poverty strategies; seven world-class success stories in poverty alleviation and lessons learnt. I have also been making presentations on development, social entrepreneurship and Bangladesh in different forums of IPRCC, Chinese Universities etc. My research paper was read by Chinese leaders and the Minister in charge of the State Council Leading Group office of Poverty Alleviation and Development on August 20-26, 2010, the Chinese Poverty Reduction Delegation visited Bangladesh with a group of 7 senior government officials, IPRCC leaders and 2 NGO leaders, to see and learn on its experiences in poverty alleviation focusing particularly on Microfinance and development.

This high level delegation visited Bangladesh met important people in the government and private development organisations and also visited the field programmes of BRAC and Grameen Bank. The people they met were, the ministers of Local Government, Agriculture and Foreign Affairs, a member of the Planning Commission, the Founders of BRAC and Grameen Bank and the editor of the Daily Star. Towards the end of their visit, they made a courtesy call on the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

I was also part of the delegation and was with them the whole time. It was an experiential learning for me as well. The minister and the delegates from China had many questions and received answers and clarifications from the people they met. They saw development activities in microfinance, development and education and met the women borrowers and the teachers and students in the villages. There minister and the delegates were asking inquisitive questions to the grassroots women, men and children. It was interesting to note that the Chinese visitors asked very detailed questions to know and understand the details of the respective programmes and activities. The depth of knowledge and sense of humor were very much appreciated by the visitors.

At one point, the Chinese minister said, "We have achieved remarkable successes in poverty alleviation in China, but still we have more than 100 million people who are poor in our country of 1.3 billion. We still are facing many challenges in poverty reduction. We have learnt so much from our exposure to Bangladesh and its poverty alleviation efforts which will be useful for our future strategies and implementation of poverty programs in China."

In my view, this was a very successful visit by high level policy makers, administrators and researchers from China, whose experience in Bangladesh would go a long way to build a positive relationship between our two countries and people. For me it was an enormous feeling of satisfaction where a country like China was learning from our Bangladesh.

This is not the end of the story of China learning from Bangladesh. I was once invited by a British University in China named Nottingham University, Ningbo China to make a presentation on Social Entrepreneurship, Development and Bangladesh. I wrote about it in one of my earlier write-ups in the Star Campus. As a result of that presentation, student leaders of an international students' organisation, SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise) got interested to visit Bangladesh to learn about Microfinance and Development. They also wanted to see for themselves the people and our culture. So I organised for three of them an exposure programme. It was interesting that they left and the ministerial delegation came in.

These three undergraduate students were really overwhelmed by their experience in Bangladesh. They visited BRAC, Grameen Bank and met the students of BRAC University. They also met the Pro-VC of BRAC University. Interestingly the students stayed with a family of a student from BRAC University. I gave them company and took them round. Their dream was to meet the Founders of BRAC and Grameen Bank and they did that. Again they were really happy that their dream was fulfilled.

The Students' Group also visited Microfinance activities in the villages. The Grameen Bank was kind enough to arrange for them a field visit programme to their activities in the villages. In BRAC Bank they got some idea about their activities in promoting SME (Small and Medium Enterprises). At BRAC University, they met some students, where they presented their work of SIFE and tried to impress upon them that BRAC University opens a Chapter of SIFE. The BRAC University students received them very well and had a good exchange of views.

Through these two visits, we could project Bangladesh in a very positive way. Although there are problems in Bangladesh, the country has achieved some extraordinary development results, which needed to be highlighted to the world. It was a very productive and meaningful experience to me. The most interesting part was that I was representing both Bangladesh and China. I worked like a bridge between the two. It was a great feeling of achievement. The world definitely will be a better place to live in if such cooperation and partnerships are encouraged and promoted.

This whole experience of staying for two weeks in Bangladesh with the Chinese ministerial and the Students' delegation, reminded me of the book by the famous Brazilian philosopher educationist Pablo Freire, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed". There is a chapter in that book, "There is no Teaching without Learning". I used to teach that chapter to my students in BRAC University. This chapter says a lot. One, you cannot teach without learning from your students and two, anyone, no matter what level or background s/he comes from, can teach you. All you have to do is to keep your mind open and broad.

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