

## Primary Education: Promises and Perils Key to Creating Wealth for Many

by Nuruddin Mahmud Kamal

**Good quality education demands skilled and dedicated teachers, quality curricula and above all a congenial classroom atmosphere. To provide these, the government, parents and the society must make decisions in unison that educating a child is worth sacrificing other priorities. Primary education cannot be sold short. If the will can be found, so can the funds.**

I must admit, the anxieties that arose in my mind earlier turned into comfort when I learned that at least one reader outside my family found my essay on education consistent with the thinking of a reasonable man in our society. This has encouraged me to continue my writings on the same topic: Primary Education Promises and Perils (ref. the author's article on 12 October 1999 in The Daily Star). But before I start to do so, let me tell you a story: I sing horribly badly. I never dare to sing when I'm with others, but I like to hum when I'm alone. One evening after Magreb prayers, I was walking down a street in Dhanmondi, Dhaka, recently humming, when I noticed a man who was walking towards me. When he got to within almost five yards of me, he suddenly turned away and started to cross the road. But then, seeming to recognise me he came over and said, 'Aren't you so and so?' I said, 'Yes, why did you move away?' 'Well, he replied, 'I heard you singing so I thought you are either mad or in serious problem and I couldn't recognise you.' When I complete this writing, and you happen to read it, I would really expect that you do not consider me the humming man.

Today, I would like to share with you a brief account on introduction of formal primary education and also some subsequent developments that have influenced the system to attain a not-so-good situation as we all are witnessing now. Indeed, the history and development of education in this country dates back to the ancient period. The traditional and non-conventional exchange of knowledge from *guru* to *pathshala*, *tol* to *maktab* and *madrasa* led to the present day primary education system. However, primary education was not made compulsory nor was there any effort to make it 'universal' or even 'formal' during those periods. The British rulers in India introduced English education about 145 years back from now. In fact, the formal primary education has its legacy with the 'Woods Despatch' in 1854. Then came the graded school system and the office of the Director of Public Instruction (DPI).

The office of the DPI has now transformed into a top-heavy organisation called the Directorate of Primary Education headed, manned and managed by college teachers, while the experienced professionals from the primary education frame act as support personnel. It would be interesting to note that compulsory primary education bill was first

introduced in the year 1912 in the Imperial Legislative Council of the British government, but the proposal was not accepted. Almost 78 years later, Bangladesh Parliament passed the Compulsory Primary Education Act in 1990. Worldwide, the current decade is witnessing a remarkable progress made for the education of children. A rare demonstration of new vision and commitment of the world leaders in the early 90's enthused many developing country leaders to make wiser decisions and help improve their own education system. Those courageous leaders were convinced that a good quality education was prescriptive to the process of peace, democracy and development. Bangladesh also enthusiastically participated and endorsed the World Declaration of Education for All and the Framework for Action enunciated in the high profile World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) attended by 1500 participants from 155 countries and 125 NGOs. The whole point of WCEFA was to forge greater alliances, new partnerships and view the attainment of education goals as social mission of the governments, NGOs and the communities.

If we go deep down, we will find something is hindering the progress of primary education. Let's try to find out the reasons. The investigation may start with this story. An American lady living in Bangladesh once called a carpenter to fix a window frame. She gave the carpenter a sketch but he followed the sketch too literally and botched the job. When she remonstrated, saying, 'Why didn't you just use your common sense?' he drew himself up with great dignity and said, 'But common sense, Madam, is a gift of Allah; I have technical knowledge only.' 'Technical knowledge only' seemed a good epitaph for civilization which had not yet learned that engineering economics cannot be the sole basis of a humane public policy, nor, indeed, is an important criterion as social and moral values. Social and moral values are closely linked with the primary education system. If we miss them, we will miss the main aspect of quality education.

As new technologies make it possible to move more information faster than before we are at times dazzled by the millions of gigabytes that move across the world in nanoseconds. But do we ever ask ourselves: what is that we are communicating? Will it make the world a better place to live? And does all this information add up to knowledge? The challenge is to get information to where it is needed through the most effective method possible. Only when information helps people to communicate and participate and allows them and the government to make informed choices that information becomes knowledge. I am sure, we all want to turn information into knowledge, and give this country a chance to move towards prosperity. The knowledge gap needs to be bridged. A good quality primary education can be a basis for our future development in Bangladesh. Here, I do not intend to talk about the top of the line computers in each classroom. I only want to talk about a teacher who is adequately trained and motivated to teach, a classroom that has a roof, school children have enough to eat so that their brains are not strained by low caloric intake.

Unfortunately though, the actual situation does not provide a good signal about our basic education scenario. For instance, in a recent discussion meeting organised by the Federation of Bangladesh Teachers' Association (FBTA), Professor Iqbal Mahmud (ex-VC, BUET) observed that a new curriculum and textbooks would be needed to the students facing uncommon challenges in the coming years. Addressing the discussion as the chief guest, the current Vice-Chancellor of BUET, Dr. Nooruddin Ahmed went further to say that the standard of classroom education has deteriorated to an alarming level and that even kindergarten students take help of the private tutors to solve easy problems which gradually hinder the growth of their thinking abilities. If this is the state of affairs in the elementary level education in Bangladesh at the flag end of 20th century, how are we going to seize the opportunities of 21st century?

The call of literacy, as we all know, has a scriptural basis: the first revealed word in the holy Quran is 'read'. Today, the government says 'read', the NGOs say 'read', the informed communities say 'read', but even the most optimistic view would not claim in public that the adult literacy (15+ age) rate has crossed the boundary line of 45 per cent mark. In the primary education domain, almost 23 per cent boys and girls (about 4.4 million) do not attend school out of the total 19 million eligible children. Yet as a result of inefficiencies and wastages of resources on the one hand, and overemphasis on the achievements in literacy and primary education by the authorities on the other, a new wave of controversy appears to have been created in the educational parleys. Unfortunately, both the parties zealously guard their own viewpoints creating an adversarial relationship, which threatens the system.

As far as investment in primary education is concerned, I for one very strongly support much higher allocation rather than oversteering on military hardware at this stage of the country's development. It all rings a bell in my ears whenever I recall what the President of Ecuador spoke in 1990. He said, 'The cost of a nuclear submarine would finance the annual budget of 23 developing countries' primary education sector and meet the needs of 160 million primary school age children.' Presumably, the underlying assumption was that effort must be made on optimising use of resources available for promoting basic education.

But the mode and manner and also the priorities given on various projects and programmes under the primary education sector in Bangladesh appear to be in conflicting positions, perhaps because the pie (fund) is too small. It is known to us that free and compulsory education has been guaranteed in the Article 17 of the country's Constitution, which reads, 'The state shall adopt effective measures for the purpose of— (a) establishing a uniform, mass oriented and universal system of education, and extending free and compulsory education to

all children to such stage as may be determined by law' and the (c) reads, 'Removing illiteracy within such a time as may be determined by law.' In 1990, a five-year compulsory primary education law was enacted, but the disinclination of primary school system operated by some NGOs has also created the confusion. The investments made and the high expenditures incurred over the years for the development of primary education by some NGOs did not go along with the provision of the Constitution. There is however one consistency in running the affairs of the country by various players. Like the electric (power) or gas systems, primary education system also has a high degree of system loss, particularly when we consider drop-out, competency, repeater and achievement rates.

In my opinion, good quality primary education demands a greater commitment than any other development activity, because it cannot be compared to, for instance, oral saline programme. Among others, good quality education demands skilled and dedicated teachers, quality curricula and above all a congenial classroom atmosphere. To provide these, the government, parents and the society must make decisions in unison that educating a child is worth sacrificing other priorities. Primary education cannot be sold short. If the will can be found, so can the funds.

Over the decade, while Bangladesh rushed to enhance the number of schools and teachers, quality and relevance took a back seat. The classroom situation has not been monitored properly. If we did, we would be horrified. I must conclude, But before I do so, I wish to share about my childhood days in Armentola Government School located (now) in the old part of Dhaka city. This educational institution was reputed to be one of the best in the country in the 50s. My eyes aglow with pride and respect whenever I try and recall the classroom situation in particular and school atmosphere in general. Our revered headmaster Shamsuddin sir, teacher Kazi Ambar Ali sir, Basit sir, Bazul Rashid sir and dearest Khan Mohammed Salek sir, to name a few, will always remain in the heart of our hearts. The memory of their class-room teaching style rekindles our emotions. Shamsuddin sir used to say education is the key to creating wealth, not just for few, but the many.

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## Of Standards and Quality Control

by A Husnain

**To speak bluntly, the standards culture, beginning with the standard of the human resources who supervise the activities in the society, has to be cultivated (and practised) from the very top level, that is by the political leadership followed by the civil service, who implement the public standards in all the sectors. The improvement of any standard is proportional to the upper limit set by the senior supervisors themselves.**

It is nice to read the full page supplements in the news media, initiated by the BSTI (Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution) on the occasion of the 30th World Standards Day. Outside this page there are no critical articles surveying the field of activities in Bangladesh, and no analytical review issued by the BSTI on the shortcoming of this standards procedure in developing countries such as Bangladesh.

Some manufacturers are adhering to ISO 9000 series certification for their products and services. This new awareness is welcome, but it should not become a gimmick to dupe the customers and consumers. How many readers are aware of these mystical 9000-symbols?

Why so many BSTI labelled products are not upto standard? The certificates are issued, and then the products are neither sampled regularly nor regulated by the standards. Why such government agencies can only test, and not prosecute? No statistics are published in the media. The legal loopholes have to be plugged for fast legal action against the defaulters (the majority of the certificate holders). The bureaucracy is top heavy and handling too many 'business' activities, and at the same time carrying on regulatory assignments.

The standards (of products and services) network is difficult to build up in the LDCs and DCs due to many infrastructural and logistics weaknesses, and it takes years to build up; and it is even more difficult to operate and maintain it due to bureaucratic apathy and indifference of the political will. BSTI's support services have to be reviewed for creating public impact (similar problem with BCSIR). One is the shortage of budget and the other is trained, dedicated staff. The hundreds of inspectors are too few and they are overworked if they try to mind their job respectabilities seriously, in an environment of corruption and rent seeking. These administrative issues are not spotlighted in seminars and public meetings!

Bangladesh is richly endowed with a thriving SME (small and medium enterprises) sector, and the entrepreneurial spirit is very much evident in the country (we have a large working population who have to be innovative to earn their

living by the sweat of their brow, and not through quick fixes). There is a serious need for an awareness campaign by the government agencies and NGOs concerned. This information network needs resources to develop. Then the enforcement cannot be too strict initially as the entrepreneurs are handicapped with innumerable local problems in maintaining standards and quality. Quality control cannot come without knowing about the standards first.

The question may be asked how many Bangla publications in the form of booklets are freely available at the time of registration of the small cottage-industry level companies? How many training and orientation programmes are available, sponsored by government? The NGOs can be helpful here at the field level; but it appears that there is a blind approach to the potentialities of the NGOs, in that these agencies are told to focus mainly on poverty alleviation. Where are the NGOs to help the small business persons?

It is time that official reorientation is initiated at the policy level to diversify the activities of the thousands of NGOs, to penetrate the small business sectors, in contrast to the fact that at present the vast majority of the NGOs are focussed on poverty-level activities. Help the poor but also the small business companies. Only lately some agencies like the JOBS are coming forward with training courses, and several are engaged in enhancing the handicraft sector which has gained tremendous impetus in improved designs and better quality (we are exporting hand-crafts now).

The present activities and enhanced roles of agencies like the BSTI, BSCIC, BITAC, the handloom board, silk agencies and others may be reviewed by the government, including encouragement for active cooperation and participation of the private sector, after fruitful exchange of views with an umbrella body like the FACC.

At present the interaction between the public and the private sector are not seamless, and many invisible walls exist, together with considerable areas of communication gap. The initiative has to come from the government, as the small com-

panies are too busy with own day to day worries. The bureaucracy must become technical-minded and make themselves approachable at the field and local office level (that is why we are going to have the local government set up through the future local elections).

The days of file-oriented, pen-holding administration are gone. The officers have to get up from their chairs and move about, inside and outside their offices, and have to face confrontations with the clients, instead of leaving this important interfacing task to the lower cadres of the field staff, who are inadequately trained to motivate the clients who need public servicing incentives. (In Malaysia, the government counters are manned by the officers, not the clerical staff).

The whole structure of the government field offices have to be recast, if the civil service re-oriented to be cooperative and come out in the open, and the political will can concentrate on internal problems of state management exercises — political exposure is much more than facing the public from behind the microphone.

But the problem is that the elected representatives are all the time busy with too much politics, and leave the routine jobs to the routine people who are content to pass the day in a routine manner! Development is not a routine activity, but full of initiative and innovation day in and day out; and it is no use blaming the past regimes for deeds and misdeeds. Someone has to show the way. We are approaching the millennium with the log-of-mind mentality!

To speak bluntly, the standards culture, beginning with the standard of the human resources who supervise the activities in the society, has to be cultivated (and practised) from the very top level, that is by the political leadership followed by the civil service, who implement the public standards in all the sectors. The improvement of any standard is proportional to the upper limit set by the senior supervisors themselves.

The ISO is for the products. Where is the ISO for HR, and how does it work in the third world? Those who work behind the scenes have to be watched, not the product labels!

BA NGLADESH is an agrarian country with most of its population socially, economically and even politically dependent on agriculture. Agriculture remains the major source of employment, but that is yet very traditional and Bangladesh remains one of the poorest countries, despite having the most fertile soil in the world. Poverty is endemic with nearly 47 per cent of the population living in conditions of absolute poverty. Among them 56 per cent are landless and more than 80 per cent are still living in villages. They are out and out related to land but possess no land and no production implements. A few landlords control the major portion of cultivable land where most of the peasants work either as labour or as sharecroppers.

Thousands and thousands of acres are virtually government owned khas land. According to the existing government rules and regulations, landless people have right to own these lands. However, due to their unawareness and lack of information in this regard as well as they having no unity among themselves to loudly voice their claim to be heard, they could not establish access to these lands. Most of the khas lands are unauthorisedly occupied by so-called landlords. According to an unofficial figure there are 21,37,905 acres of khas land in our country. But due to the land grabbing process still going strong by the powerful the rural poor who are not able to carry out the court cases for a long time are becoming landless and day by day losing all their other belongings. Consequently, they are taking shelter on the high roads and embankments constructing 'Gram Basti' (village slums) and waiting to migrate to urban centres, specially Dhaka city, for survival.

The total land area of Bangladesh is approximately 35 million acres. Of this, 64 per cent is under cultivation. No other country in the world has such a high percentage of its land area under cultivation. The remaining 36 per cent is covered by waterways, settlements, roads and forests. Fallow land, as proportion of total land area is less than 3 per cent. Over the last three years, population has increased from 70 million to 133 million. Per capita land availability today is .18 acres. Land scarcity and landlessness are integrally linked. The 1997 Agriculture Census reveals that 10 per cent of households own no land whatsoever whether homestead or

arable. If we add those who own homestead but no arable land then the proportion of landless rises to 39 per cent. However, the common definition of landlessness also includes those who are considered functionally landless i.e. those owning up to 50 decimals only. On this latter definition, total landlessness stands at 57.5 per cent. That is why, one may say that the landless constitute the largest minority in Bangladesh.

Deltaic Bangladesh continues to be defined by the interplay of land and water. Within the context of overall land scarcity, the recurrent process of land erosion and land accretion generates a crucial secondary dynamic whose one face is the sudden pauperization brought about by river erosion and the other, the compensatory emergence of *chars* and also beels as a continuing 'land frontier' potentially available to the landless as indeed to anyone who may work to bring it under cultivation.

Like some developing countries, the history of land reform in Bangladesh is a long one, stretching over centuries. Feudalism in its worst form took the deepest roots under the British colonial rule. A chain of struggle by peasants spread over a century gave them a stable right to tenancy through Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885. Since then changes came in bits and pieces. Feudalism was legally abolished by the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act, 1950. But its implementation took an inordinately long period. This article, however, seeks to trace out the present problems and their possible solutions vis-a-vis land reforms in Bangladesh.

There is undeniably a large number of vested-interest groups within the local as well as national government's management and administration machinery. Besides, some complex ancient land laws, bureaucratic procedures and huge corruption of government officials concerned are the main problems obstructing land reform. The vested-interest groups would always take opposite position vis-a-vis constructive land reforms. For example, according to the SA record in Bangladesh, there are 21 lakh acres of khas land in our country. However, presently they have declared that there are only 8 lakh acres of khas land in Bangladesh. Now obviously the question arises, where has the rest of the khas lands gone; how

## Enhancing Poor People's Right to Land Existing Problems and Possible Solutions

by Md Abdul Kader and Sohail Ibn Ali

**Government should take steps for such pro-poor administrative reforms, as would reduce conflicts over land as well as bureaucratic corruption and increase small holder security. Enhancing poor people's right to land is likely to require a range of interventions to strengthen their own voice, advocacy to gain support from government, and create impetus for reform and also institutional reform per se to enable the demand itself to be met, particularly at the local government and administration level.**

much in river erosion, and how much gained through accretion?

**Present Problems**  
The system of land administration of Bangladesh is complex, couched in archaic terms and conditions and there is general lack of landholder's confidence in the records, witnessed by the unduly high proportion of matters that are litigated in the courts.

Current structure of land administration is built around three core functions: 1) Record Keeping; 2) Registration; 3) Settlement. Each of these functions is handled by a different category of offices. At the lowest tier, the function of record keeping is the jurisdiction of the Tahsil office while that of registration is of the sub-registrar's office, and there is an altogether different office which handles the function of settlement. The major problem here is that ownership rights are being recorded in two different offices each of which is located in completely different executive jurisdiction process. Tahsil office has a chain of command descending from the Ministry of Law. Similar is the case with settlement.

The problem arises when there is a conflict around land claims. Say, one has a long dispute in a village. Now to have a satisfactory resolution of this dispute, the most important requirement is the proof of ownership. Now if one party brings a proof from Tahsil office, another from Registrar's office and yet another from the Settlement office, and if there happens to be a difference, which is obvious, then how a judge is to adjudicate the dispute? Because each of these offices are legally constituted and hence their documents are legally admissible. This multiplicity of documents or records of rights are the central flaw in the system of land administration. The legal jurisdiction of the sub-registrar as laid out in Rule 42(1) is:

'Registration officers should bear in mind that they are in no way concerned with the validity of documents brought to them for registration, and that it would be wrong for them to refuse to register the document on any such grounds as the following e.g. that the executive was dealing with a property not belonging to him or that the instrument infringed the rights of third persons, not party to the transaction.'

Consequently, if one wants to register a deed is which one claims to be owner of, say, a whole thana and wanting to sell it, the sub-registrar would be legally bound to register such a deed! The problem of false records is the most serious one in present land administration system. There exists two official sources of record. While the register is maintained under the system of deed registration under the Registration Act, 1908, the record of rights is maintained under the provision of the State Acquisition and Tenancy Act, 1950 and the publication of settlement and revision settlement operation is made under Part (V) of that Act.

In the case of surveying and mapping, presently the government is doing this with even uneducated and untrained persons in this regard as temporary workers on contract basis. Consequently, duplications and mistakes have been occurring. The head of the survey and mapping team called 'Sardar Amin' is also on contract basis. That is why they have no direct accountability to the government. Consequently, corruption is occurring. Besides normally the authoritative power of the court in this case remains suspend during the survey time. Then 'Sardar Amin' who is engaged in the work as contract basis temporary worker holds all the authoritative power of the survey and mapping area. Consequently, the survey and mapping works are often

not properly done through scrutiny. There are open allegation that they earn a lot of money as bribe from the survey area (Mouza). In addition, Sardar Amins have failed to solve the disputes, which often occurred in the survey field due to their lack of proper education, training and experience. Consequently, so many conflicts have occurred and so many cases filed in the courts.

Land Revenue Department of Bangladesh Government has many experienced, educated and trained staff. Government is not using them in and during survey works. Rather they are alleged to be indulged in corruption and mismanagement. According to existing rule, the Land Revenue Officer should be present in the survey field during the survey and mapping time. But, in fact, it is not happening, leading obviously, to corruption and mismanagement. Besides, during the survey time, no magistrate remains present in the survey field. As such people are compelled to register their complaints in the court and cases drag on there for months and years.

But why such cases should necessarily drag on? A common answer here also is corruption and the principal culprit here happens to be the system of adjournment. To illustrate, let us assume hearing on a case is going on. Suddenly an adjournment is declared by the judge. Now this adjournment carries certain consequences for the disputants, more so if they belong to the poorer class. If a hearing is adjourned once, the expense i.e. conveyance to attend court, fees etc. for the disputants, immediately doubles. If adjournment is thrice, the expense is triple. If it is 50 times, expenses also increase 50 times.

In our present land management system, there is no appropriate process to identify an inheritor of land. Presently, in this case the court has to depend on village marriage

registrar (Kazi). As such adjudication of the case is based on his opinion.

Allegations are rife that receiving large amounts of bribe the staff of the Record Directorate tamper documents and create false records to create false ownership. Then the land owner deed writing process is too old, continuing since the Mughal era.

It is found that the National Land Revenue Board has not been doing the proper mutation works in due time. Consequently, dual ownership is often created. Besides, the Board never properly identified khas land, khas water bodies, khas ponds, enemy property, abandoned property as well as unused land under different government office. Consequently, land grabbers have occupied these lands. Existing land ceiling has not been properly imposed.

Present agricultural system is too traditional. Government has never identified experienced agricultural workers. There is no fixed time and appropriate wage for agricultural labour in Bangladesh.

The sharecropping law has never been used. The present land distribution committee is dependable on bureaucrats.

Thus land reform has never been a success due to lack of political willingness and vested interest groups within and outside government.

### Possible Solutions

Engage properly trained, experienced and educated persons in survey and mapping works. Appoint a magistrate who would be present in the field during the survey and mapping period and establish a temporary magistrate's court in the field during the survey works. Annual contract basis works of survey and mapping. Form a committee with members of civil society, which would act as a watchdog during the survey

works. Ensure the presence of Land Revenue Officer in the field during the survey works. Modernize, computerize and make self-reliant the land survey directorate and the land record keeping process.

Establish a single parcel basis system of land registration, which needs modification of existing laws and introduction of new legislation. Create an efficient and responsive surveying, documentation, recording and taxation system, which would provide an efficient and transparent land administration of the government for the public. Redesign existing register books, indexes and khatahs and create a stand alone 'Land Register' showing existing land ownership and new transaction. Develop a redesigned Khatian certificate of land rights to record all interests, liens, encumbrances and changes in each individual plot. Develop forms for transacting in land, which would be registered and retained on public record. Develop a systematic procedure of cross check to reduce multiplicity. Modernize and computerize the land deed writing system.

The functions of record keeping and registration have to be brought within a single executive process at the field level i.e. Tahsil office and Sub-Registrar's office, both should come within the jurisdiction of a single executive officer, say the Assistant Commissioner (Land). Develop a process requiring mandatory registration of all land taxation and establish a fair, equitable and efficient land taxation system in the country.

Ensure the work of mutation and change of classification of land in due time. Government should identify the khas lands, khas ponds, khas waterbodies, enemy property, abandoned property, unused land of different government offices and distribute these among the landless poor as per government laws. Government also should acquire and reclaim swamp areas and wastelands suitable for aquaculture and distribute them on favourable terms to fishermen for development of aquatic farming. Identify the accreted land (chars) from the sea and rivers and distribute these as per land reform related Presidential Ordinance, 1972. Increase the participation of civil society in land distribution committee and decrease the number of bureaucrats in khas land distribution committee. Government should identify the

skilled agricultural workers and protect them from exploitation; enact and enforce rural labour legislation relating to conditions of work, including minimum wage standards. Fix the work time of agricultural labour and re-fix their wages.

Prohibit the transfer of agricultural lands to non-agriculturist. Impose ceiling on the ownership of agricultural land by a family. Distribute the ceiling surplus land among the landless poor as per government rule. Create a small and medium peasant through abolishing big peasant, and thus an option for him to join cooperative. Establish special land court in every district. Amend the State Acquisition Act; Vested Property Ordinance; Bengal Tenancy Act; East Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy Act, 1949; Bengal Permanent Settlement Act, 1793; Bengal Regulation Act, 1793; Transfer of Property Act, 1882; SA Act, Sharecropping Law; Law of Adjudgment, Inheritance Law of Land; Survey Act, 1875 and Rule 42(1) and Part (V) of Registration Act, 1908.

Repeat those laws which discriminate against women in respect of rights of inheritance, ownership and control of property. Promote ownership rights for women, including joint ownership and co-ownership of the land in its entirety to give women producers with absentee husband effective legal rights to take decision on the land they manage.

Conduct parallel reforms at all level at a time. Land acquisition needs of the government should be determined strictly in accordance with an overall national land use policy to ensure optimum utilization of land resources.

Government should take steps for such pro-poor administrative reforms, as would reduce conflicts over land as well as bureaucratic corruption and increase small holder security. Enhancing poor people's right to land is likely to require a range of interventions to strengthen their own voice, advocacy to gain support from government, and create impetus for reform and also institutional reform per se to enable the demand itself to be met, particularly at the local government and administration level.

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Garfield

