“People’s participation is becoming the central issue of our time. The democratic transition in many developing countries, the collapse of many socialist regimes, and the worldwide emergence of people’s organizations these are all part of a historic change, not just isolated events”.

The report further urged that “this is the vision national and global decision makers must consider if the 1990s are to emerge as a new water shed in peaceful development --- and if the 21st century is to see the full flowering of human potential all over the world. The process of change ushered in by the events of the past few years must now be carried forward with great courage and resolution”

The UNDP report on Human Development in 1994 put added emphasis on (i) transfer of resources through “peace dividend” (reduction of global military expenditures in favour of sustainable human development with focus on the developing countries) (ii) protection of world environment from further degeneration and degradation.

With the above development in the fields of non-conventional approach to environmental protection and sustainable human resources development at the international level, we would now turn to the response of Bangladesh.
Part-III: The Specific Response of Bangladesh to the Conventional and Non-Conventional approaches to Environmental Protection and Sustainable Human Development

The case of the response of Bangladesh to the above conventional and non-conventional development in the field of environment and SHD would be presented under three subheads: (a) the early effort of Bangladesh for achieving SHD through its own variety of socialist reconstruction particularly in the macro-economic approach to development; (b) the question of choice of human indicators for SHD development in Bangladesh within the framework of market economy, and finally (c) the process of internalization of this new approach through development of a number of human freedom indicators in Bangladesh that is now in process.

(I) The early effort of Bangladesh to achieve SHD through socialist reconstruction

Bangladesh achieved its independence in 1971 through a liberation war triggered by a mass movement against injustice and inequity. After independence, it faced the formidable problem of not only economic but also socio-political rehabilitation and reconstruction. In retrospect, it took the economy alone almost six long years to come back to its 1970 benchmark. In addition, it had to (i) resettle about a million refugees who had fled to the neighboring country during the liberation war; (ii) recover arms from various splinter groups who were threats to each other in the immediate post-liberation period and (iii) unite a population that appeared divided in
several ideological camps on the question of national identity and socio-political reconstruction.

In the field of SHD, the leaders who came to power in 1971 assumed that capitalistic democracy was essentially expletive, it creates poverty and unemployment and de-humanizes the poor. As such, the aim of economic reconstruction in the post-independent period should be to promote development of a socialistic society.

The transition of a semi-feudal semi-capitalist country like Bangladesh towards its socialistic goal, however, was to be a gradual process. To help achieve this goal, the First Five year plan (1973-78) presented twelve objectives before the new nation with the emphasis that poverty alleviation was the foremost objective of the plan. It envisaged both production and institutional program for development. It visualized a need for restructuring institutions to meet the problems of organization of rural people, utilization of resources and development of local planning system. It identified weaknesses in the institutional system as "one imposed from the top, non-representative in character and a channel for distribution and utilisations, of resource from outside without adequate emphasis on mobilization resources from within."  

To achieve the above objective, the First Five Year Plan (1973-78) proposed political and institutional intervention with focus on socialism.

"The political leadership must be dedicated to the ideals of socialism. It will have to provide the leadership in
bringing about a social transformation. The party leadership must shoulder the obligation and responsibility to set examples in social behavior and come up with bold new ideas for social action, which will give them the normal authority to effect desired changes"

The above presentation shows that the planners considered development more a matter of political economy than a market economy. This perception of economic development, however, changed with the violent overthrow of the government in 1975. The subsequent change in the planning concept is described below.

(II) Sustainable Human Development through Market Economy

The First FYP was followed by a Two year Development Programme (1978-80). Its main pre-occupation was the completion of on-going projects and programs with necessary pruning and expenditure adjustments in view of the acute resource constraints particularly following the oil price hike in the international market in the mid 1970s. This interim adjustment period also gave the planners the required time for thinking about the long term direction of the development of the country. While formulating the Second Five year Plan (1980-85), the question of sustainable development came to the forefront.

However, the plan this time tried to base its prescription for growth and development more on the market economy than socialistic reconstruction. as a result, the Second Five Plan,
paved the way for a more capitalist process of development in the following years.

This reappearance of the merit of capitalist market economy was reinforced by the instrument of structural adjustment reform policies initiated mainly by the World Bank and IMF particularly after the mid 1980s through the structural Adjustment Facility Loans. As a result, in the 1980s the following “corrections” got incorporated in the framework of national thinking through the Second Five Year Plan (1980-85) on planned economic development.

1. No development ideology can be sustained for long without an incentive structure based on material reward. The best way of achieving a rational and efficient incentive structure is through opening up of the economy to the market forces. The main task of the Government should, therefore, be the creation of a supportive environment to achieve the above objectives through appropriate structural adjustment in the economy within a given time frame.

2. For alleviation of poverty, the most important requirements was accelerated growth. A high growth rate helps poverty alleviation through a trickle down process of increased opportunities for increased employment and income.

3. Increase investment in the social sector (education, health, social welfare, etc) contributes to growth by increasing the skill and productivity of labour. So, along with promoting private investment through an appropriate incentive structure efforts should be made to increase investment in the social sector.
However, the second phase of development planning in Bangladesh was characterized not only by a reassertion of the superiority of market oriented economy but also by an independent growth process that brought social development as important strategy for both poverty alleviation and sustainable human development in the mainstream of economic thought in this country.

(III) Efforts to reallocate resources in favour of SHD in Mid-Term Plans

The Third Five Year Plan (1985-1990) of Bangladesh initiated the process of this reconciliation between resource requirement for growth vs. human development) through development of a Social Accounting Matrix Based Applied General Equilibrium. It divided the population into ten main social groups mainly in terms of land ownership. The model, made some efforts to examine the impact of reallocation of resources in the sector based Annual Development Programme of Bangladesh on the different social groups. However, the model could not be put into effective operation because of the lack of data.

The Fourth Five year Plan (1990-95) tried to give a more explicit orientation to the concept of sustainable human development based planning. Its primary objective was poverty reduction and generation of employment through human resources development. It was also assumed that this would simultaneously promote higher rates of growth through mobilizing the development potentials of the poor through social development. For such social development, the main
emphasis was on decentralized participatory planning with focus on organizing the poor at the grassroots.

(IV) Adoption and Expansion of Development of Human Development Indicators in Bangladesh

The decade of 1990 started in Bangladesh with an overthrow of the military regime and the consequential restoration of democracy along with its pledges for immediate human and social development and the intensification of pressure by the donors for further structural adjustment reform policies in the country. In the initial years, the policy makers had to give greater importance to the latter compulsion partly because they were heavily dependent on foreign assistance and also partly because there was the presumption particularly among the donors that macro-economic stabilization was a necessary condition for sustainable human development. By mid 1990s, the new government not only claimed that substantial progress in this field of implementation of structural adjustment reform policies could be achieved but also that the policies had become substantially internalized. The main achievement in the area were as follows:

(a) Progress towards Macro-Economic Stabilization

(i) Increased self-reliance: In 1989-90 nearly the entire Annual Development Programme (ADP) was financed by foreign assistance. By 1994-95, domestic financing of ADP stood at about 43%. In real terms; ADP expenditure was slightly negative during 1984-95 to 1989-90 while it grew at 9.8% during 1990-91-1994-95.
(ii) **Fiscal Policy**: The tax-GDP ratio had increased over 0.5% per annum during 1990-91 to 1994-95 while the top individual tax rate of 25% and corporate income tax rate of 40% was among the lowest in South Asia. Owing to improved fiscal measurement, the overall fiscal deficit had declined from 7.9% of GDP in 1989-90 to 5.1% in 1994-95.

(iii) **Export performance**: Similarly, following the strong export performance (export grew at 5.4% to 12.1% against the growth of import from 18.3% to 20.2% during 1980-84 to 1994-95), particularly in non-traditional sectors, the current account deficit had declined from 7% of the GDP in 1989-90 to 3.6% in 1994-95.

(iv) **Inflation**: The average inflation rate was about 10% in the 1980; it dropped to 5.2% in 1994-95.

The above achievement of substantial short run stability enabled the government to increase domestic resources for enhanced human resources development (investment in social sector has gone up from about 12 to nearly 30%) and increase its support for both safety net and income generating activities in the public sector designed to help the poor and the disadvantaged. In 1994, thus there was hope that, given the achievement in the short terms macro economic management of the country, it would be possible to give greater attention for a shift to a high growth path in the future but 1995-96 caught the country into violent political turmoil (mainly over the modality of general election for transfer of power from one government to the other). Consequently many of the above indicators deteriorated
during this period. For example: (i) the country's fiscal deficit rose to 6% of the GDP in 1995-95; (ii) its foreign exchange reserve dwindled to $2.07 billion from $3.07 billion over last June; and (iii) export growth rate dipped from 15% to 8% over the same period.

(b) The progress towards Social Development.

The achievement in the above macro-economic indicators of the early 1990s and the difficulties that the economy faced in the mid 1990s made the question of sustainable human development more important in Bangladesh. There was increasing enquiry about who benefited when macro economic indicators improved and who suffered most when these indices were down. There were apprehensions that in the period of relative higher growth, it was the affluent section of the society that was getting the largest share of the benefit while at the time of relative hardship the axe of adjustment was falling more on the poor. This question became all the more important in the context of the World Social Summit at Copenhagen that reaffirmed (in March 1995) the Human Development Index (HDI) developed by UNDP for SHD and recommended increased resource flow for development of the poor both within the country and from the rich to the poorer countries (the 20:20 formulae). In the Summit, the danger of social disintegration in the process of growth-oriented development also came into limelight, which implied that development to be sustainable must also be value-based.

Mid-1990s therefore, witnessed additional compulsion for identification of SHD indicators in Bangladesh both for
evaluating the hitherto achieved gains from structural adjustment reform programme and the responsibility that it took upon itself to restructure its development in favour of the disadvantaged as a signatory of the Social Summit at Copenhagen.

As a result, there was a further consolidation and expansion of the quantitative and qualitative Human Development Indicators in Bangladesh. The main indicators may be seen below:

(a) Quantitative Indicators identified:


(b) The Qualitative Indicators Identified:

(i) Crisis Coping Capacity (ii) Vulnerability (iii) Intra-Household Relation (iv) Awareness about Project Deliveries (v) Participation (vi) Security

Simultaneously, the government had to re-examine its own role in ensuring implementation of the above human development programme. It may be mentioned in this connection that under market economy, the main role of development is assigned to the private sector and therefore, the initial prescription (particularly that came from the donors) was to reduce the size of the government. More specifically, it was recommended that
the loss making public sector enterprises should be privatized, as far as possible, and government should try to reduce losses and wastage’s in its remaining operations. On the other hand, in the context of the above emphasis on SHD effort, it was also realized that the government in developing countries like Bangladesh have to play a pro-active role in the area of creating congenial atmosphere for private investment as well as for promoting social development around the HDI identified above.

In may also be noted that in 1994, the UNICEF\textsuperscript{34} independently identified 12 main areas of concern for “Human Development Choices for Bangladesh. The areas were: (1) Economy; (2) Education; (3) Emergencies (involving catastrophes like flood, cyclone, draughts etc; (4) Environment; (5) Food; (6) Gender; (7) Health; (8) Nutrition; (9) Participation; (10) Population; (11) Urbanization and (12) Work.

In another publication by UNICEF and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), titled Progotir Pothey\textsuperscript{35} (road to progress), the conditions of the disadvantaged sections of the community the women and children of Bangladesh are caught in statistical terms. It also serves as benchmark from where to chart the path to progress in achieving both Mid-Decade (end 1990 and Summit Goals 2000 A. D.). The report provided information at both the national and sub-national (district) levels.

The above development shows how the non-conventional approach to SHD have been becoming crucially important for a more human development for Bangladesh. To respond to this challenge, the Government of Bangladesh identified a number of sub-groups of SHD indicators for further quantification. These were mainly-\textsuperscript{36}. 
1. For Education: 5 indicators: (a) adult literacy rates; (b) gross enrolment ration in the primary school; (c) secondary enrolment ratio; (d) mean years of schooling and (e) number of primary schools.

2. For Health: 21 indicators: (a) life expectancy at birth; (b) contraceptive prevalence rate; (c) average marriage age for girls; (d) population per physician; (e) population per nurse; (f) population per hospital bed; (g) population with access to health services; (h) birth attended by health personnel; (i) maternal mortality rate; (j) infant under 5 mortality; (k) one year old immunized; (l) underweight children under 5; (m) oral dehydration therapy use rate; (n) access to safe water; (o) access to sanitary latrine; (p) pregnant women immunized against tetanus; (q) children immunized against DPT etc; (r) no. of health and family planning workers; (s) daily calorie supply per capita; (t) daily calorie supply as per requirement; (u) food import dependency ratio.

3. For Income Distribution: 3 indicators: (a) income ratio of highest 20% to lowest 20% (b) Gini coefficient-national, urban and rural; (c) population below poverty level national, urban and rural.

4. For Woman Development: 7 indicators: (a) male-female ratio; (b) female representation in Parliament; (c) female wages as percentage of male’s; (d) adult literacy ratio; (e) primary school enrollment ratio; (f) secondary school enrollment ratio; (g) life expectancy at birth male/female.
5. For Resource Allocation: 5 indicators: (a) education expenditure as percentage of GDP; (b) health expenditure as percentage of GDP; (c) public expenditure on social services as percentage of GDP; (d) military expenditure; (e) ratio of military expenditure to education and health expenditures.

6. For Participation and Social Integration: 5 indicators: (a) from of government parliamentary development; (b) no. of elected Union Parishads; (c) no. or registered community organizations; (d) no. of NGOs operating in the country; (e) no. of cooperative societies.

7. For Environment: 4 indicators: (a) forest and wood lands; (b) annual rate of deforestation; (c) commercial energy consumption per capita (kilogram of oil); (d) green house index (carbon heating equivalent metric tons per capita).

The development of these detailed identification of the main quantitative indicators was a significant step in evaluating the economic performance of the country in terms of sustainable human development perspective. However, the critical question for the coming years would be if the policy makers would redirect the socio-economic political system of the country to monitor and evaluate the performance of their economy according to the above indicators or would continue to evaluate their job mainly in terms of the conventional macro-economic aggregates as recommended by the structural adjustment policy prescriptions with focus on the short term stabilization requirement. to get an answer to this question we seem to remain largely dependent on the future course of political development of this country. This issue is briefly taken up next.
(VI) The direction of future Political Development in Bangladesh: the emergence of a few new Human Freedom Indicators.

The course of political development in Bangladesh that followed after independence in general and in the first half of the 1990s seemed intimately interwoven with the concept of SHD. This may be seen below:

(a) during the pre-independence period (when East Bengal was a part of United Pakistan, 1947-71) the political power was in the hands of people who had little respect for rule of law. They preferred controlled democracy both at the centre an at the local levels, supported by controlled information media and managed by civil and military elites rooted in the feudal norms and values.

(b) with independence of Bangladesh, there was high hope that the hitherto suppressed preference for a democratic polity based on freedom of expression and rule of law would now find more congenial atmosphere for fuller expression and would eventually lead the country towards a growth path that would demonstrate not only high growth rate but also high indicators of human development.

(c) over the years, however, the above expectation was overshadowed by the authoritative rules of about two decades until 1990 when a popular democratic movement could restore democracy in the country. This political development brought the importance of human development indicators as a component of sustainable human development in the forefront.
As a result of the above dynamics, the concept of human freedom indicators also became important in Bangladesh. Eventually this aspiration was reinforced by the publication of UNDP human freedom index for the developing economics.

The concept of Human Freedom Indicators as appeared in the UNDP Human Development Report, 1992, indicated that the performance of a country should be evaluated not only in terms of quantitative socio-economic indicators but also by a number of liberal political indicators. However, it was realized that these political indicators would be more difficult to quantify and much of this progress or lack of it would have to be assessed qualitatively. It may also be added here that because the developing countries are at different stages of socio-political development, some of these indicators would be necessarily more country specific. However, the UNDP report, 1992 specifically mentioned four main items in their calculation of HFI index. These were (a) personal security with focus on protection against arbitrary arrest and detention; torture and cruel treatment or punishment; arbitrary killing and disappearances; (b) rule of law with focus on fair and public hearings; legal counsel; review of conviction; competent, independent and impartial tribunals; (c) freedom of expression with focus removal of restrictions in law and practice, media censorship; media ownership and freedom of speech and (d) political participation with focus on free and fair election; community and local decision making; continuity of democratic system and (e) equality of opportunity with focus on legal guarantees; violence against or harassment of particular groups; political and economic participation.
The UNDP report found that for high income countries, the average HFI was 84%, for middle income countries 61% and for low income countries, 43%. However, the calculation also showed that even poor nations could have high HFI. The report admitted that this was an extremely difficult area. It called for substantial further research.

We have identified the implicit political development cum freedom indicators that seem to have emerged in Bangladesh with considerable significance for future sustainable human development to be mainly as follows:

> From 1990 onwards general election in the country should be regularly held at an interval of five years under a “caretaker government”.

> All differences among the political parties should be sorted out in the Parliament; the differences should not be taken to the street.

> Judiciary must be separated from administration and it should function independently.

> There should be consensus among the political parties that they would not jeopardize the process of economic development for their differences on political issues.

> The military should remain outside politics.

> State should guarantee media autonomy.

> The State should be ruled in accordance with rule of law with guaranteed transparency and accountability.
> Autonomous local government should be developed at the local level.

> The Parliamentary Committees should be headed by opposition members of the parliament.

> The educational institutions should be kept free from terrorism.

> All black laws that permit the government to arrest and detain people arbitrarily should be withdrawn.

> The administrative court should be set up and be allowed to function independently to give the government servants much needed sense of security and justice.

Of course the above list can be extended by adding a few more elements in it but these appear to have gained relatively greater importance for Bangladesh in its transition to responsible governance from the tradition of authoritarian rule.

It may also be noted that the above political development cum human freedom indicators, have not been identified out of pure academic recommendation. They have emerged substantially from popular movement of the people in this country over a long period of time but particularly in the late 1980s. And as such, this development dynamics cannot be left outside the broader concept of sustainable human development in Bangladesh, for long. If the above specific human freedom indicators can be strengthened with the more comprehensive human freedom indicators as identified by the UNDP report
mentioned above, the chance of obtaining desirable result in the area of sustainable human development would be even brighter. In addition we have also described how the 7 sub-groups of Human Development Indicators (in areas covering Education, Health, Income Distribution, Women Development, Resource Allocation, Participation and Social Integration and Environment Protection) have been identified in Bangladesh in response to new challenges of sustainable Human Development highlighted by UN agencies, Social Development Summit at Copenhagen and by a number of development thinkers. In any study on monitoring sustainable human development in Bangladesh these socio-economic and political indicators would have to be considered with due attention. This seems to be a net gain for the political and economic development that has occurred in this country, in recent years.

Conclusion
It is interesting to note that despite various types of social, economic and political turmoils, Bangladesh has been able to develop its own variety of Human Freedom Indicators, at least, implicitly, if not explicitly with particular focus on its transition to future democracy from past authoritarian rules. For our study, this development is extremely important. Apparently, these developments are of political nature but they have very high content of freedom embodied in them. Further, the political movement in favour of democracy seemed to be the essential pre-requisite to make in concept of Human Freedom Index identified by UNDP actually meaningful in Bangladesh. However, we may also note the above achievement in Bangladesh in the area of conceptualization of human development may be relevant and praiseworthy but as has been
pointed out in the introduction of this paper, one critical question still remains—Can Bangladesh move alone in the area of sustainable human development and environmental protection without getting its effort linked to the process of environmental protection policies of the developed countries? As one of the least developing countries of the world, it seems to have no ready answer; however, having done some home task (described above), it can only hope for the best.
Footnotes

3. Ibid;
4. Ibid;
6. Ibid;
7. Ibid; P-4
8. Ibid; P-23
9. Ibid;
10. Ibid;
11. UNDP: Human Development Report; 1990; Oxford University Press; Overview; P-1; Delhi.
12. Ibid;
13. Ibid;
15. Ibid;
16. Ibid;
17. Ibid;
19. Ibid;
20. Ibid;
21. Ibid;
22. Ibid;
23. Ibid; P-29
24. Ibid; P-30
25. UNDP: Human Development Report; 1993; Oxford University Press; Delhi; 1993; P-1.
26. Ibid;
27. UNDP: Human Development Report; 1994; Oxford University Press; Delhi; P-47-58.
28. The First Five Year Plan of Bangladesh (1973-78); Government of Bangladesh: P-2
29. Ibid;
31. The Third Five Year Plan of Bangladesh (1985-90); Government of Bangladesh
32. Dr. Zaidi Satter: The state of Bangladesh Economy, December 5, 1995
34. A Fork the Path; UNICEF; Pioneer Printing Press; Dhaka
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