Chapter 4

Indigenous knowledge and Globalization in Bangladesh: NGOs’ Capacity for Social Capital and Community Development

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ABSTRACT

This is an example of a PhD proposal based on a qualitative case study. This PhD proposal was completed by the author at the UNESCO Centre for Comparative Education and Research, Faculty of Education, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom. This proposal describes the main elements of a research proposal. First, it provides a background and introduction of the proposal, and then discusses research problem, objectives and research question, significance of the study, conceptual and theoretical aspect. Finally, this proposal outlines the methodology of the study briefly. The proposal also includes a long list of the references used in the study. This will help the students to understand the qualitative study.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This proposal is about to explore the capacity of NGOs in social capital and community development in Bangladesh where I will attempt to look an alternative development model with considering the indigenous and global knowledge approach. This proposal will look two important development approaches such as ‘social capital’ (Putnam, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2001) and ‘community empowerment’ (Laverack, 2006).

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-7897-0.ch004
It is argued that NGOs’ interventions in developing countries such as Bangladesh, are now focused on social capital formation and community empowerment. Currently, the majority of the NGOs in Bangladesh work to create opportunities and resources, such as education, skills, social networks, and employment. Some NGOs also aim directly at community empowerment; their ultimate objective is to secure community development. The NGOs use many interventions and the most important is knowledge. Knowledge, both IK and global/scientific knowledge (GK/SK), is now considered an important aspect of development intervention for NGOs. This proposal considers an appropriate paradigm to review such knowledge approaches, where NGOs’ interventions can work towards sustainable community development in Bangladesh. It is argued that the NGOs are working with both indigenous and global knowledge approaches, each with comparative advantages and disadvantages. In response, the research premises the explore the challenges the NGOs’ capacity for social capital and community empowerment due to globalisation. With this in mind, the study selected two programmes from two leading NGOs in Bangladesh: the Markets and Livelihoods Programme (MLP) of Practical Action Bangladesh (PAB) and the Small Economic Enterprise Development (SEED) programme of Proshika. The study further selected two groups of people, blacksmiths (MLP) and goldsmiths (SEED), from two communities served by those NGOs.

Bangladesh achieved its independence in 1971, but has deep rooted traditions and cultural practices (UNESCO, 2001:45). Bangladesh took the inspiration for an independent state from the historic language movement of 21st February 1952, which remains a milestone and a red letter day for the people of Bangladesh, who had fought long and hard to achieve democracy. The People’s Republic of Bangladesh has been a parliamentary democracy since 1991. As a developing country, Bangladesh is progressing gradually, though many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are not yet achieved, partially due to its high population growth rate (World Bank, 2005). As the Malthusian theory (Malthus, 1798) suggests, the country is struggling with the contest between population control and depleting resources. Largely, due to the limitations of the Government initiatives, the NGO is increasingly becoming a necessary sector for community development in Bangladesh (Devine, 2003:228). In light of this, the context of the research has three aspects: the NGOs’ use of IK and GK for social capital and community empowerment; the challenges that arise; and the options for community development.

The IK in Bangladesh is an integral, valuable resource based on deep rooted traditions. Craft persons, such as blacksmiths and goldsmiths, have acquired various skills, developed through the wisdom and experience of successive generations (UNESCO, 2001:1). The proposal requires into how such knowledge, culture, skills, and practices may be woven into community development, most of them being established through a process of trial and error, which underpin their ontological