

Who cares about participation? All is needed another piece of paper to continue debts and loans

Palash Kamruzzaman (Kamruzzaman.md@liverpool.ac.uk)
School of Sociology and Social Policy
University of Liverpool, UK

Abstract

The poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) framework has been suggested by the World Bank and IMF for all poor countries. By preparing PRSPs countries should get unconditional debt relief under HIPC initiative. However, it was expected that these documents will be the key vehicle for the World Bank and IMF and other donors for various assistance, lending and non-lending operations with the poor countries. Like other previous prescriptions for poverty reduction from the World Bank and IMF such as CAS, PPA, CDF the PRSP framework also press on the idea of 'participation' and 'ownership'. This paper argues that ownership of such grand framework can by no means rest upon the poor countries or their people as the whole idea has been produced from the think-tanks of the World Bank and IMF. Nevertheless, ownership through 'participation' can be seen as a legitimising effort for continuing the hegemonic relationship of the World Bank and IMF and poor countries. This paper discusses participation in the development of Bangladesh's PRSP and claims that neither participation nor ownership was the target in preparing a national poverty reduction strategy rather it has been necessitated to formulate another document to continue the debt and lending relationship with the World Bank and IMF.

Key words: Poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), the World Bank, IMF, participation, ownership, Bangladesh