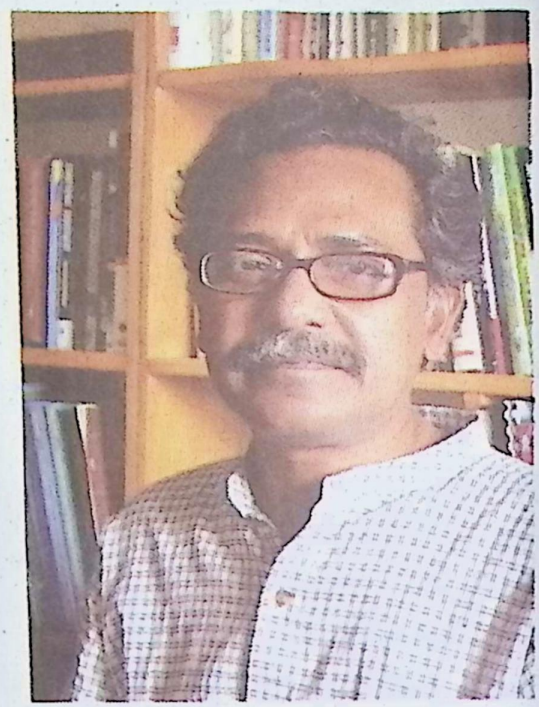
When it comes back down to prices and income the complaints remain the same. The farmers have it even worse than the salaried workers, their income is anything but stable and most of the time they get cheated by the middlemen who hike up prices of their produce to such an extent that they become unaffordable in the cities. Aside from just food prices a common complaint seems to be why wages have not risen with the prices so that the average person could at least cope. Anu Mohammad has an interesting take on that issue: "There are many economists who would say incomes have risen along with prices. What they are saying is not necessarily wrong but it's not right either," he goes on to say, "all the figures relating to Bangladesh seem to be pointing in the right direction. Grosse Domestic Product (GDP) and the per capita income has been rising yet still for roughly 90% of the population their real income is decreasing, how is that possible one may ask?"

> "There was a time when Tk 8000 a month was something to look forward to, but now those people live on the very edge of the poverty line, most of them below it. People are being paid decent salaries and they are still poor, just imagine what the rest of the country has to go through!"



Dr Anu Mohammad

"For the top 5 to 10% of the population", he continues "their incomes have gone up so much that it has begun to affect the overall statistics of the nation." For some, wealth has been acquired at such an alarming rate and at such enormous levels that seemingly a handful of individuals have sent this country's GDP soaring upwards. It boggles the mind to think that only a few people could shift the aggregate demand curve of a nation. Their incomes have improved so alarmingly that if one divides the increase in income of the top 10% by the remaining 90% then nationally the figures would say the average persons incomes has increased! Seemingly while the rich get substantially richer the figures seem to show how everyone has benefited, even if that is not the case. There is a saying that there are lies, damned lies and then statistics. To fully understand the situation one needs to look at Saudia Arabia. There the GDP is constantly on an upward shift and per capita incomes are alarmingly high, but that is not a clear indication of how the entire population lives. The reason is that the rich are so rich there that their earnings greatly affect the GDP and per capita incomes. There may be 50 billionaires whose incomes are so great that when it is divided by the rest of the nation it seems as if everyone's incomes are rising or are that artificially high.

Seemingly the same has occurred in Bangladesh just that every other class of people other than the rich has to live with the false effects of those figures. Shoily Rahman a middle class housewife and mother of three talks of how the spiralling prices have affected her family. She says, "not too long ago, my husband's salary was enough to keep us afloat, as most people do we wished for more money but we were also content with what he got. We could easily feed our three children and there was even a time when we went on the occasional holiday. We have left those days far behind us, now with the same salary we are struggling to make ends meet. To be truthful it is very difficult to feed the entire family and it has come to the point when I don't even want guests over as that will entail more food. Our holidays are a thing of the past and now my children's school fees take up a good chunk of our income." Her story is echoed by many around the city especially by those who have to run households on even less money than her.

Aakash a 29 year-old driver for a family in Eskaton says, "it is impossible to survive with the salary I am being paid and yet this was what I thought would be enough for me. I get paid Tk 5000 a month and every single month I have to borrow money to stay afloat. To save some money I have even pulled my daughter out of school, there was no way I could continue to afford that along with the cost of her books and clothes." The problems we are faced with today could lead to further complications down the line. Already every income group is cutting down on what they deem excesses but what at