'Private policing' and all that

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STRAIGHT LINE

Private policing incorporating sponsorship in appropriate sectors could be a partial answer to a cost-effective customer friendly policing approach. Security is a service that can be purchased and those who can afford are providing for their own security. This transforms the relationship of individuals to authority, for the citizen's relationship to the state is replaced by the consumer's contract with the suppler.

POLICING, both as activity and service is understood to be in the domain of public sector. There are many, particularly in the developing world, who very strongly feel that a strictly regulatory subject like security cannot be arrogated to private sector without disastrous consequences. Such thinking, however, does not appear to be in tune with the ground reality where significant socio-economic changes have taken place that demand serious thoughts and actions for widening the existing private sector involvement in security services or what some commentators would prefer to call "private policing."

There is nothing new about private security. Long before the state established a police force, private individuals paid retainers to protect them and their property, and to apprehend criminals and recover property. As we see, many of these practices have been retained after the introduction of public policing and in the recent past progressively commercialised.

Night watchmen have been replaced by uniformed security guards and the paraphernalia of alarm systems. What is interesting and noticeable is the explosion in the scale of private security provision during the last couple of years in many jurisdictions.

In Britain, even some police and military premises are guarded by private security firms and such firms have begun to penetrate mainstream criminal justice activities such as transporting remand prisoners to and from court, as well as staffing private run prisons. Authorities there are of the view that police need to be relieved of some tedious tasks in order to efficiently perform the core functions and that such relief may be provided by private security companies.

The opponents of aforementioned privatisation would naturally be apprehensive and vocal about the threat to civil liberties. When such fears are expressed by the police, one may see in such protests the expression of vested interests by a monopoly producer. Still others might say that the private security guard is not an agent of the state constrained by constitutional safeguards, but the employee of a private employer whose particular interests are served. While this is a genuine concern, the facts remains that there are many ways in which liberty is threatened just as assuredly but far more insidiously.

One has to admit that the element of private security has entered into many aspects of our daily lives without any form of public debate or consent. These days we are entering private premises with the prior knowledge that we will be subjected to surveillance. However, the relationship between the police and private security risks civil liberties as private security carves out for itself an area of responsibility previously exercised by the state. Care and caution is needed to ensure that private security does not venture into defining "peace and order" as that would surely be an incipient challenge to state authority.

Critics opine that another threat posed by privatisation is the assumption of full law- enforcement powers by private security companies. However, attempts to regulate and improve efficiency of private security can actually encourage further encroachment into public policing roles. Serving police officers will demand the registration and licensing of private security firms. The irony of this is that licensing and enhanced training will improve the credibility of private security and facilitate its encroachment into public policing.

We have to agree that a major boost to the growth of private security has been the development of office plazas, shopping malls, entertainment and sports complexes that blur the distinction between public and private space. The growth of private security has been based upon preventive surveillance of private space. This surveillance is virtually unfettered by constitutional safeguards. As such it gives such premises the feeling of safety that customers find attractive. Shopping arcades and similar premises effectively privatise what was once the epitome of the public space -- the shopping street.

There is no doubt that public space will increasingly be privatised with housing, and private firms may be asked to provide regular patrols. In Britain some local authorities have already done so. Here in Bangladesh for those who can afford it; there is a real prospect of leaving one's home in a privately guarded compound, to work in privately guarded and secure offices, to do shopping and being entertained in the security of private malls.

The omnibus and indeterminate responsibilities that the police acquire as custodians of state authority pose serious challenge to rational management. One view is that policing needs to develop organisational forms appropriate to its distinctive task. The large scale socio-economic changes, occurring nationally and globally, direct our attention to the fact that policing is largely determined by the society it is policed.

The umbrella term "globalisation" refers to one such huge change. One consequence of globalisation is the increasing demands being made upon the police. This arises from financial stringency and its associated insistence on managerial accountability. Policing in such circumstances has to choose between the harsh reality of financial stringency and the spectre of increasing demand for service. In coming to terms with the altered scenario there has to be a fundamental transformation of policing. New styles of policing have to involve both the state and private institutions.

One response to socio economic changes is to improve the cost-effectiveness of police organisations. The goal is adequate levels of policing at lower unit costs. The problem is that policing is manpower intensive and officers are expensive. This expense lies in the need to offer salaries that attract personnel of an acceptable calibre and to train and frequently retrain in the essentials of criminal law and procedure, forensic techniques, weapons handling etc.

The management reality is that police personnel need to be reasonably competent across a broad range of duties. However, due to cost pressures police in many places have abandoned the assumption of "omni competence" and hived off various tasks to other personnel who are not dedicated police officers.

In Britain, increasing emphasis has been given to recruiting unpaid police auxiliaries known as "Special Constables." Some police forces there have begun using the special skills and knowledge possessed by such auxiliaries in organisational and law enforcement roles.

Policing in Bangladesh is considered a low-status activity that is primarily financed from the non-development budget. This scenario will not witness any significantly positive change in the foreseeable future as revenue receipts are not expected to record very sharp increase to cater to a predominantly revenue expenditure.

Private policing incorporating sponsorship in appropriate sectors could be a partial answer to a cost-effective customer friendly policing approach. Security is a service that can be purchased and those who can afford are providing for their own security. This transforms the relationship of individuals to authority, for the citizen's relationship to the state is replaced by the consumer's contract with the suppler.

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We need to curb inflation

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INFLATION in Bangladesh has signalled a long stay. Despite sincere steps from the government, it shows no signs of abating. And that makes the government concerned since inflation erodes all other macro achievements, which it has earned so far. The timing of floods and the holy Ramadan has, no doubt, aggravated the price-hike already in motion. We have to accept this strange confluence of circumstances, and adopt an integrated approach to curbing inflation.

It is interesting to see some ongoing debates in Bangladesh over the diagnosis of inflation. Some economists, for example, advocate only supply-side measures because they brand this inflation to be cost-push. Others attempt to label it as demand-pull, and suggest only demand-side steps to leash it. Another group views this price-spiral as structural, and would be happy to adopt structural correction accordingly. While everyone has elements of truth from the theoretical angle, most of them are missing one point that prescription need not be constrained by diagnosis per se, particularly for inflation. Unlike other macro variables, inflation and unemployment are the twin-evils of the economy, which require a comprehensive treatment no matter which factor triggers it first.

The current rate of 9 percent inflation is alarming since Bangladesh's threshold is around 6 percent. Any inflation rate exceeding the threshold is always unpredictable, and therefore requires appropriate tools to work on it. When a country suffers from inflation, the first tool that policymakers look for is the Phillips curve. Unfortunately, there is no well-defined work on the Phillips curve for Bangladesh. Estimation of the Phillips curve has also been controversial in countries like India and Pakistan. Despite that limitation, Indian policymakers have always engaged integrated strategy to control inflation. This was done without complicating the causes of the price-hike. As a result, India has been noted for its price stability and low inflation. Bangladesh can make use of this strategy to reap the benefits of inflation control.

A hypothetical Phillips curve for Bangladesh would involve estimating inflation on three things: expected inflation, the output gap, and supply shocks. If employment and production of the economy is above the long-term natural rate, the output gap is positive and the resulting inflation is demand-pull. If the output gap is constant but inflation is rising due to adverse supply shocks such as oil-price hikes, floods, and droughts, inflation is cost-push. Apart from the demand and supply-side reasons, part of this money might have been flowing into circulation. Hence soaking this excess liquidity would be reasonably recommended. Milton Friedman asserts that no country has ever succeeded in curbing inflation without restraining the growth of its money stock. If we greatly ignore this monetary phenomenon of inflation, the price-hike would go wild and upset the remaining stability.

It is a priority to bridle inflation

We advocate a comprehensive approach to inflation control regardless of which side triggered it first. Biased diagnoses and one-sided prescriptions have never been fruitful in the past. Hence integrated strategy with operations on both demand and supply along with expectations would now be most effective in fighting inflation in Bangladesh.

inflation can still go up simply because of expectations, which have not been discussed much recently. The growth of high-powered money may also directly determine inflation in a developing country while the effect is indirect (via output) in developed countries. Given Bangladesh's perspectives, the current inflation is therefore a blend of all these factors.

Some economists in Bangladesh argue that demand contraction by the central bank would be unwise until we diagnose this inflation as demand-pull. This type of compartmentalised reasoning would worsen the situation. It is hard to distinguish the sources of inflation while the consumer price index owns a basket of commodities. Sometimes demand-pull elements begin insidiously causing cost-push factors to activate later on, and the whole interaction is hard to disentangle. Hence demand contraction as well as input-price control is unavoidable.

There are other reasons why the central bank should embark on monetary contraction. First, there is evidence of excessive growth in high-powered money in the last twelve months. Second, disposable income in some groups might have gone up due to the ban on hartals and lockouts. And third, a group of prospective election-candidates might have amassed huge liquid assets to spend on election campaigns. Due to the massive crackdown on corruption, even at the cost of some output loss. India undertook monetary tightening in the mid 1970s despite knowing that its inflation was mainly cost-driven. The outcome was simply low inflation in 1975. In the early 1980s, the US knowingly embraced a recession by adopting demand contraction in addition to supply-side maneuvres although supply-side elements were exposed to be the main culprits behind the inflation. The outcome was simply low inflation in the mid 1980s. Thus, inflation control becomes inevitable at the cost of output loss, and the country has to accept that tradeoff.

Sometimes a country has less leeway in supply-side maneuvres. For example, we cannot make Saudi Arabia lower its oil price, but we can lower our money supply. We cannot make floods disappear, but we can raise our interest rates. This illustrates the comparative advantage of demand-side tools over supply-side ones. Of course, the degree of monetary contraction requires a great deal of homework since excessive credit crunch would throw the economy into a lengthier recession. As a rule of thumb, GDP growth and the targeted inflation rate can be added up to get a guideline of the desired money growth. The area in the current money growth in excess of the desired money growth can roughly be considered for monetary contraction, but the tightening should be gradual and slow in order to avoid excessive volatility in business cycles of the economy.

We further argue that demand tightening would have been highly damaging to the economy if the country had already been in stagflation. High inflation with a high unemployment rate defines stagflation as we have seen in the US during the 1970s. However, it would be too early to label stagflation for Bangladesh based on observations of the last few months. Unemployment is high nowadays as it has always been in the past. This sets the natural rate of unemployment for this country at a higher notch. The current unemployment rate has not remarkably exceeded the natural rate of unemployment. Accordingly, assessing stagflation in Bangladesh is still far from reality. This situation approves moderate demand-contraction along with supply-side measures in order to put a brake on inflation.

Additionally, the present government can adopt few other steps to dampen inflation pressures. Now is the time to categorise fiscal spending and discard unproductive expenses. The small size of the government can be helpful in reducing public deficits. Monetisation of fiscal deficit should be suspended and the government should borrow money from the market. Commitment and gestures to combat inflation must be present. The government can create more business confidence by not posing excessive interference, but by securing an environment of fair play between market forces. Price-fixing is not a viable option in this age of free market. By accelerating the judiciary, speeding up ports, expediting transport and communication, and by minimising political disturbances, authorities can add supply-side stimulants to the economy.

In summary, we advocate a comprehensive approach to inflation control regardless of which side triggered it first. Biased diagnoses and one-sided prescriptions have never been fruitful in the past. Hence integrated strategy with operations on both demand and supply along with expectations would now be most effective in fighting inflation in Bangladesh.

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Nutrient-enriched organic farming practice

Market-based mechanism to address climate change

Climate change adaptation measures are gaining momentum globally. Poor farmers, women and children are most vulnerable as they depend on the climate-sensitive natural resources like agricultural produce for their livelihood. Therefore, it is essential that a community-based approach is initiated to increase the resilience of climate change vulnerable people. Fertilizer industries can play an important role in developing products that support the environment and improve livelihood of millions of farmers across Asia. Based on the experience of implementing Nutrient Enriched Organic Farming Practice at Tangail district, that would reduce emission of greenhouse gases and improve soil fertility, this write-up by **M Omar Faruq** and **Dr. Md. Muslem Uddin Miah** is aimed at to work as a model to fight climate change variability and climate-related hazards in agriculture.

AGAINST the background of the most conclusive scientific evidence to date the warming of the climate system is unequivocal and accelerating. According to a report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in February 2007, the world faces an average temperature rise of around 3º C this century, if gHg emissions continue to rise at their current pace and are allowed to double from their pre-industrial level. An average temperature rise of 3º C would translate into severe water shortages and lower crop yields around the world, with climate change already causing setbacks to economic and social progress in developing countries.

However, northern Europe may be able to grow wider range of crops than currently possible due to a warmer and longer growing season. The latest report says that warming during the last 100 years was 0.74º C, with most of the warming occurring during the last 50 years. The warming per decade for the next 20 years is projected to be 0.2ºC.

Nitrous oxide (N2O) is about 310 times more effective at trapping heat than carbon dioxide on a molecule-for-molecule basis and methane (CH4) is an extreme heat trapping gas -- one molecule of methane is 20 times more efficient at trapping heat than a molecule of carbon dioxide.

Agriculture is a major source of methane emission in EU (43%), followed closely by waste (34%) and energy (21%). Agriculture is also the main source of nitrous oxide emission and is responsible for 52% of total emission, compared with 27% due to industrial process, 16% due to energy use and 4% due to land use and forestry. The role of agriculture -- both as a source of and as a sink for gHg -- varies significantly across Europe because of the different agricultural policies adopted and implemented. Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories have been drawn up by the IPCC. These Guidelines (IPCC 1996) distinguish between "Agriculture", and "Land Use Change and Forestry". "Agriculture" refers to activities specific to agricultural production e.g. methane emissions from livestock management and rice production and nitrous oxide emissions from agricultural soils.

Bangladesh is the third largest country where rice is cultivated on 11.25 million ha, which is 79. 13% of total cultivated land of the country. Rice is the world's single most important food crop and the primary food for more than one third of the world's population. With Asia's population growing by some 56 million a year, domestic demand for rice is expected to top 880 million tons by the year 2025. To meet the rice supply of growing population, rice cultivation will continue to increase at or beyond its current rate. But the size of Asia's rice land is shrinking under pressure from industrialisation and urbanisation. As such increased production has to be achieved mainly by intensifying cropping i.e. two or three crops per year and increasing yield ceiling from its late 1980 level of 10 t/ha to around 13 t/ha, while average yield will need to reach about 6 t/ha, nearly twice the current level.

This will have to be achieved using less land, less water, less chemical fertilizers, less pesticides and with lower emission of greenhouse gases. Many policy makers are in the opinion of diversifying crop production from rice to vegetables to avoid further gHg emissions. But the changes in cropping pattern would require investment of enormous amount of money and time and question the food security of the ever growing population.

The use of nitrogen-based fertilizers, macro and micro-nutrients, is essential for agricultural production and in raising crop yield, but surplus use of nutrients in excess of crop needs -- especially urea fertilizer which is a common practice in Bangladesh -- can lead to additional amount of nitrous oxide emission. This emission can potentially be a source of damage to water and air quality, and contribute to global warming. Increase in Urea fertilizer price may discourage farmers to use it in excess. According to IPCC, if fertilizer application is doubled, emission of nitrous oxide will also be doubled, all other factors being equal.

Therefore, judicious and efficient use of nitrogenous chemical fertilizers, mainly urea in rice paddy cultivation, shall be one of the few options to reduce nitrous oxide emission without sacrificing yield.

But this practice does not improve soil fertility for sustainable agriculture. Organic matter content in the soil is the indicator of soil fertility. A good soil should have at least 2.5 per cent organic matter, but in Bangladesh most of the soils have less than 1.5 per cent and some even have less than 1 per cent organic matter. It is believed that the declining productivity of Bangladesh's soil is the result of depletion of organic matter due to increase in cropping intensity, higher rates of decomposition of organic matter under the hot and humid climate -- an effect of climate change, use of lesser quantities of organic manure/organic fertilizer, little or no use of green manure.

There is no doubt that the soil organic matter is constantly undergoing changes and being depleted and needs to be replenished continuously to maintain soil fertility under the climate change scenario. This climate change affect all people but poor farmers, women and children are most vulnerable as they depend on the climate-sensitive natural resources for their livelihood.

Organic fertilizers

Organic fertilizers are those materials which have carbon as an essential constituent and are non-synthetic, well-decomposed/partially decomposed residues derived from plant and animal wastes and remains. Such fertilizers are farmyard manure, cow dung, poultry manure, compost, crop residues and green manure. Organic fertilizers are bulky, have low nutrient concentrations and cannot meet up the nutrient demand of the modern high yielding varieties.

Organic source generally contains not more than 0.25-1.15 per cent N, 0.03-1.05 per cent P and 0.2-0.70 per cent K and traces of micro nutrients. Therefore, it is needed to apply in large quantities to meet the nutritional requirements of crop plants. A ton of organic fertilizer will only supply 2.5-11.5 kg N, 0.3-10.5 kg P and 2.0-7.0 kg K, which are equivalent to 5.4-24.9 kg Urea, 1.5-53.3 kg TSP and 4.0-14.0 kg MOP.

HYV rice plants need 108 kg/ha N, 18 kg/ha P, 102 kg/ha K and 11 kg/ha S to give yield of 6 t/ha. It has to be ensured that same amount of nutrients are made available to the plants whether it is from organic source or from chemical source. A farmer would require 305 kg/ha Urea, 130/ha kg TSP, 166/ha kg MOP, 86/ha kg Gypsum and 8/ha kg Zinc Sulphate to cultivate modern high yield variety (HYV) rice paddy like BRRIdhan 29 during boro season. If he wants to use only organic fertilizer to achieve 7.5 t/ha yield from BRRIdhan 29, he would require 12-57 t/ha (depending on the source) of organic fertilizer for cultivating one hectare of land.

Even these huge quantities of organic fertilizers are not adequate to supply all nutritional requirements needed for vegetative and reproductive growth of rice plants to give yield of 7.5 t/ha if the soils are critically deficient of micro nutrients say, Zinc. Moreover, organic fertilizers/composts are a source of 24 per cent of the total methane emitted by agricultural activities.

Commercial production of crop-specific macro and micro-nutrient enriched well decomposed organic fertilizer or nutrient enriched organic fertilizer is essential as an external source of replenishment of macro and micro-nutrient content in the soil. In addition to that it improves soil's physical and biological conditions, reduces gHg emissions and bulky requirements of organic fertilizers that are costly, require long time to produce, difficult to transport and not easily available.

The new challenge of this century is not only to adapt to the impacts on agriculture and natural resources due to climate change but to improve the soil fertility, replenishment of micro-nutrients for sustainable agriculture, to increase the organic matter content in the soil and slow down the process of faster mineralization of organic matter.

Use of crop-specific nutrient enriched organic fertilizers (or organo-chemical fertilizers) under integrated Plant Nutrition System (IPNS), which we call Nutrient Enriched Organic Farming (NEOF) practice, can effectively reduce excess use of nitrogenous fertilizers like urea and other chemical fertilizers like TSP, MOP etc. by almost 10-40 per cent (depending on the type of crop) due to increased nutrient use efficiency (NUE) resulting in reduction in nitrous oxide emission by the same amount without sacrificing crop yield that is essential for the food security of the growing population.

Results, from both the on-station research and farmers' field trials in rice, potato, vegetables and fruits showed that application of government approved "ChookChook" brand crop-specific nutrient enriched organic fertilizers under NEOF practice reduces chemical fertilizer use, increases fertilizer efficiency and crop yield, produces high quality food grains, potato, vegetables and fruits, increases income of farmers and maintains long term soil fertility for sustainable agriculture. NEOF practice reduces methane and nitrous oxide emissions from agricultural farmland while financially benefits a large number of farmers and their increased spending accelerates on-farm non-farm economic growth that results in faster reduction of poverty at village level.

Market-based mechanism

Now it is necessary to develop a methodology for monitoring and verification of the NEOF practice for the approval of the United Nations Framework Conventions on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in order to qualify for certified Emission Reduction (CER) transactions under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). The following social, economic and environmental benefits are considered to design a sustainable market-based NEOF practice without sacrificing crop yield which is suitable for farmers for easy adaptation under community based programmes and acceptance by the agricultural scientists, donor agencies and policymakers of the country.

A. Self sustainable benefits to the farmers: reduction in cultivation costs; increasing yield and quality of produces from the present level, and higher market prices of their quality produce than the "business-as-usual" scenario.

B. Serving national interest for sustainable agriculture: replenish micro nutrients; improve soil's physical and biological conditions increasing soil fertility by using recommended nutrient enriched organic fertilizers or organo-chemical fertilizers; conserve ground water by reducing number of irrigations and reduce poverty of farmers affected by climate change.

C. Compliance to environmental requirements: Reduce usage of overall chemical fertilizers for green cultivation; reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural farmland that contributes global warming; deal with increased climate variability and climate related hazards on agricultural productivity and soil fertility; other environmental issues related to climate change.

The community based approach will enhance the adaptability of NEOF practices by farmers at a faster rate to challenge the climate variability and climate related hazards of agricultural productivity and soil fertility. It will raise community awareness on vulnerabilities and adaptation through discussion in group meetings, demo farms, audiovisual shows in schools/colleges, community level workshops, cross visits of community level leaders, rally etc. Participation of women farmers in the community approach shall be encouraged.

The national level interventions are integration of climate change issues related to agricultural productivity in government policies that focuses on arresting degradation of soil fertility and carryout block demonstrations that may be implemented by the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE)/NGOs in each of the upazilas to increase the resilience of farmers' livelihood to climate variability.

Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects

Five hundred CDM projects are being conducted in more than 40 countries and have so far generated more than 31.0 million CER units (each equivalent to 1 tonne of carbon dioxide) with a targeted total of 740.0 million CERs. Among the 40 countries where projects are being conducted, Bangladesh has registered 2 projects, Pakistan 1, Bhutan 1, Nepal 2, Sri Lanka 4, China 37, India 162 and Malaysia 12.

The CDM has registered its 500th project -- a wind farm in Gujrat, India in February 2007 to generate 8.75 MW electricity. The project is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 15,300 tonnes or 15,300 CER units annually. The mechanism is anticipated to generate more than 1.8 billion CERs in the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol by 2012. Another 950 projects are being registered and expected to deliver an additional 1.1 billion CERs by 2012.

So far Bangladesh has focused on reducing gHg emissions from the surface transports, brickfields and municipality waste landfills sector. But there is a golden opportunity to reduce 310 times more gHg emissions from the agricultural farmland than from surface transports, brickfields and city garbage. The adaptation of nutrient enriched organic farming practices (NEOF) under community-based approach to reduced nitrous oxide from agricultural farmland will not only bring additional income to all the stakeholders in the sector but will also put Bangladesh in the sophisticated carbon trading market that will open a new source of foreign currency earning.

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