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Opinion

For proportionate poverty alleviation

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The main objective of economic development in Bangladesh is to eradicate poverty through increasing and distributing the national income. Eradication of poverty and keeping prices of necessities under control are very much important in this regard. It is important to create employment opportunity, increasing income and proper utilisation, bring the prices of essentials within general people's reach and thus remove public suffering. Bangladesh is affected by problems like over-population and poverty. So it is imperative to remove poverty for the development of Bangladesh. Presently district quota is one of the issues that have been considered for removing poverty. If we remove

this quota, it would appear as something suicidal.

Bangladesh has passed about four decades after Liberation. Among 7.5 crores population in post-liberation period about 4 crores were poor. At present the number of the poor has stood 6 to 7 crores. In other words at a period of 39 years the number of poor people has also been doubled proportionately with the total population. Among these 6 to 7 crores people at least one third should be taken under rationing system which is really a difficult task.

The economic condition of every one of 64 districts in Bangladesh is not the same. The existing quota system proportionate to population which is 10% is not enough to relieve

discrimination and poverty especially in Northern districts. The reason is that because of erosion of Padma and Jamuna and their branches and at the same time due to flood the damage of crops has become a regular phenomenon. In the northern districts of Rangpur, Kurigram, Nilphamary, Gaibandha people can hardly afford two square meals because of lack of food, employment and above all because of lack of purchasing power. In this situation the government has declared the above mentioned districts as munga-stricken and taken various programmes for removing poverty. Despite that the economic development in these areas is not up to the mark. Again Padma and Brammaputra washed

away greater Mymensingh and so many other districts which should be brought under quota system and various development programmes should be taken accordingly.

In recent times it has been published in newspapers that some are of the opinion that quota system in government jobs should be removed. Out of 64 districts in Bangladesh Barisal, Noakhali, Comilla and Chandpur are in leading position in respect of competence shown in job market. Besides, least developed and mediocre districts are Kushtia, Jessore and Khulna. These districts are considerably developed because crops are not that much damaged by natural disasters over there. On the other hand a major section of people of Sylhet and Chittagong are well-off. Many people there are good businessman and working abroad. So because of removal of quota system, people from Jessore, Kushtia, Khulna,

greater Sylhet and greater Chittagong will not be affected much. But people of northern districts, greater Mymensingh and greater Faridpur will suffer from poverty. Therefore it is obvious that people of Barisal, Noakhali, Chandpur and Comilla will be benefited due to removal of quota system and the other districts will be deprived of opportunities. It is not at all total development of the country providing benefit to few districts like Barisal, Noakhali, Comilla and Chandpur. The best way to removal of poverty is a balanced utilisation of national income and employment. A more increase in per capita income does not define a development. The Middle-east countries can never be termed as developed for the lack of equitable distribution of income even if per capita income in those countries is very high. So if the removal of quota system in the employment sector is undertaken efforts of develop-

ment will not be successful. As a result of quota-removal, the government will be in trouble to meet overall unrest created among people because of regional discrimination in the employment sector.

It is clear from the discussion above that if the plan for removing quota system in the employment sector is implemented, we will face obstacle in removing discrimination among regions which will affect poverty eradication programme very badly. We know most of our people are poor and tax realisation of the government is not up to expectation. The government will not succeed in removing poverty by taking various programmes. That is why employment opportunities should be created and an equitable distribution of income should be ensured. For this district-quota system must be kept unchanged. If the job quota is removed, poverty eradication programme will fail which nobody aspires.