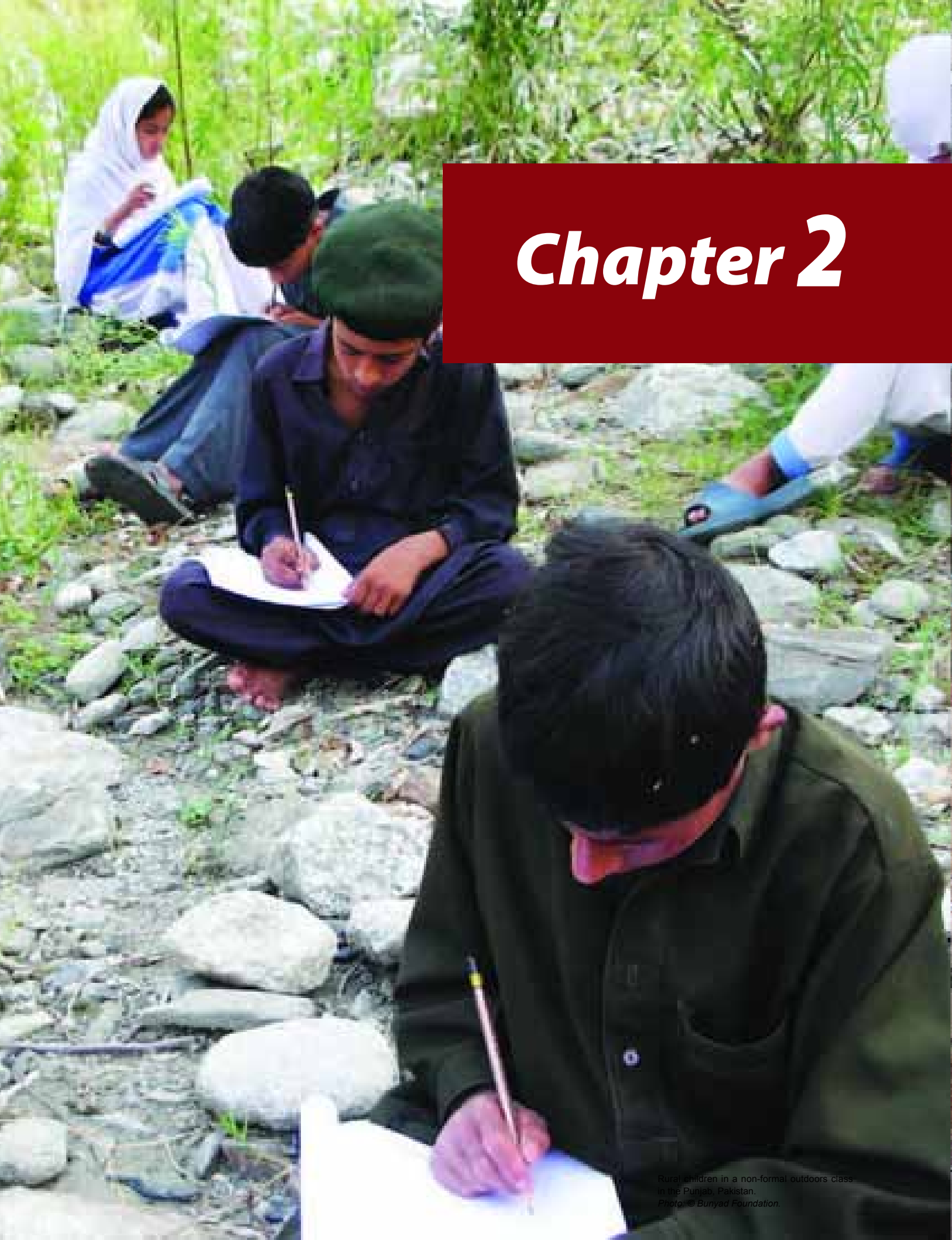


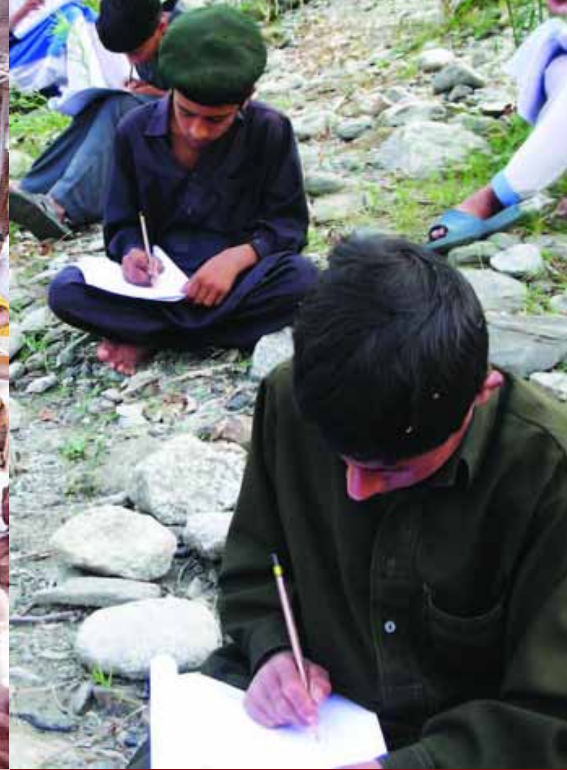
Chapter 2



Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty



Young women from the countryside working in a ready-made garments factory in Bangladesh.
Photo: © BRAC.



Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

2.1 Education, Skills and Pathways out of Rural Poverty.....	67
2.2 Jobs and Escape from Rural Poverty – State of the Discourse	71
2.3 The Nature of Skills Development.....	77
2.4 Bridging Skills, Jobs and Rural Poverty Reduction	91
2.5 Cross-Cutting Concerns – Youth, Gender and Migration.....	95

The rural world is changing rapidly, and young people need to be prepared to rise to the new opportunities. Agriculture is also changing, with new technologies, products, markets, and business environments. And many rural people will need to become engaged in nonfarm activities or migrate to urban areas. To seize these opportunities, all will need skills that differ from those of their parents – but education and training systems are not ready to face the challenge.

World Bank, "Focus G, Education and Skills for Rural Development", World Development Report 2008, p.222.

This chapter is in five parts. In the first part, observations are offered on the pathways out of rural poverty and the saliency of skills development and building capacities of people in following the pathways. In the second part, the state of the discourse on employment and rural poverty is presented. In the third part, skills development is defined and the relationship between education and skill training, the nature of TVET and skills development, skills in the context of rural transformation and skill needs in rural areas are discussed. The fourth part is about the challenge of bridging in concept and practice, skills development and job creation, combating rural poverty and contributing to rural transformation – making a case for the sustainable livelihood approach as the bridge. Finally, arguments are made for special attention to youth, the gender dimension and migration from rural areas as relevant cross-cutting issues.

A paradox of a global proportion prevails today, which is the persistence of enormous unmet needs of people and, at the same time, the huge wastage of untapped human resources. There are approximately three billion people with unmet basic needs living on incomes of less than US\$ 2.50 a day. These billions lack the minimum requirements for a normal life. There cannot be a dearth of work until these people have adequate food, clothes, homes, education, medical care and other essentials of life. But the national and global economic systems fail to harness the technological and organisational resources, and most importantly, the human resources, to meet the unfulfilled human needs. Over 200 million people in the world today, who are willing and able to work, are estimated to be unemployed, and probably more than a billion are involuntarily underemployed (Jacobs and Slaus: 2010). The unemployment and under-employment of over a billion people is the greatest single direct obstacle on the way to halving absolute poverty by the year 2015 – the overarching MDG goal. There is a massive mismatch between work to be done and people who need jobs. This gap has to be bridged by skills development and policies and actions to use the skills in decent jobs that are socially beneficial and personally rewarding.

The majority of the three billion poor and the hundreds of millions unemployed and under-employed are rural people. The key link between working age people and jobs

are skills and capabilities nurtured by education, training and different institutional, non-formal and informal ways of building capabilities of people. This chapter explores the characteristics and various facets of this vital link between people and productive and rewarding jobs as the instrumentality for combating poverty among rural people.

2.1 Education, Skills and Pathways out of Rural Poverty

Understanding the role of skills development in combating rural poverty requires a better grasp of the pathways out of poverty for rural people. Indeed this is the central question in the context of rural transformation. This question has been a concern to policy makers, practitioners and researchers at national and international level for some time.

Some lessons from poverty reduction interventions

A special evaluation study of the Asian Development Bank attempted to answer the questions: How do poor households in rural areas rise out of poverty? How effective are certain poverty reduction interventions? What are some lessons for the future? (ADB: 2006, p.iii)

The study looked at experience in Vietnam, China and Malaysia, countries which have achieved very substantial rural poverty reduction and rapid economic growth in the last 2 to 3 decades. The study examined the dynamics of rural change in relation to large investments in rural areas in infrastructure including construction of expressways, credit, land settlement and township development projects. The seven projects financed by Asian Development Bank (and the year of their inception) were: Vietnam Rural Credit Project (1996); Vietnam Rural Infrastructure Sector Project (1997); China Chengdu Nanchong Expressway Project (1998); China Southern Yunnan Road Development Project (1999); Malaysia Sabah Land Development Project (1974); Malaysia Terengganu Tengah Township Development Project (1978); and Malaysia Second Terengganu Tengah Development Project (1982).

Substantial reduction of rural poverty was found in all of the project areas, in line with general poverty reduction

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

and economic growth in the three countries. However, there were variations in the degree of poverty reduction and the sustainability of positive development. Agricultural growth contributed in a major way in the early stages of exit from poverty, benefiting from relatively abundant farmland. When population growth led to shortage of farmland per capita, the role of agriculture declined dramatically. This was especially the case in many remote rural areas which remained unattractive to private investors even after improvement of rural roads and off-farm employment opportunities failed to expand. The recourse open to poor people in remote and poorly endowed regions to escape from poverty was to migrate to non-poor regions and to take low-wage and low-productivity work in non-agricultural sectors.

Most of the poor were found to have few assets other than their labour. Employing family labour in economic pursuits in every possible way was the only means of earning an income for them. Major binding constraints to employment in agriculture were: (i) shortage of farmland; (ii) scarcity of water in the dry season; and (iii) other adverse farming conditions such as a harsh climate. The obstacles to self-employment in off-farm activities included lack of access to commercial credit. In respect of wage employment, local opportunities were few; migration was a possible avenue, but there were many barriers in the form of (i) government control on labour mobility; (ii) language difficulties among ethnic minorities; and (iii) lack of social connections in cities and road transportation costs and difficulties.

For the venturesome ones who took the plunge to move to cities, lack of education and skills was not a binding constraint for employment in the informal sectors such as construction and low-skill services. For formal employment, as in foreign-invested factories, however, secondary education was a precondition. In a high growth economic situation, as has been the case in the East and Southeast Asian countries, private firms provided their own training to new workers who came from rural areas.

It was found that vulnerabilities and risks arising from unpredictable and not infrequent man-made and natural emergencies, which rural households faced, kept them in or pushed them back into poverty. Major vulnerabilities

included: (i) serious or chronic illness of primary wage-earner or other family members; (ii) natural disasters such as cyclone and flood that disrupted life and destroyed temporarily or permanently livelihood and occupations; and (iii) large investment loss due to market fluctuations, epidemic outbreaks of animal disease, or natural disasters.

Many households could recover by themselves from a shock one time or even a second time by working harder, and reducing consumption, if they had timely access to credit with a maturity date long enough for them to re-invest and recover. These kinds of credit facility that offered emergency loans under reasonable terms did not exist. The majority of rural households relied on money-lenders applying usurious terms. The poor households found themselves forced to engage in distress sales of their assets, often the farmland or livestock.

What were the interventions that helped to improve the situation of the poor rural households? In the three countries, in the context of the public projects supported by ADB, the positive factors were: (i) public investments to promote economic growth and job creation, such as the two expressway projects in China; (ii) policies or programmes to reduce barriers to labour mobility and facilitate migration; (iii) credit made readily available for most rural residents, such as the rural credit project in Vietnam; and (iv) policies and programmes to reduce household vulnerability through provisions for good quality education, skill training and health services as in Malaysia.

What interventions did not work? In the case studied, these were identified as: (i) isolated investments in upgrading rural roads in remote and poorly endowed regions without linking these or assessing fully the ancillary economic and ecological factors; (ii) add-on components satisfying ADB's pro-poor conditions, such as HIV/AIDS or gender-related actions, without sufficient demand from clients; and (iii) household and geographic targeting used in investment projects that did not tackle the key causes of poverty, but simply assumed that funds flowing into poor regions, or intended benefits for socio-economic groups, would automatically lead to poverty reduction.

It was found that locating projects in poor regions did not guarantee significant poverty reduction if the key causes

of poverty in the particular project areas are not given specific attention in the project. Some of these key issues in the poorly endowed regions were: (i) a serious shortage of farmland on a per capita basis; (ii) already large and rising labour surplus in the agriculture sector due to population growth and shortage of farmland; and (iii) lack of off-farm employment locally to absorb the surplus labour. These constraints could not be addressed directly or mitigated by the project interventions.

It was concluded that "poverty remained largely unchanged for the segments of the population who were poor at the beginning of the project, after the projects improved rural roads or small-scale irrigation facilities, which brought only small, poorly sustained benefits to rural residents due mainly to insufficient funds to maintain the facilities after project completion" (ADB: 2006, p.111).

The solutions to the problems noted in fact did not lie within the rural communities in the poor regions themselves or within the defined scope of the interventions. Longer term and broader interventions within a larger regional framework were considered necessary. Coordinated infrastructure development, improvement of social services, investments focused on job creation, availability of credit under appropriate terms, safety nets to reduce vulnerability of households, and education, training and appropriate skill formation activities as well as support to orderly migration of workers to locations with better job prospects were seen as the appropriate interventions. All these had to be carried with a coordinated approach.

It is noteworthy that the limited and non-sustained poverty reduction outcomes were observed in the three countries in periods when they enjoyed high aggregate economic growth at the national level and the countries were regarded as success cases in economic development and poverty reduction. It can be reasonably surmised that in the context of less robust national economic growth, the constraints encountered would be greater and the outcomes would be even less positive.

Logically, the pathways out of poverty for rural people have to be strongly connected to productivity increases and expansion of employment in the rural economy through farming activities, rural non-farm enterprises or via

rural-urban migration. Literature on rural poverty supports the view that agricultural growth has historically had an important role in poverty reduction in many countries (for example, Ravallion: 2004; Besley and Cord: 2006).

However, with more open trade and market development within and among countries for agricultural products, slowing of population growth, and the growth of non-farm economic activities, the overall economic growth and poverty reduction is no longer dominated by the agriculture sector. Overall in developing countries, non-farm output now accounts for roughly half of rural income. Despite the fact that some non-farm activities are characterised by low-productivity and low earning, many have a greater potential for enhancing rural income and employment than farming activities. Thus, the question is not whether the emphasis should be on agriculture or non-farm activities, but what the pragmatic and dynamic combination should be and what may be the relative balance of inter-sectoral transitions and importance of rural-urban migration. The answer for any given country depends both on its factor endowments as well as its policy and institutional environment (McCulloch *et al.*: 2007).

McCulloch and colleagues, looking at empirical evidence in Indonesia from the decade of the 1990s, found that "increased engagement of farmers in rural non-farm enterprises is an important route out of rural poverty, but that most of the rural agricultural poor that exit poverty still do so while remaining rural and agricultural. Thus changes in agricultural prices, wages and productivity still play a critical role in moving people out of poverty" (McCulloch *et al.*: 2007, p.28).

A question raised in the literature is whether non-farm enterprises are mainly a low productivity supplementary activity for households undertaken to diversify their income sources and insure against shocks to their agricultural income, which are important concerns for the rural poor. Or can the rural non-farm enterprises be potentially a source of growth and poverty alleviation? The evidence suggests that they fulfil both important functions (McCulloch, *et al.*: 2007; World Bank: 2006). This is consistent with what was observed in the projects in the three countries studied by ADB, mentioned above.

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

The importance of a structural change in the economy with increased land and labour productivity in agriculture, increasingly important role of the non-farm activities, mobility of labour from agriculture to non-farm occupations and out of rural areas, and building up and deploying human and social capitals effectively are emphasised by analysis of panel data from nationwide household sample surveys for two decades from 1987/88 to 2007/8 in Bangladesh (Hossain and Bayes: 2009).

The sample of analytical evidence cited above is quite limited, but arguably can still shed light on the connection between education, skills and jobs, on the one hand and the economic and political policy directions for fighting rural poverty. In short, the obstacles that had to be overcome for success in fighting poverty were of several kinds:

- Poor natural resource endowment – shortage of farmland, shortage of water and inhospitable climatic and ecological condition for improving agricultural productivity, for smallholders and their move towards larger commercial production.
- Infrastructure deficiency – poor roads, inadequate irrigation and water supply, insufficient energy and power, insufficient investments for these purposes.
- Institutional deficiencies of several types – lack of credit in accessible terms for the poor, political and bureaucratic obstacles to labour mobility, absence of social safety net, such as health care and child and old age benefits, insurance against catastrophe, protection against natural disasters and other vulnerabilities, and poor civic governance in general.
- Socio-cultural obstacles – language and ethnicity as obstacle to labour mobility or accessing economic opportunities. Not specifically mentioned are some common phenomena, such as, corruption that can seriously undermine sound and promising projects, improper political patronage and interference, and clans and tribes rivalries affecting project efficiency.
- Human development deficiencies – poor quality of primary education that does not ensure basic literacy and numeracy skills for many children, particularly the poor; lack of secondary general education and appropriate skill development, and scarce tertiary education that could provide technical assistance and support technology

adaptation for rural areas. Not mentioned are insufficient non-formal and informal skills development and general adult and lifelong learning opportunities.

Four general comments are pertinent about this enumeration of constraints.

First, as noted, the solutions to some of the major problems did not lie in specific interventions within the rural community or the locality, such as, those about social safety net and credit policy, and bureaucratic and legal barriers to labour mobility and labour market flexibility. Similarly, the problems of farmland shortage and population pressure required regional or even national strategies much beyond the boundaries of the rural localities.

Second, macroeconomic conditions and policies that were effective in promoting aggregate economic growth served as a positive backdrop for implementing poverty reduction actions; and the opposite in the case of slow growth.

Third, good quality primary and secondary general education was important for helping young people from poor households take advantage of better paying and higher productivity non-farm employment opportunities. This was necessary for participating in occupation-specific skill training or gaining entry-level spots in firms for on-the-job or in-house training. The corollary to this condition was that education and training were not particularly a requirement for low-productivity, low-wage and low-skill jobs in the informal sector.

Finally, different kinds of constraints, skills development through education and training being one among the major constraints, point to the importance of finding ways of bridging the gap in concepts and practices between poverty reduction strategies and actions, on the one hand, and generation of skills and jobs, on the other. It is more a problem of bringing the two areas of policy and strategy discussion, which have continued somewhat in parallel, into one universe of discourse. It is not that the links have not been recognised, but this needs to be clarified and sharpened and the implications for policy and coordinated action that address the interfaces of skills, employment and poverty reduction among rural people spelled out and acted upon, as elaborated below.

2.2 Jobs and Escape from Rural Poverty – State of the Discourse

The argument has been made that rural world is changing rapidly, and that young people need to be prepared to seize the new opportunities. New technologies, products, markets, and business environments are emerging in both agriculture and non-farm economic activities in rural areas. It is also clear that many rural people will need to move from traditional agriculture-based occupations to non-farm activities and many will need to move in search of job opportunities to towns and cities. Many will need skills that are different from those of their parents and these needs keep changing at a faster pace than before. But how exactly are skills turned into gainful and rewarding jobs? And how and what kind of employment creation can lift people out of poverty in rural areas?

The decent work agenda for rural people

The International Labour Conference placed on the agenda in its 97th session in 2008 a general discussion on the promotion of rural employment for poverty reduction. It comprised a stocktaking of the nature, magnitude and changing patterns of rural employment, especially in developing countries; and the development of a comprehensive strategy to promote employment and decent work in rural areas. The following discussion draws substantively from the usual tripartite deliberation representing the government, employers and organised labour that takes place at the International Labour Conference (ILO: 2008).

The agenda concerned a framework for shaping policies and actions to reduce poverty by generating more and better jobs. The discussion was about integration of economic and social objectives, a well-orchestrated combination of measures in the areas of employment promotion, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue. It was argued that expanding “decent work” for rural people opened the avenue out of poverty. The discussion was about the adaptation of the decent work agenda, which is a central element of the Global Employment Agenda (GEA), in the rural context. GEA was a general approach to promoting productive employment as the key strategy for poverty alleviation and equitable development, endorsed by ILO earlier in 2003 (ILO: 2003).

The ten core elements of the Global Employment Agenda included supportive international and macroeconomic policy measures, such as, trade and investment for productive employment and market access for developing countries, promoting sustainable development for sustainable livelihoods, encouraging technological change for higher productivity and job creation, and policy integration for growth and employment. Other key ingredients were operational strategies at the national level related to labour market and job creation including expansion of employment through entrepreneurship, improving knowledge and skills to enhance employability, and labour market policies to promote employment security, equity and poverty reduction. The agenda also included the creation of a supportive environment through social protection measures and improved occupational safety and health (Box 2.1).

Box 2.1 The Global Employment Agenda (GEA) and Decent Work

Ten core elements of GEA

- Promoting trade and investment for productive employment and market access for developing countries.
- Promoting technological change for higher productivity and job creation and improved standards of living.
- Promoting sustainable development for sustainable livelihoods.
- Macroeconomic policy for growth and employment: a call for policy integration.
- Promoting decent employment through entrepreneurship.
- Employability by improving knowledge and skills.
- Active labour market policies for employment, security in change, equity and poverty reduction.
- Social protection as a productive factor.
- Occupational safety and health: synergies between security and productivity.
- Productive employment for poverty reduction and development.

Decent work

- The concept of decent work emphasises shaping of policies and actions to reduce poverty by generating more and better jobs. It calls for the integration of economic and social objectives and for a well-orchestrated combination of measures in the areas of employment promotion, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue. Decent work is thus a productive factor, and social policies based on decent work have a dynamic role to play in promoting a healthy economy and a just society.
- The insight underlying GEA and the decent work concept that employment is the missing link between growth and poverty reduction and the recognition that sustainable poverty reduction requires simultaneously social transfers, investments in social and physical infrastructure and good labour market performance, constitute key policy orientations for any country to succeed in reducing poverty in rural areas.

Source: ILO, 2003. *The Global Employment Agenda*. Geneva; ILO, 2008, pp.7-8.

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

The underlying premise of GEA was that employment provided the missing link between growth and poverty reduction. This meant that sustainable poverty reduction required simultaneous investments in social and physical infrastructure, good labour market policy and performance, and provisions to improve and adapt skill levels in the workforce. This generic insight was sought to be applied to the rural economy through the decent work agenda for rural areas.

Decent work in the rural context is about opportunities for women and men to obtain productive employment in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Absence of decent work is characterised by conditions evident in many rural areas. These include limited opportunities for remunerative work that is available to certain groups at the expense of others, social and labour conditions that expose workers to risk rather than protect them from it, and a general shortage of productive work that keeps workers and their families in a cycle of poverty.

How realistic are the premises and promises of GEA and decent work for rural people? What are the obstacles to realising the potential? An empirical look at the real experience revealed gaps between theory and practice, the possibilities and the cold realities, as highlighted in the ILO report on this subject (ILO: 2008).

A discussion of the rural-urban continuum and opportunities to intervene in the rural labour market as potentially positive factors in job creation and reduction of rural poverty illustrate the complexities.

Rural-urban Continuum

The economic implications of the rural–urban continuum could be the basis for a positive scenario of change both for rural and urban people. In theory:

Agricultural growth is seen to benefit farm households directly by raising income and food security, but also to benefit both urban and rural households by promoting higher wages, lowering food prices, increasing the demand for consumer and intermediate goods and services, encouraging the development of rural-based businesses, raising the returns to labour and capital and improving the overall efficiency of markets (ILO: 2008, p.14).

In reality, the gap in many countries has widened between urban and rural livelihoods. The positive effects mentioned may be experienced mainly in suburban perimeters and along main trunk roads. The increases in commodity prices fail to reach the very small producer, who faces rising costs for inputs, but receives a shrinking portion of the market value of his or her crops. Nor do agricultural workers generally see higher commodity prices translated into fuller wage packets.

The term “labour market” suggests a unity that is absent in practice. Rather, there are multiple segmented markets for labour, demarcated by industry, crop, occupations and geographical areas. Rural economies are generally mixed, with the rural farming and non-farming populations earning their living from interdependent agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Employers compete for available labour supply during the peak farming season, whereas there are troughs of underemployment, casual labour and poor income at other times. Strong economic, social and political power imbalances between employers and workers tend to be more prevalent in rural society than in urban areas and can undermine the fair and effective functioning of rural labour markets. Labour organisation tends to be weak in rural areas, where feudal labour relations persist in many instances with few legal rights enjoyed by workers. Barriers associated with gender, ethnicity, caste or tribe can severely restrict labour mobility.

How rural labour market functions

Rural labour markets are dominated by unskilled labour where supply comes from workers with little formal education or training. The prevalence of casual labour and child labour contributes to low productivity, low wages and weak bargaining capacity. Labour market governance and institutions are usually weak in rural areas and have little capacity to directly address factors determining supply or demand for labour (*ibid.*, p.28).

With a total of over 1 billion people employed in the agriculture sector in the world, it is the second greatest source of employment worldwide after services. It still keeps occupied the majority of the rural workforce in developing countries. Estimates on agricultural employment in general are more readily available at the international level than

statistics on rural employment. Due to national differences in defining and distinguishing urban and rural areas, the distinction between urban and rural employment is not amenable to a standard definition which is applicable to and comparable among all countries or even for countries within a region (ILO: 2008).

The general picture that emerges from available data is that with over 700 million agricultural workers, Asia accounted for more than 70 percent of the world total, and Sub-Saharan Africa, with slightly under 200 million workers had almost 20 percent (c. 2007). With 510 million and 276 million people respectively in agriculture, two countries, China and India together, represented almost 60 percent of the world's total agricultural labour force (ILO: 2008, p.28).

Within countries, as proportion of rural employment, agriculture remained the dominant source. It accounted for 63 percent of rural household income in Africa, 62 percent in Asia, 50 percent in Europe and 56 percent in Latin America in the mid-2000s (c.2005).

From another angle, the rural employment picture is that agriculture and related activities are sources of livelihood for an estimated 86 percent of rural women and men in developing countries and provide jobs for 1.3 billion smallholders and landless workers. It is noteworthy that with close to 90 percent of rural employment in developing countries in agriculture and farm-related work, the sector was the source of less than two-thirds of the total rural income. This disproportion is a manifestation, in a way an explanation, of the low income and poverty of rural people.

However, non-agricultural activities have been accounting for an increasingly

larger share of total rural employment. Panel data from repeated household surveys carried out in Bangladesh, India (Tamil Nadu), the Philippines and Thailand illustrate this trend (Table 2.1). Non-farm income had contributed less than 50 percent of household income in seven out of eight instances in the 1980s. By 2003-2004, in five out of eight instances, the proportion of household income from

Table 2.1 Changes and Differences in Real Rural Household Income per Capita (PPP US\$) and Its Composition (%) in Selected Countries of Asia

Country	High-Potential Agricultural Areas		Marginal Agricultural Areas	
	1980s	2003-2004	1980s	2003-2004
Philippines				
Per Capita Income (PPP\$)	1,065	2,364	386	1,119
Agricultural Wage (%)	13	11	30	7
Rice (%)	37	12	20	9
Non-Rice Farm Income	5	7	13	24
Non-farm (%)	45	70	36	60
Remittances (%)	15	22	13	20
Thailand				
Per Capita Income (PPP\$)	2,014	4,617	959	2,543
Agricultural Wage (%)	4	6	12	5
Rice (%)	66	26	54	7
Non-Rice Farm Income	21	22	13	14
Non-farm (%)	10	47	21	74
Bangladesh				
Per Capita Income (PPP\$)	634	1,018	841	1,094
Agricultural Wage (%)	14	8	11	4
Rice (%)	35	20	24	13
Non-Rice Farm Income	18	21	20	26
Non-farm (%)	33	51	55	57
Tamil Nadu (India)				
Per Capita Income (PPP\$)	520	697	228	623
Agricultural Wage (%)	11	28	17	3
Rice (%)	62	50	39	22
Non-Rice Farm Income	19	19	40	49
Non-farm (%)	9	4	7	27

Source: Otsuka and Yamano (2008): "The role of rural labour markets in poverty reduction: Evidence from Asia and East Africa", a draft background paper for the World Development Report 2008. Adapted from table 6, using panel data from repeated household surveys.

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

non-farm activities surpassed that from agriculture. This was the case in both high potential and marginal agricultural areas in the country or the territory.

Non-farm income share in the total household income in Bangladesh increased from under 40 percent in 1987 to over 51 percent in 1999-2000 (ILO: 2008, p.34). It increased further to 53 percent by 2008 as shown in the previous section in (Box 2.2). This increase largely came from greater engagement in trade and business activities, (increase from 12.8 percent to 19.9 percent); and the growth in remittances (from 4.7 to 11.8 percent). Out-migration within the country and abroad and declining birth rates contributed to smaller average household size and thus to a faster rise in per capita income as well (Hossain *et al.*: 2003, cited in ILO: 2008, p.34).

In short, although agriculture is still the predominant source of livelihood for rural women and men, agriculture alone cannot alleviate rural poverty. In all rural communities, the promotion of sustainable off-farm enterprises is necessary to generate more and better jobs. The weight of research and evidence clearly points to the importance of non-farm enterprises as engines of rural development, income growth and poverty reduction (Mellor and Lele: 1973, pp.35-55; Foster and Rosenzweig: 2004).

Larger non-farm employment opportunities lead to a reduction in the supply of agricultural labourers, increasing wages in this sector, thus creating positive fallout on all rural workers and households. In many instances, small-scale farming is part of a diversified livelihood strategy, combining on- and off-farm wage work, service activities and remittances. Earnings from agricultural wage labour are low and volatile and opportunities for regular employment are in decline with workers increasingly engaged on a casual or temporary basis (World Bank: 2007).

Addressing extreme poverty

Extreme poverty of rural people places them under special vulnerability. One description of extreme poverty of Earth Institute at Columbia University emphasises its different facets.

Households living in extreme poverty are chronically undernourished, unable to access health care, lacking the amenities of safe drinking water and sanitation, unable to afford education for some or all of the children, and perhaps lacking rudimentary shelter – a roof to keep the rain out of the hut, a chimney to remove the smoke from the cook stove – and basic articles of clothing such as shoes. Such deprivations cost lives, by the millions, every year. Life expectancy is considerably lower and mortality

Box 2.2 Transformation of Rural Economy in Bangladesh 1988-2008: Insights from Longitudinal Surveys

- Poor households in rural areas declined from 60 to 43 percent of total during the period 1987 to 2004 but increased to 47 percent in 2008. The proportion of extreme poverty decreased from 34 to 15 percent in the two decades. About 30 percent of the rural households remained chronically poor.
- Workers primarily dependent on agriculture for livelihood declined from 71 to 53 percent in two decades. Those dependent on business and services increased from 21 to 32 percent. On average, annually nearly one percent of the households migrated out of their localities.
- Upward mobility to non-poor status was experienced by a higher proportion of families than the reverse during 1987 to 2004, whereas more families moved from non-poor to poor status than the reverse from 2004 to 2007.
- Large household size and increase in number of dependents, natural disasters, health shocks such as death and disability of earning members, and litigation from land dispute were principal causes of downward economic mobility. Land ownership and accumulation of land, mobility from agriculture to non-farm occupations, accumulation and transfer of capital to non-agricultural activities, migration to cities and abroad, and accessibility to newly developed infrastructure, such as road and electricity were factors behind upward mobility.
- Expansion of non-farm activities have become the driver of rural growth; agricultural surplus is a source of capital for non-farm enterprises.
- Income from services including remittance, trading and non-crop agriculture is unequally distributed and their growing importance is contributing to worsening rural income distribution (unless mitigated by appropriate skills development and other support measures).
- Development of rural infrastructure, providing access to education and credit to poor families, and improving terms and conditions in rural markets are necessary for poverty reduction. Mobility between occupations and away from home was facilitated by expansion of rural roads, supply of microcredit, and improvement in education.

Source: Adapted from Mahabub Hossain (2011): "Transformation of Rural Economy in Bangladesh 1988-2008: Insights from Longitudinal Surveys". Power-Point presentation at the "Rural Development Club seminar", BRAC University, 18 October, 2011. Also see Hossain, M. and Bayes, A. (2009): "Rural Economy & Livelihoods: Insights from Bangladesh", Dhaka: A H Development Publishing House.

rates are considerably higher in countries in which large proportions of the population live in extreme poverty. (<http://mvsim.wikischolars.columbia.edu/Extreme+Poverty>)

The first Millennium Development Goal is to halve the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. It is now expected that the global poverty rate will fall below 15 percent by 2015 – well under the 23 percent target. This global trend, however, mainly reflects rapid growth in Eastern Asia, especially China. Success in bringing the proportion of humanity living in extreme poverty to below 15 percent would still leave 900 million people living on less than US\$ 1.25 a day (UN: 2011).

One example of a multidimensional social-assistance programme is the “Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction – Targeting the Ultra Poor” (TUP) programme of the large Bangladesh NGO, BRAC. This was launched in 2002, following BRAC staff’s conclusion that their existing interventions through microcredit, livelihood projects, village organisation, basic health care and basic education – while valuable to many living in poverty – were not reaching or helping the poorest people in rural Bangladesh. TUP programme combines asset transfers through grants, rather than loans, linked to specific livelihood skills, health promotion and other specific social support for a period of two years to households in extreme poverty selected by well-defined criteria. The aim is to achieve a transformation in the situation of these households so that they “graduate” to taking advantage of mainstream poverty alleviation programmes based on microcredit, other social services, and other on-farm and off-farm economic opportunities. Legal advice on issues such as marriage and domestic violence law – particularly relevant for the many women participants in the programme, is also offered (ILO: 2008, p.77).

Impact assessment based on panel data from three rounds of survey (2002, 2005 and 2008), explored sustainability of livelihood impacts of the first phase of CFPR (2002-2006). Household income was found to be increasing over time. Income from livestock and poultry, begun with grant from the project, increased among programme participants. It was concluded that “programme impacts on income, employment, food security and asset holding were mostly sustainable in the long-run”. The programme, however, did

not have a significant impact on education of children of the participant households, although in the long-run “a modest positive impact on boys’ primary enrolment” was expected. Qualitative exploration reveals that determination, confidence, social network, asset management skill, and hard work of the participant women were important behind effective use of the support provided by the CFPR programme. In short, participants’ incomes had grown beyond those who were “not quite poor enough” to be selected for the programme in 2002, but that they were still poor. The participants appeared to be more confident in their ability to withstand vulnerability or livelihood “crises”, such as the serious illness of an income earner, or risks to the newly acquired assets, such as livestock disease or death (Das and Misha: 2010).

The Indian National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) passed in 2005, is aimed at making available up to 100 days of employment per rural household per year on public works, at the prevailing minimum unskilled wage rate (Sjoblom and Farrington: 2007).

Implementation of the employment guarantee law, one of the largest rights-based social protection initiatives in the world, is expected to replace ad hoc schemes for assisting rural poor with a rights-based approach and can be regarded as a key element in the strategy to lift the households in extreme poverty out of their state of vulnerability. The national budget for the financial year 2006-2007 was approximately US\$ 2.5 billion or 0.3 percent of GDP, and is expected to grow to over 1 percent when it becomes fully operational to reach around 40 million households living below the poverty line (ILO: 2008, p.37).

As the programme unfolds, questions are emerging about how the poor, often illiterate, households, can turn the rights to employment into action, especially when only the poorest households are expected to engage in manual work for low wages on the basis of self-targeting. Vexing questions arise in this context about the trade-off between social inclusion and social justice, when wages below prevailing farm work rates are offered and whether the types of activities funded are beneficial for the rural poor. Women are often excluded when they are less able to travel long distances to find work on offer (Sjoblom and Farrington: 2007).

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

The predecessor of NREGA in the state of Maharashtra, MEGS, which served as the model for the national law, illustrates the significance of the linkages and interaction between employment creation for the poor and broader economic growth. In an environment of robust economic growth, the benefits of employment guarantee under MEGS were assessed to have been largely "secondary and indirect rather than direct". It has been concluded that:

- MEGS raised agricultural wages as labourers became reluctant to accept less than the official minimum wage.
- MEGS provides insurance for rural workers against unemployment and stabilised work for rural households by providing opportunities during the agricultural off-season.
- Assets created by MEGS contributed to increasing agricultural productivity, but the benefits of this were regressive because asset locations tended to favour better-off households.
- There were concerns about exclusion, but MEGS helped enhance women's participation in paid work and their independence, when employment opportunities were locally available (ILO: 2008, p.76).

Both the ultra-poor initiative in Bangladesh and the rural employment guarantee programme in India appear to have not given due attention to the linkages between assistance to address extreme poverty and vulnerability and human capital development, especially building skills and capacities of the participant families, except as specific orientation type of activities in the former case. There has been no attention to educational needs of children except for exhortation to enrol in primary school. The school did not function effectively in the concerned communities and the majority of children of the poor, who enrolled, dropped out before completing primary education (Sjoblom and Farrington: 2007).

They also raise the general question of social exclusion of segments of the population, especially in the rural areas, from benefits of development and how social protection can be extended to them. As the Indian initiative illustrates, social protection from extreme deprivation and vulnerability is a right to which people are entitled by national constitution and laws and international covenants. Social

exclusion is a concept that describes how people are left out of, or prevented from participating in processes that lead to growth, improved welfare and, ultimately, development. Social exclusion and poverty are intimately linked and are largely co-existent. Focusing on social exclusion is necessary in policy making and planning for effective and sustainable action to combat the multi-dimensional causes and consequences of extreme poverty and vulnerability of people. As the ILO discourse on employment and rural poverty points out, it helps to (ILO: 2008, p.70):

- Contextualise poverty in social systems and structures;
- Understand how political and historical processes lead to chronic deprivation;
- Focus on causality rather than simple correlations or characteristics;
- Recognise the multi-dimensional nature of poverty; and
- Target social identities whose holders are prone to social exclusion.

It has been also cautioned that the normative assumptions about exclusion and inclusion, as negative and positive phenomena, may distract attention from how exclusion actually works in specific contexts. The theoretical formulation may ignore the agency of poor people in taking action to help them, looking at them as powerless victims. The term originated in the context of industrial countries where relatively small minorities are affected by the exclusionary conditions. When applied to developing countries, the assumptions and the logic may get distorted. In many developing countries, especially in rural areas, the "marginalised" constitute large numbers, even the majority in some situations. Inclusion and exclusion, therefore, need to be considered in terms of structural changes, rather than correcting aberrations within existing structures which affect small numbers (ILO: 2008, *ibid.*).

The conceptual origin of the notion of social exclusion in the west may explain why education and skills development of appropriate kind are not often incorporated as a key element in interventions to help the extreme poor, because the education and training structures worked with reasonable effectiveness for all in industrialised countries, whereas these are often highly discriminatory or even dysfunctional for the poor in developing countries. By

the same token, education and training alone, in isolation from broader development policy and priority shift, cannot change the plight of the deprived and the vulnerable, which is the recurrent refrain of this report.

2.3 The Nature of Skills Development

Skills development defined

A broadly agreed concept of skill development in the context of productive activities of society, relevant for this discussion of skills and poverty, is captured in the definition offered by Robert Palmer (Palmer: 2005).

Skills development is not narrowly equated with formal technical and vocational education and training (TVET) alone, but is used more broadly to refer to the capacities acquired through all levels of education and training, occurring in formal, non-formal and on-the-job settings, which enables individuals in all areas of the economy to become fully and productively engaged in livelihoods and to have the capacity to adapt their skills to meet the changing demands and opportunities of the economy and labour market (Palmer: 2005).

Palmer adds to the definition the qualifier that skills development does not refer to the source of education or training itself, but to the capacities that are acquired through these skills. This is consistent with other formulations which emphasise “skills” as the expertise needed to perform a task or to do a job, or as a product of education, training and experience which, together with relevant knowledge is the characteristic of a competent worker (European Training Foundation: undated, p.1).

It is generally agreed that skills development of workers is fundamental to continuing employment and mobility, as well as promoting active citizenship, filling skills gaps, and generating quality jobs (Todaro and Smith: 2007). More broadly speaking, skills development is the key for improving efficiency of enterprises, employability of people and alleviation of poverty. It is also related to the question of recognition and fulfilment of the right of individuals to decent work.

The concept of skills development as presented has several important connotations:

Firstly, skills development is not an isolated and self-contained area of activity. There are important linkages with the general education system of the country including basic, secondary and tertiary stages, and non-formal and informal education, which influence the characteristics and outcomes of the skills programmes. In this regard, it is necessary to look at skills development in the context of the Education for All (EFA) initiative which has helped shape educational priorities and plans in developing countries.

Secondly, skills development is not confined to institutionalised formal training labelled as technical and vocational education and training (TVET). There is a wide range of modalities of delivery, organisational and institutional mechanisms, locus of responsibility, and diversity of objectives and clientele for skills development programmes. In this sense, the shift in terminology from the conventional TVET to skills development has more than semantic significance.

Thirdly, skills development is broader than skills related to economic production or earning a wage. It extends to organisational and management skills, especially in relation to self-employment; life skills that makes one an effective and responsible worker who derives pride and satisfaction from work; and civic and family life skills that enhance an individual’s performance as a worker and as a person.

Fourthly, in the context of poverty reduction and rural transformation, the generic skills development issues have to be examined in relation to the broader and multi-faceted rural transformation perspective, the implications of which extend beyond purely rural to national development goals and priorities.

Education and skills development

That education contributes to higher incomes and thereby reduces misery arising out of penury is a well-accepted observation. But discourses on poverty including the now familiar “Human Development Index” and the underlying concept have significantly changed the contours of relationship between education and development. Especially pertinent for the present study is the thesis effectively articulated by Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, interpreting poverty in terms of capability deprivation of people, has

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

brought the role of education into sharper focus not just in its instrumental role in alleviating poverty, but also as a core constituent of development and human well-being (Sen: 2006).

The World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA: 1990) put forward the expanded concept of basic education that embraced the basic learning needs of all – children at first level of education, youth who are out of school and adults requiring lifelong basic education opportunities. These needs are to be fulfilled through a variety of delivery modes, formal primary schooling, non-formal/alternative schooling for those with limited or no access to formal schooling, literacy programmes and informal education. These basic learning needs “comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions and to continue learning”. It is very clear from this formulation that rural transformation is not an objective or goal that is exogenous to basic education. On the other hand, it only makes explicit what is already contained in the definition of basic learning needs and imparts substantive content to the ideal of “living and working in dignity” and all the principles it entails (WCEFA: 1990, p.3 and p.7).

Specific occupational and employment-related skills are generally acquired at the post-primary or even post-secondary stage. The presumption is that young people bring basic educational competencies, knowledge and proficiencies that they acquire from primary, lower secondary or secondary education, to skill training courses. It is expected that the trainees have achieved basic literacy, numeracy, communication and reasoning skills, which are the tools for further learning and which make the learners in skill training courses trainable. How valid is this presumption?

Primary education and basic general competencies

It is not uncommon for children to take 8 to 12 years of schooling to acquire basic skills of literacy and numeracy

at a functional level, as found in a World Bank study in Ghana and Pakistan. “...if a 15-year-old enrolled in school is unable to use his or her literacy skills for further learning and attainment of knowledge, as indicated by low proficiency scores in international student assessments, the education system has failed the individual” (Fasih: 2008, p.2).

The implication of this situation is that the validity of the basic premise behind the MDG goal is put to question. The premise is that the completion of primary education, along with the achievement of the other goals, will help realise the goal of cutting in half by 2015 the number of people living in poverty worldwide. The author of the outcomes study asserts that data analysed in this report indicate that just increasing the quantity of education at the lower educational levels will not raise earnings substantially, and thus not prove to be effective in helping people climb out of poverty (ibid.).

The problem underscored from data in two countries is illustrative of a much wider phenomenon. The quality of education remains very low in many countries. Millions of children are emerging from primary school with reading, writing and numeracy skills far below expected levels (GMR: 2011, p.1). The World Development Report 2007 (World Bank: 2006) suggests that employers demand strong thinking, communication, and entrepreneurial skills from candidates at entry level for jobs or for training programmes – the demands largely unmet by curricula, teaching methods and general performance of schools in developing countries.

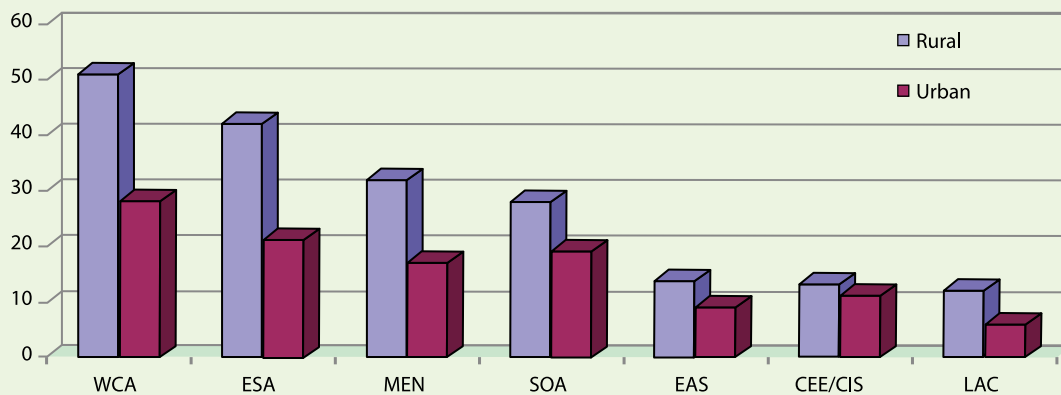
The review carried out and the statistics reported on EFA progress leading up to the World Education Forum in Dakar 2000 and progress since then, neither highlighted nor analysed rural-urban disparities in the participation and access to primary schooling. There is a general neglect in systematically collected and assessed inter-country data indicating urban-rural differences and other aspects of disparities necessary for identifying and dealing with the range of issues connected to universalising primary education with quality. An estimate by UNICEF with data from the early years of the decade after 2000 provides an indication of the disadvantage of the rural areas in respect of exclusion from primary education (see Figure 2.1).

Another way of gauging the urban-rural gap in primary education is to look at the situation in the countries with high non-enrolment. The Global Monitoring Report for EFA shows that half the world's out-of-school children live in just fifteen countries (Figure 2.2). These are also the countries with a high ratio of rural population.

In general terms, poverty stricken rural children as well as adults, who constitute the majority of the population in developing countries, have very limited opportunities to

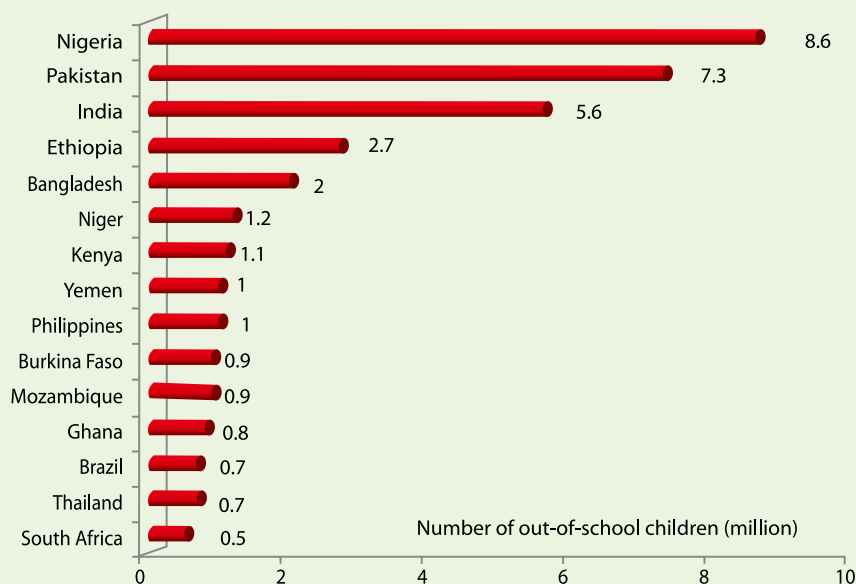
obtain a viable basic education that would help them prepare for productive skills development and economic opportunities, and thus "break free" from the poverty cycle. Many rural children still do not set foot into a school; many of those who do fail to complete the full primary cycle; and even among those who do complete it, many leave school barely literate. When schools exist in remote rural areas, they are often in need of repair, poorly equipped and dependent on inadequately trained and under paid personnel (Atchoarena and Gasperini: 2003, pp.390-391).

Figure 2.1 Percentage Children out of Primary School by Area of Residence



CEE/CIS= Central Asia and East Europe, LAC= Latin America and the Caribbean, EAS= East Asia/Pacific, SOA= South Asia, MEN= Middle East/Northern Africa, ESA= Eastern/Southern Africa, WCA= Western/Central Africa
 Source: UNICEF, "Progress for Children, A Report Card on Gender Parity and Primary Education", Number 2, April 2005.

Figure 2.2 Number of Children of Primary School Age out of School (Selected Countries, Millions in 2008)



Source: EFA Monitoring Report 2011.

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

ILO emphasised that schooling is positively and significantly associated with participation in rural non-agricultural wage employment and concluded that, "Improving basic education is essential and often a necessary condition for other programmes and policies targeted at improving skills and knowledge in rural areas and for making the most of vocational and technical training opportunities" (ILO: 2008, p.54-55).

Second level education and skills

The skill requirements of rural jobs continue to rise along with required general education levels of workers. Although less educated rural adults fared well in the 1990s all over the globe due to positive economic trends, their prospects however are uncertain. Many rural jobs historically held by workers with limited education have been lost to changes in (i) production technology; (ii) overseas competition; and (iii) changing consumer demand. Prospective employers are increasingly attracted to areas offering a concentration of well-educated and skilled workers, just as better educated youth and adults are still drawn to places – often in cities – that offer better jobs with higher salaries.

The question of the linkage between post-primary/secondary education and skills development are framed by two related concerns – how secondary education, lower and higher stages of it, contribute to conventional vocational and technical training as well as to emerging non-conventional skills development programmes; and to what extent and how secondary education itself can become "vocationalised" and complement conventional TVET?

The two concerns are linked and raise a number of interconnected questions. The questions that come up and need to be sorted out to develop workable strategies acceptable both to the employers and parents and participants themselves include: Under what conditions is vocationalisation of schooling justified and is likely to work? Should the curriculum focus be a narrow one on technical skills development or on a broader notion of vocational learning including socialisation and identity formation? Should any vocationalisation be "light" – general pre-vocational to provide an orientation – or should it aim to

produce job-ready workers for specific occupations? Can it ever be popular and acceptable with learners and parents? Is a new skills profile for the globalised knowledge economy necessary – comprising skills, knowledge and attitudes for increasingly service sector-driven economies? How does vocationalism respond to the context of jobless growth in the formal economy, being experienced widely in many countries? Equally important, how should vocationalised post-primary education respond to the needs of the informal economy, the predominant form of economic transactions in both rural and urban areas of developing countries? (McGrath: 2007)

A huge amount of analytical work on various facets of skills development and its relationship with the broader educational systems has been undertaken by the World Bank. This is encapsulated in two important publications: Vocational and technical education and training, a World Bank policy paper (1991) and Skills development in Sub-Saharan Africa (2004). These have been influential documents which set the agenda for discussion on vocational and technical education and served as benchmarks for policy and programmatic choices, even when the prescriptions were not fully adopted and not followed in many instances.

It would be fair to say that the 1991 World Bank policy paper contributed greatly to a re-conceptualisation of the scope and range of provision for vocational and technical skills for countries and aid agencies. It and its sequel focused on Africa influenced subsequent discourse and reviews on this subject. As King summed it up,

...the Bank proclaimed its principal proposition about the relationship of school to skill to be that making general primary and secondary schools good in their teaching of language, maths and science is a better way of improving workforce skills than making schools technical or vocational. Hence the Bank's position on school and skill is that you do not need to make the school curriculum technical or vocational for school to contribute to skill (King: 2007).

King observes that the conclusions and implications of the two reports mentioned above have not been adequately incorporated in or dealt with in several reports of World Bank itself specifically concerned with the

relationship between technical and vocational education and post-primary general education or the place of skills development in the total education system. These Bank documents include *Expanding opportunities and building competencies: A New Agenda for Secondary Education* (2005), *Education Sector Strategy Update* (2005), *World Development Report* (2006), and *Choices for secondary education and training in Sub-Saharan Africa* (2007) (ibid.). It can be argued by the same token that the Bank's lending and technical assistance have not been fully consistent with the key policy recommendation it had put forward in its policy statements mentioned above. Many countries appear to have opted for a mixed approach with a degree of "vocation-alisation" in the mainstream general secondary education, influenced by variations of the European models of vocational and technical training and education. The differences in labour market and overall educational development context from Europe have not deterred the countries and the outcomes, on the whole, cannot be regarded as satisfactory.

The key policy message of World Bank regarding the relationship between vocational and technical education and general second level education hinges on ensuring adequate basic competencies of young people in languages, math and science for their later success in the world of work, irrespective of occupations. Researchers and academics have regarded this as sensible, but it does pose for the countries the huge challenge of bringing about a major transformation in the way primary and secondary education systems functioned. The governments aided and abetted by external donors, decided to hedge the bet and went for the "path of least resistance" of introducing variations of vocational subjects in general secondary education. For the purposes of this report, it should be noted that the "vocation-alisation" approach allowed introduction of agriculture and farm-related courses in rural schools. Whatever the merit of this initiative, which is not without its detractors, the basic problems of quality assurance and management of the general system became major obstacles to positive outcomes in many developing countries (Feller: 1996, pp.24-27).

In a large number of developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the ability of the

governments to deal with the changing realities in the economy and labour market needs has been seriously constrained by demographic pressures and financial constraints. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, labour force is still projected to grow between 2 to 3 percent or more a year at least in near future (UNDP: 2011). Much of the economies and much of the populations in this region are still rooted in traditional activities and structures. More than half of the labour force is still engaged in rural activities. Despite some movement away from agriculture, most of the labour force, ranging between 80-90 percent, is working in the informal sector, much of it at low levels of productivity and earning.

For a significant proportion of this majority group, adequate and easy access to secondary education and vocational education and training (VET), in varying combinations of general and vocational education or in separate programmes of acceptable quality, is necessary, but lacking seriously. In developing countries excluding China, almost half of the children of secondary school age are not enrolled in school. In most cases, it is even less for girls, except in Latin America and the Caribbean (see Table 2.2). The proportion of the secondary level students in technical and vocational education varies regionally, but is the lowest in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. This proportion has come down between 1999 and 2008 by 2 percent worldwide, while overall secondary enrolment has increased by 21 percent (Table 2.3). An effective school to work transition for the young people, which is facilitated by higher quality secondary and tertiary education and VET, could improve their employment prospects and life-time earnings.

Non-formal, adult and lifelong learning

The Global Monitoring Report team found goal 3 related to meeting the learning needs of all young people and adults through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes as the hardest to define and measure, because of the character and multiple dimensions of this area of learning needs (UNESCO-GMR: 2005).

Low attainment in rural areas is often attributed to farm work; children miss school or drop out to help with farm or household work. But studies of child labour show that

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

Table 2.2 Secondary School Enrolment Ratio (Latest Year of 2005-2009)

Regions	Gross		Net	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Africa	44	36	33	29
Sub-Saharan Africa	40	32	32	28
Asia	64	60	-	-
South Asia	56	48	-	-
Latin America & Caribbean	87	94	72	77
Middle East & North Africa	72	66	66	62
Developing Countries	64	60	54*	53*
Least Developed Countries	39	31	33	29
World	69	65	61*	60*

Source: UIS data cited in UNICEF, *State of the World's Children, 2011*.

Table 2.3 Share of Technical Vocational Education in Second Level Education

Major Regions	Total Secondary Enrolment (000)		Technical and Vocational Education as a Share of Secondary Enrolment (%)	
	2008	Change Since 1999 (%)	2008	Change Since 1999 (%)
World	525,146	21	11	-2
Sub-Saharan Africa	36,349	75	7	-6
Arab States	29,858	35	13	-7
Central Asia	10,913	16	15	123
East Asia and the Pacific	164,021	25	16	9
South and West Asia	130,312	33	1	-5
Latin America and the Caribbean	59,101	13	11	3
North America and Western Europe	62,333	3	13	-10
Central and Eastern Europe	32,258	-21	19	5

Source: Compiled from EFA Monitoring Report, 2011.

of the 5 to 14 year-old children not in school, 32 percent do only domestic work. Other reasons for dropping out include the inability to meet costs of attendance, distance to school, a curriculum or language incompatible with local conditions, beliefs that education is not necessary and poor school quality. Improving basic education in rural areas, whether primary education in Africa or secondary in Latin America, is essential to energise the process of rural development (UNESCO: 2010).

There is clearly a need for special attention to rural areas in addressing skills development for poor people. This must be linked to a renewed understanding of the importance of agricultural development in general and non-farm development in rural areas. There is a parallel challenge of skills development for the informal economy, the major source of employment and income for both rural and urban people in most developing countries. There needs to be a focus on the ways of combining education and training with the devising of ways for effective entry into the

labour market in rural and informal economy contexts. Alternative paths and second and recurrent opportunities for acquiring general education competencies separately or in combination with occupational skills need to be expanded (Lakin and Gasperini: 2003, pp.77-169). This point is further elaborated below.

Tertiary education and rural skills development

Generally, higher agricultural education is regarded as relevant to supporting and promoting development of skills and employment and contributing more broadly to poverty reduction and economic development among rural people. Two pertinent questions arise: how well are tertiary level academic institutions in agriculture playing the expected role? Secondly, is tertiary education contribution to rural development, especially of a broader transformative nature, confined to higher agricultural education?

Agricultural professionals and researchers

Poor quality training of agricultural professionals, technicians and producers has been identified as part of the global food security problem as well as the broader issues of poverty alleviation and development in rural areas. The development of human resources in agriculture, technology and other developmental priorities for rural areas is often not a high priority in the overall development plans of countries. As a result, curricula and teaching programmes are not necessarily relevant to the production needs and employment demands of rural areas (World Bank: 2007).

Due to the growing economic crises in the public sector of many developing countries, the situation has become even more serious in recent years. In the past, the public sector absorbed nearly all of the students who studied agriculture. This is no longer the case. Agriculture graduates and diploma holders are finding it more difficult to become gainfully employed. Governments can no longer afford to hire every graduate, and education in agriculture has not kept up with the increasingly sophisticated labour demands of the private sector. These and other factors, such as environmental degradation, rapid changes in technical knowledge and the marginalisation of rural areas, all call for changes in the current systems of education in agriculture in many countries. The new agriculture also requires more and better trained research-

ers and agricultural professionals. But the education and training structures are not always up to this task (World Bank: 2008, pp.222-223).

General higher education and the rural context

The transition to higher education, which is particularly difficult and expensive for rural youth, requires support. Remarkable higher education policy reforms have been introduced in an increasing number of developing countries, which offer lessons and indicate strategic directions.

The Chinese tertiary education has experienced a radical shift over the last three decades – from a largely elitist and limited access system into a diversified system with increasingly wider access, multiple providers, and multi-layered programmes. In this process of growth, equal access, affordability, gender, graduate employment, quality control, and the redistribution of the best education resources have all become matters of public concern and contention (Brandenburg and Zhu: 2007, p.16).

The Chinese government has three new policies in place in order to overcome inequities in access. One is to invest more money in the less developed regions in order to provide more tertiary education opportunities to ethnic minorities and students from poor families. The other is to allow poor students to take loans from their hometown local authorities before they get registered at colleges and universities. Many provinces in the country started to implement this policy, which intends to meet the financial needs of significant proportions of students. The third policy is to develop technical and vocational education to complement standard tertiary opportunities in the country (Brandenburg and Zhu: 2007, p.27).

Similarly, the Mexican Jóvenes con Oportunidades offers youth in school a savings account in which they accumulate points during grades 9 to 12. The money can be tapped upon the completion of 12th grade for further study, opening a business, improving housing, or buying health insurance. The program thus provides incentives for children to graduate from secondary school and facilitates their continuing on to higher education (Mexico: 2004, pp.1-6).

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

TVET to skill development – the spectrum of skills

It goes without saying that rural areas all over the world are changing at an accelerated pace. National governments will have to accord increasing priority in their national development plans to prepare rural people to rise to the new opportunities. New technologies, new products, new markets and new business environments are fast changing the way the agriculture sector operates. And many rural people are shifting to non-farm activities or migrating to cities in search of new employment opportunities. To seize these opportunities, rural people will need skills that differ from the conventional ones or inherited from their elders. To what extent are the education and training systems ready to face the challenge?

A broad vision of education, training and skills

Education and training – purveyor of knowledge, skills, confidence and hope to the participants – need to generate the energy and creativity among rural people to face up to the complex world around them fraught with risks and possibilities. Attempts to gauge the effects of education on rural development have to view education, broadly defined to subsume formal and non-formal modes as well as training and skills acquisition, as means for gaining knowledge, transforming attitudes and acquiring skills. Effective participation in education is expected to render a person capable of contributing to development in one or more of the following ways: the acquired knowledge in reading and writing enables and stimulates a person to receive and convey knowledge and information related to individual and community development; the attitudes imparted lead to greater motivation to participate in development processes and to motivate others to do the same; the communication skills and group discipline inherent in education foster a spirit of cooperation and team-work. In addition, education generates a variety of skills which individuals can deploy in their daily life as well as for enhancing their productivity and earnings.

The term technical and vocational education and training (TVE or TVET) is used to refer narrowly to the regular provision of vocational training at the second level of education. It has been confined traditionally to formal vocational

and technical training institutions within the structure of the formal system. The term, it appears, needs to be modified as well as the range of activities included under it need to be expanded to cover some of the other kinds of skill acquisition and the sites where this happens – beyond schools, at the work place, shops or farms, formally, on-the-job, and in formal or informal apprenticeship. “Skills development” can refer more accurately to the diverse types and sites of provisions. By the same token, post-primary or post-basic education, rather than secondary, connotes a broader and flexible relationship between general secondary education and preparation for the world of work, through curricular offerings within the secondary school, through complementary activities away from school or time-release for work place experience. Irrespective of the label used, there is a need to expand the scope, objectives and modalities of delivery of both general second level education and technical and vocational education and training, further discussed below.

The spectrum of skills

An essential change about which all are agreed is that literacy and numeracy skills alone are quite inadequate and should be accompanied by the acquisition of certain attitudes, knowledge and skills relating to vocations and income-generation, as well as management, entrepreneurship and social, political and cultural life. This conception goes much beyond what is generally found in literacy programs being implemented in many countries, confined mostly to decoding alphabetical symbols. Functional literacy puts the emphasis on the acquisition of economically and socially useful skills. It also implies the need to develop attitudes and values of the participants, necessary ingredients for making effective use of the functional skills for personal and social objectives, such as becoming a good worker, a good citizen, and a responsible member of community and society.

By the same token, technical and vocational skills, narrowly and specifically defined and taught to carry out certain occupational tasks, are not often enough even for the particular task, not to speak of adapting to changing and evolving nature of occupations and job markets. Recent research (ILO: 2010 and World Bank: 2011) strongly asserts that the developing countries’ transition to a knowledge-based

economy requires a new generation of educated and skilled people. Alleviation of poverty will be determined by people's ability to create, share, and use knowledge effectively. A knowledge economy requires these countries to develop workers – knowledge workers and knowledge technologists – who are flexible and analytical and who can be the driving force for innovation and growth both in urban and rural contexts.

Attitudes and values are critical to the poor in their attempts to better their condition, because even the attempt may not be made without some conviction about their inherent own worth, ability and potential. They need to understand their situation and be convinced that it could be changed for the better. They need to be self-reliant and possess a sense of self-esteem. The teaching-learning approach should support the development of these values and attitudes.

Since the poverty groups tend to be less confident in their abilities and less expressive, the learning approach should encourage them to express their point of view in a supportive atmosphere so that they can be gradually more expressive. No matter how they are, they should be treated with respect and dignity. Values and attitudes need to be supported with thinking and analytical skills (Pichayasathit: 1997, p.53).

The emphasis on practical skills and not just mere knowledge is from the perspective that the poor may take some meaningful action immediately, under their present conditions without waiting for the day when the situation will improve. If their soil is poor what may be done immediately about it? What other crops may be grown? Such questions not only need answers, but backed up with help to develop necessary skills along with the supply of other resources that may be needed. Among the attitudes and skills which need to be supported, developed and refined are those relating to cooperative action. Management and entrepreneurial skills also need to be developed. This is particularly important if the poor are to take the initiatives themselves (UNESCO-PROAP: 1998, p.47).

With regard to skills development covered within EFA, three typologies have been identified, namely: basic skills (such as literacy and numeracy), psycho-social skills

(reflective, personal and interpersonal skills including problem solving, communication and team work) and practical/functional skills (manual skills relating to specific vocations or specific changes in personal or social behaviour as in health, hygiene and nutrition) (WCEFA World Declaration: 1990).

Recognising the fact that in a globalised economy, a large pool of skilled workers is indispensable, countries that have had the most rapid increases in educational attainment, as well as sustained economic growth, have upgraded education sequentially (for example, China and Republic of Korea) (GMR: 2011). In the economically emerging countries of the Asia-Pacific region skills development has enhanced significantly the efficiency and flexibility of the market; skills bottlenecks have been reduced, skilled workers are more easily absorbed into the economy, and their job mobility is improved. This has also helped to attract foreign direct investment.

Skills within the rural transformation framework

The perspective of rural transformation – multi-faceted change in rural areas as part of integrated development embracing rural and urban people – poses a special challenge for reforming TVET, or more appropriately, skill development, in relation to rural and agricultural development. The themes of moving from institutional TVET to development of skills in multiple modalities, and looking at the scope of skills development as a wide spectrum, are totally consistent with the transformative view of rural development. This view, at the least, would call for three kinds of change in the way skill development strategies and programmes are conceptualised and planned (UN: 1999, p.4).

First, there has to be a greater emphasis, in objectives and content of programmes, on agriculture-related and rural development skills within TVET and broader skills development activities. TVET provision itself has to be made transformative by making it contribute to rural economic regeneration and also facilitate inter-sectoral and geographical mobility of including orderly out-migration from rural areas, recognising that this is an essential element of the larger scenario of rural transformation (see below). Skills for rural transformation have to be seen as a sustainable

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

livelihood approach, encompassing all skills for rural life rather than a concentration on agriculture (see elaboration below).

Second, rural skills interventions have to be specifically incorporated in poverty reduction strategies. Poverty reduction strategies developed in many developing countries in the last two decades with the encouragement of international donors make references to TVET as a critical component of capacity building. However, it appears that these strategies often have remained within the confines of conventional TVET, rather than looking at reforms of TVET and their broadening into skills development. Such a broadened view could incorporate diverse capacity building of the poor, provisions beyond formal institutions, better functioning of decentralised governance, and involvement of NGOs, civil society and the private sector in skills development (UN: 1999, p.27).

Third, the essential corollary of the broad view of rural transformation is the broadening of the EFA agenda to include skills and capacity building for rural youth and adults. As observed by many, EFA national plans have focused on achieving universal primary education, apparently presuming that the problem of the large numbers of out-of-school children and youth will disappear with rapid progress in primary education. It has not turned out that way. Moreover, as noted above, the targets and strategies regarding EFA goal 3, skills development of youth and adults, have remained problematic with difficulties both in defining indicators of progress and recording or demonstrating progress.

In short, skills development for rural transformation with a focus on combating rural poverty has to be premised on the development of capacity for learning, innovation and productivity of rural people. Skills have to be regarded as more than narrow technical competencies, encompassing capabilities in communication, teamwork, creative skills, and interpersonal behaviour. Moreover, education, training and skills development have to be planned and implemented, not in isolation, but within a comprehensive approach for poverty reduction, identifying the right pathways out of rural poverty.

Skill needs in rural areas

The categories and character of skills needed for rural people are determined by the broader rural transformation imperatives and the requirements of promoting sustainable livelihoods are presented in the following section.

The discussion of education and skills development issues – how they relate, the nature of skills and their development, and placing skills within the framework of rural transformation – still begs the question what skills are relevant and necessary when the goal is lifting people out of poverty and contributing to transformative change in rural areas. At the same time, it cannot be forgotten that rural areas and circumstances of rural people are hardly homogeneous. Moreover, the transformation perspective requires that rural education and skills development are not put in wholly separate compartments from education and training in urban areas without any link and interaction. Despite the caveats, it is a practical necessity to consider categories and types of skills and capacities that need to be developed and for which provisions need to be made.

The skill and learning needs of diverse groups of learners and their categorisation in different socio-economic and geographic contexts have been considered copiously in abundantly in curriculum and education literature. Typologies of skill and learning needs in rural areas, with large proportions of the people in poverty and under-development have been attempted to be developed deriving these from analyses of inter-connections and interplay of the sociological, cultural, economic and educational dimensions of poverty. An illustration of a general typology of skill and learning needs in rural areas is presented in Table 2.4.

Another way of looking at the typology of learning needs is to focus on occupational categories and people who may be engaged in these. Such a typology formulated almost four decades ago as part of an attempt to examine the role of non-formal education in attacking rural poverty, shown in Table 2.5, still remains relevant.

The skill needs of learners from rural settings – children in primary schools, adults in literacy workshops and youth pursuing non-formal education – are such that they can

Table 2.4 Skill Needs in Rural Areas – A Typology

Area of Skills and Capacities	Learning Needs
Basic tools of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills of literacy, numeracy, communication and problem solving, to enable one to read, write, communicate through speech and writing and carrying out simple arithmetical operations as required in day to day living.
Quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge about the immediate physical and social environment what things are and how they work. • Knowledge and skills relating to health, hygiene, housing, family life, sanitation, nutrition.
Productivity skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technological, managerial, entrepreneurial skills as would help in increasing productivity. • Intelligent and sustainable resource generation and utilisation skills. • Understanding of poverty – environment relationships. • Understanding/skills with respect to effective use of basic services. • Creatively responding to income earning opportunities. • Opportunities to participate in work situations.
Organisation, attitudes and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being aware of one's rights as a human being, as a child, as a woman. • Understanding of how civic life is organised. • Skills of discussion, cooperative decision making for effective participation in community life and developmental activities. • Self-esteem, confidence, courage and ability to take positive decision, actions, initiatives concerning their own lives.

Source: UNESCO-PROAP: *Basic Education for Empowerment of the Poor, 1998, p.92.*

Table 2.5 Illustrative Rural Occupational Categories and Their Skill Needs

Groups	Type of Persons
Persons directly engaged in agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial farmers • Small subsistence and semi-subsistence farm families • Landless farm workers
Persons engaged in off-farm commercial activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retailers and wholesalers of farm supplies and equipment, consumer goods and other items • Suppliers of repair and maintenance services • Processors, store-keepers and shippers of agricultural commodities • Suppliers of banking and credit services • Construction and other artisans • Suppliers of general transport services • Small manufacturers
General services personnel: rural administrators, planners and technical experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public administrators, broad-gauged analysts and planners at sub-national levels • Managers of cooperatives and other farm associations • Managers, planners, technicians and trainers of specific public services (e.g. agriculture, transport, irrigation, health, small industry, education, family services, local government) • Managers and other personnel of credit services

Types of learning needs at various levels of sophistication and specialisation

- Farm planning and management, rational decision-making, record-keeping and revenue computations; use of credit
- Application of new inputs, varieties, improved farm practices
- Storage, processing and food preservation
- Supplementary skills for farm maintenance and improvement, and sideline jobs for extra-income
- Knowledge of government services, policies, programmes, and targets
- Knowledge and skills for family improvement (e.g. health, nutrition, home economics, child care, family planning)
- Civic skills (e.g. knowledge of how cooperatives, local government, national government function)
- New and improved technical skills applicable to particular goods and services
- Quality control
- Technical knowledge of goods handled efficiently to advise customers on their use, maintenance, etc.
- Management skills (business planning, record-keeping and cost accounting, procurement and inventory control, market analysis and sales methods, customer-employee relations, knowledge of government services, regulations taxes, use of credit)
- General skills for administration, planning, implementation, information flows, promotional activities
- Technical and management skills applying to particular specialties
- Leadership skills for generating community enthusiasm and collective action, staff team work and support from higher echelons

Source: Philip Coombs and Manzoor Ahmed (1974): *Attacking Rural Poverty: How Non-Formal Education Can Help, Washington D.C.: World Bank and University of Baltimore Press, p.17.*

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

be effectively addressed only when the learners are made to “own” the programmes and actively participate in their own learning. But such participation cannot be ensured unless their learning and living needs are integrated not on just paper but more importantly in actual transactions. Typically, the learners from the rural poor may be more concerned about such matters as, for example, taking proper care of cattle, goat, sheep, testing soil and water for crops, raising new crops, keeping accounts of milk received and sold, understanding the calendar, making purchases for the family, reasons for frost, drought, rain, taking care of health, overcoming diseases, how to think, how not to be embarrassed in the presence of strangers, how not to be afraid of asking questions about things one does not know. The challenge is organising learning sequences around such actual life concerns and this can be met only when there is a shared perception of the core purposes of the programme among the learners, the learning mediators (teachers) and the general community (Khan and Chatterjee: 1997, p.17).

The critical skill and learning needs of rural areas are developing productivity and income-generation skills, overcoming low self-esteem, developing ability to take positive initiatives and actions on their own behalf, learning to work cooperatively, developing ability and confidence to make decisions concerning their own life, being aware of their fundamental rights and learning to exercise them. It is true that the principle of learner-centred, activity-based teaching applies to all good learning, but what is not generally appreciated is that its non-observance in practice hits hard not all but those who come from disadvantaged population groups.

Life skills

Besides general competencies (such as literacy, numeracy and reasoning skills imparted through basic general education) and production and vocational skills, another category described as life skills has come to the fore as important, especially for people in social and economic disadvantage, as the rural poor are. Life skills are important for functioning as a person and as a member of family, community and society effectively, and have a particular relevance for people struggling to overcome disadvantage and discrimination. Thus, it is with specific reference to

skill and learning needs of the rural poor – basic and life empowering skills, productivity skills and attitudes and values – that education and training interventions should be planned. It should, however, be noted that these learning and skill needs vary according to nature of the learners’ age-group, and motivations as shown in Box 2.3.

Learning contents

Several development ministries and departments are involved in the task of rural development like health, family welfare, rural and tribal development, youth services, child welfare in addition to education. The characteristics and the problems of the rural people and their skill needs are

Box 2.3 Overview of Life Skills and Life Skills-Based Education

The conceptual basis for most of the life skills work undertaken by the United Nations and its partners is the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) Skills for Health. Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. In particular, life skills are a group of psycho-social competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathise with others, and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner.

Skills for Health designates ten skills divided into three broad categories:

- Communication and interpersonal skills;
- Decision-making and critical thinking skills; and
- Coping and self-management skills.

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

- Interpersonal Communication Skills
- Negotiation/Refusal Skills
- Empathy Building
- Cooperation and Teamwork
- Advocacy Skills

Decision-Making and Critical Thinking Skills

- Decision-Making/Problem-Solving Skills
- Critical Thinking Skills

Coping and Self-Management Skills

- Skills for Increasing Personal Confidence and Abilities to Assume Control, Take Responsibility, Make a Difference, or Bring About Change
- Skills for Managing Feelings
- Skills for Managing Stress

Source: Life Skills-Based Education in South Asia, a Regional Overview Prepared for the South Asia Life Skills-Based Education Forum, October 2005, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia.

diverse and cut across the wide range of development services and programmes. A synergistic alliance on the part of all who are concerned with development and their concerted and coordinated action is essential for the various development services to converge on concerns related to rural development and poverty alleviation. In line with these evolving synergies, Table 2.6 presents illustrations of learning content in basic services for rural areas.

While most training programmes represent the demands of the formal economy and market, attention must be paid to the fact that a large percentage of people, particularly the young, eventually settle in the informal sector of the economy. This sector calls for a very specific type of skills and learning which training programmes will have to confront (Pieck: 2000).

The learning community

The rural communities require the entire gamut of edu-

cational and training services – early childhood care and development, quality primary education for all children, second chance basic education for adolescents, literacy and continuing education programmes for youths and adults, vocational skill development, and knowledge and information for improving the quality of life. This wide-ranging need cannot be met by piecemeal learning and skills development provisions. This is where the concept of the “learning community” assumes a special significance.

Broadly speaking, the term “learning community” refers to any community where knowledge is the primary factor of production instead of capital. It may also refer to the use a certain community gives to information. A learning community creates, shares and uses knowledge for the prosperity and well-being of its people. The essential characteristics of a learning community are enumerated below as proposed by Rosa Maria Torres (Torres: undated).

Table 2.6 Learning Content for Skill Development in Basic Services

Area of Skills and Capacities / Major Area	Learning Needs / Content
Health and Hygiene	Basic awareness of facts, practices and rules of good health, common diseases, overcoming illness, cultivating good personal health habits, being aware about consequences of bad practices on general health of the community around, being aware of and effective utilisation of health services available, generating demand for access to better health services, skills of healthful living, use of traditional medicines.
Nutrition and Food	Basic awareness about balanced food and caloric intake. Learning to spend wisely on food, valuing nutritional value of food than traditional food habits, customs where they conflict with nutritional requirements, skills in preparing balanced diet, being aware of diseases caused by malnutrition and being able to take preventive care, being aware of and effective use of nutritional services available, demanding access to better nutritional support.
Farming	Being aware of modern techniques of farming, use of fertilisers to increase farm productivity and adopting new techniques, saving devices, utilising opportunities to acquire and enhance productive skills, being aware of and effective use of basic services in agriculture, cooperative functioning towards more effective implementation of new techniques.
Drinking Water and Sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being aware about the importance of clean, safe drinking water and water-borne diseases, acquiring knowledge and skills of making water safe for drinking, keeping the sources of drinking water clean. • Being aware of the environmental hazards to community and personal hygiene of waste accumulation, scientific methods of waste disposal and waste recycling.
Cooperatives and Credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being aware of what trade practices exist in the community and outside, learning to confidently participate in the trade and commerce of the community, allowing oneself not to be exploited by the middlemen, knowledge of money system, income-generating/trade and employment opportunities, enhancing productivity skills to earn and consume wisely, use of cooperatives and credit, cultivating savings habit. • Awareness about the consequences of large family size on quality of life aspects – health, nutrition, food and poverty. Gender equity, awareness and effective use of family planning and welfare services.
Family Welfare and Living In The Community	Being aware of how and who takes decision on matters that affect the life of the community, civic and social awareness. Participation in decision-making processes involving community life. Learning to live and work cooperatively. Knowledge and understanding of how others live, the dynamics of the community, interpersonal relations, understanding one's rights. Learning to exercise rights and freedom.

Source: UNESCO-PROAP (1998), pp.78-79.

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

- Is area-based and community-based.
- Assumes that all human communities possess learning resources, agents, institutions and networks that need to be identified, valued, developed and articulated so as to ensure the learning needs of all in the community are met.
- Sees state/government as having a key supporting role, and a specific compensatory role vis-à-vis the disadvantaged communities.
- Adopts a broad vision of education and puts learning at the centre, embracing all education, training and learning environments.
- Places great value and emphasis on inter-generational and peer learning. In particular, it highlights the educational potential of young people and of the elderly.
- Is based on the premise of solidarity, cooperation and alliances between home and school, in-school and out-of-school education, and public and private institutions.
- Accepts and encourages diversity, acknowledging that each community has its specific resources, needs and realities, and thus the need for community participation and ownership.
- Seeks to demonstrate the importance of developing learning systems generated and developed at the local level, based on cooperation and synergy of efforts.
- Focuses on groups and institutions, relationships and networks rather than on isolated individuals.
- Proposes a bottom-up, inside-out model of educational development and change that challenges the conventional "international cooperation for development" model.

A learning community cannot become a reality unless learning itself becomes continuous and lifelong. In order for this to happen, it is essential to develop a framework (matrix) containing education, training and skills development programmes catering to all the stages in the educational journey of a learner and providing learning opportunities for the entire community. What needs to be provided are vibrant, active continuing quality education and skills development activities relevant to the needs of the rural people which enable them to pass through the phases of basic literacy and post-literacy education and

satisfy their demand for further learning and for seeking gainful employment (INRULED: 2001). Such a programme would also be a platform for rural transformation by creating a social environment in which knowledge and information would guide people's behaviour.

What do the concepts of lifelong learning and the goal of a learning community mean? Within the broad context of the learning society, it means providing every individual with the conditions for continuous learning for improving his/her lot. Depending upon where one is positioned in the ladder of learning, it may mean different things to different individuals. For non-literates, it would mean functional literacy combined with a series of learning programmes that would help them improve awareness, capability, skills, confidence and participation in development. For a farmer, it would mean the acquisition of farming and farm management techniques. For a semi-literate rural woman who has been "pushed out" at the primary education stage, it may mean the facility to learn a new skill that would enable her to enhance the level of living of her family or it may mean attending a short-term course on gender equity which would give her confidence to speak out against injustice (INRULED: *ibid.*).

It goes without saying that quality learning in rural areas takes place in a social and environmental context very different from what is encountered in urban and sub-urban areas. Rural practitioners often have few organisations to partner with the daunting transportation hurdles to overcome. Rural communities often have deeply rooted complex social structures which can either support or hinder learning. "Rural communities have many similar challenges as their urban counterparts, but they are uniquely faced with maintaining a balance between a rural environment and development pressures, providing a "stay option" for children when they reach maturity, and addressing a feeling of neglect that can come from being on the periphery of most political and economic activity" (Mihalynuk and Seifer: 2007). At the same time, rural communities are characterised by enormous strengths, including social connectedness and cohesiveness that often translate into a wonderful sense of community and camaraderie among their residents.

2.4 Bridging Skills, Jobs and Rural Poverty Reduction

Sustainable livelihood approach (SLA)

The discussion in the preceding pages has shown that rural households attempt to adopt livelihood strategies that respond to varying combinations of human, social, natural, physical and financial capital that they face. The blend of assets – land, skills and education, social networks, and access to other resources, such as water, social services, infrastructure, credit, or cash from remittances – as well as risks and vulnerabilities to which households are exposed are key elements in the strategies they can adopt. It has also been argued that skills and capacities of people, specific and generic, and education and training provisions as well as other non-formal and informal means of acquiring skills and capacities constitute a critical asset for rural transformation. They are a critical asset for improving livelihood outcomes for rural poor and transforming rural areas as a part of national development improving life and livelihood of all people, rural and urban. Households require a range of assets to achieve positive livelihood outcomes; no single category of assets on its own is sufficient to yield the many and varied outcomes that people seek. This is particularly true of poor households, whose access to any given category of assets tends to be limited.

The principal question that arises from the chain of logic presented is – what is the bridge that connects the different forms of assets, skills and capacities of people being one of them, so that a coordinated and integrated blend of the various assets can be brought to bear on the endeavour of fighting rural poverty and thus contributing to rural transformation? It is argued below that the sustainable livelihood approach (SLA) can be the bridge in terms of clarifying concepts and providing practical guidelines.

The concept of SLA had first appeared in literature in the 1980s. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) made “sustainable livelihoods approach” a core principle of its strategy for pro-poor policy-making in its 1997 White Paper on international Development (DFID: 1997). (Initially the plural “livelihoods” was used by DFID, later both the singular and the plural forms came to be used depending on the context).

SLA was in tune with wider shifts in approaches to development through the 1980s and 1990s towards a focus on human-wellbeing and sustainability rather than only economic growth. Chambers and Conway, in their 1992 research on “sustainable livelihoods”, expressed the multi-faceted nature and complex set of relationships with SLA, with clarity (Chambers and Conway: 1992).

Among international agencies, besides DFID, IFAD and the Asian Development Bank have attempted to explore and elaborate the conceptual aspects and practical implication of SLA. ILO emphasised SLA in the context of emergencies and environmental sustainability, rather than a general approach for dealing with poverty and vulnerability of poor people. From the point of view of ILO’s concern about linking jobs and fighting poverty, it appears that ILO could have accorded SLA a more central place in its work. References were few in World Bank agriculture and rural development materials on the sustainable livelihood approach.

DFID, in articulating its SLA approach, emphasised understanding the vulnerabilities of poor people and the organisational and institutional environment within which poor people attempted to make use of assets of different types in working out a livelihood strategy for themselves. Five types of asset were identified: human capital, social capital or support derived from belonging to social groups, natural or ecological capital, physical capital, and financial capital. SLA’s aim was seen to show the complex range of assets and activities on which people depend for their livelihoods, and to recognise the importance to poor people of assets which they do not own. SLA could provide a framework for considering the whole range of policy issues relevant to the poor, access to health and education as well as to finance, markets, and personal security. Sustainability and continuity of change brought about could be promoted through participatory approach, being responsive to changing circumstances, and working at multiple levels from national to local, in partnership with public and private sector (Norton and Foster: 2000).

Central to the idea of SLA is the range of assets that poor people can or should be able to draw on and bring to bear on their own effort to change their condition. An elaboration of the five types of assets, developed by DFID, is shown in Figure 2.3 below. Skills, knowledge and ability

Chapter 2

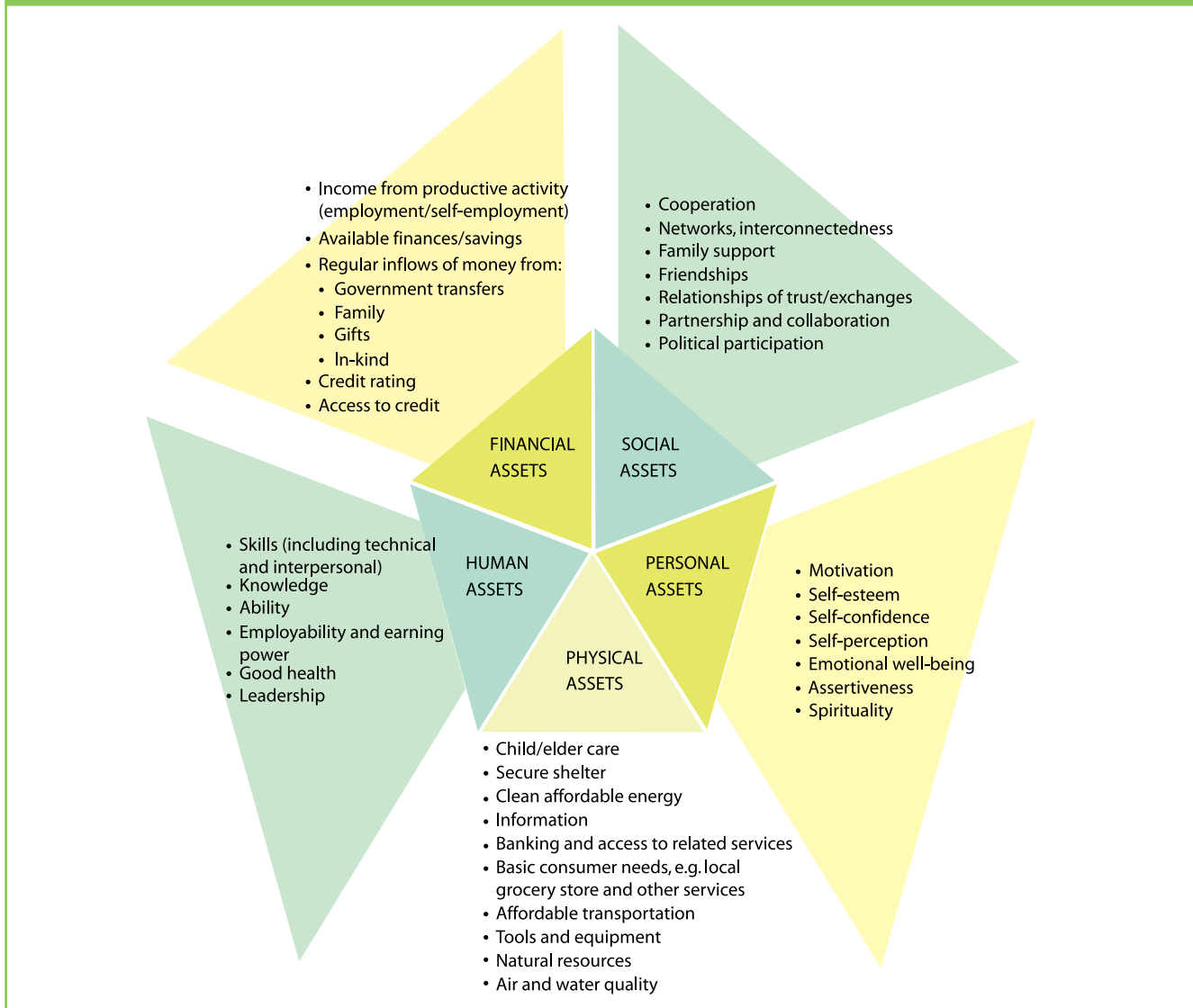
Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

are highlighted under the human capital block. However, although not specifically mentioned, knowledge, skills and information are important in relation to the other blocks for these assets to be put to use effectively. More importantly, an integrated approach is necessary in making the different assets contribute to the common objectives of turning knowledge and skills into productive work, and productive work improving people's lives.

Following the lead of DFID, other research and operational academic organisations have engaged in examining and clarifying various aspects of SLA. Various articulations of

the concept and practice of SLA have re-affirmed its value as a framework that helps in understanding the complexities of poverty and a set of principles to guide action to address and overcome poverty. One lucid formulation by the Women and Economic Development Consortium in Canada argues that the strength of the SLA framework is that it places the rural poor at the centre of a web of inter-related influences that affect how these people create a livelihood for themselves by using livelihood assets that they can access. A schematic applying system logic attempts to show the main components of SLA and how they are linked. The links are not linear and is intended to underscore the

Figure 2.3 The Five Assets Building Block



Source: J. Murray and M. Ferguson (2001): "Women in Transition out of Poverty", Toronto, Women and Economic Development Consortium, p.17.

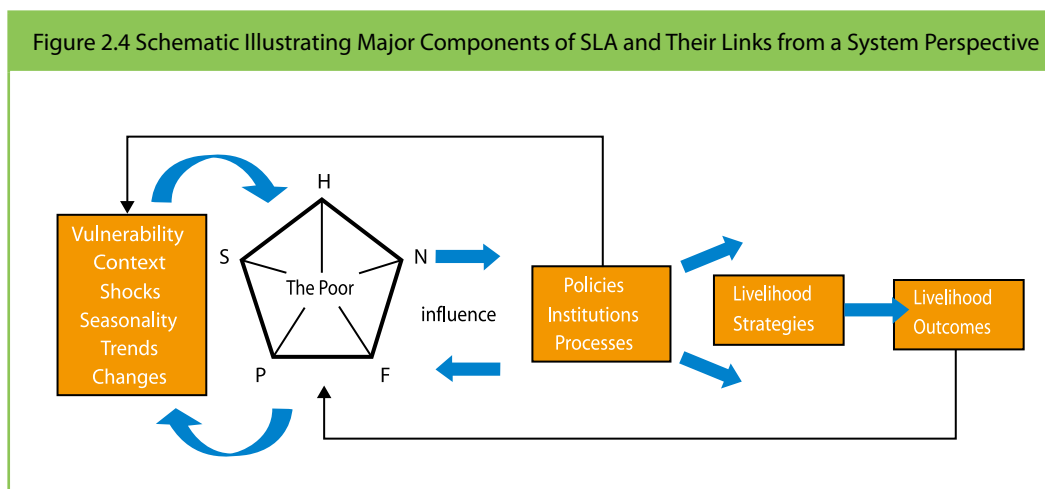
many factors that affect livelihoods, the way they interact and their relative importance within a particular setting. The schematic points to the systemic interaction between socio-economic context of the poor, represented by the rectangle on the left, five kinds of actual and potential livelihood assets (shown by the pentagon and mentioned above), policies, processes and institutions for harnessing the assets (the second rectangle), specific livelihood strategies in a particular setting (the next rectangle) and finally the livelihood outcomes that change life of the rural poor and their communities (see Figure 2.4). The links among the components, it has to be emphasised, are not necessarily linear and strictly sequential, as the schematic may suggest.

Livelihood strategies are obviously aimed at achieving livelihood outcomes, thus focusing on the most critical concern and anxiety of poor people – a guarantee of food and shelter, basic services such as education for children and health care, and safety and security of life and livelihood. SLA requires thinking out of the box, inviting stakeholders to look at contexts and relationships which can hold up or stimulate appropriate solutions. SLA encourages a shift away from the focus on project inputs and outputs and the assumed mechanical links between them. It stresses the understanding of how institutions work and linking the micro to the macro and the formal to the informal. It requires policy appraisal and policy formulation that moves from universal prescriptions to context-specific approaches that allow alternative, local perspectives to shape the policy (Serrat: 2008).

Sustainable livelihood approach has been under discussion in development literature for over two decades, adopted as a key rural poverty reduction strategy by DFID over a decade ago.

In 2002 and 2003, IFAD organised a series of workshops to encourage IFAD staff and consultants to reflect on their experience in development work and on ways for them to implement the Strategic Framework for IFAD 2002-2006. These workshops used the sustainable livelihoods approach as a means of helping participants to analyse what they already did and ways in which they, and IFAD, could enhance their positive impacts on the livelihoods of the poor. Sustainable livelihoods approach was used as a “thematic guide” for these workshops. Participants, after “recreating” the SLA framework, based on their own experience, then used it to organise and rationalise their experiences in development and clarify linkages that had not always been obvious to them before. The SLA framework proved to be a relatively intuitive, but useful tool to work with (IFAD: An IFAD Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, Policy conclusions: undated).

The IFAD workshops led to the conclusion that the “horizontal” arrangement of the original DFID framework suggests a sequential order and linearity in connections between the different elements in the framework which did not reflect fully the real world. A circular rearranging of the framework could show the greater salience of a component in a particular situation or at a specific time and its



Source: Murray, Janet and Mary Ferguson: (2001): *Women in Transition Out of Poverty*. Toronto: Women and Economic Development Consortium. January. <http://www.cdnwomen.org/eng/3/3h.asp>

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

relationships with other components. It was also suggested that SLA framework may have underplayed the agency of the poor and could place them at the centre, which could be done in a circular rearrangement (IFAD: *ibid.*). It is of course more than a question of graphic representation of the concept, but thinking about it “laterally”, recognising the limitations of any schematic model.

Asian Development Bank supported a number of sustainable livelihood projects, such as the Tonle Sap Sustainable Livelihoods Project in Cambodia and a recent brief was prepared on the subject (Smith: 2005 and Serrat: 2008).

The resonance of SLA as a concept with the overarching development agenda of poverty reduction, green development, food security and promoting human rights and human dignity has been noted. But major international development agencies have given scant attention to SLA. Organisations, such as FAO and ILO which, one would think, should find it appealing, have not picked it up as a major part of their rural development and rural poverty reduction

strategy (see Box 2.4). Elements of it can be found in the work of various agencies, but is not the rationale for SLA that a comprehensive and integrated approach has to be pursued, rather than piecemeal actions?

Arguably, the developing countries themselves have not responded with great enthusiasm to SLA. A review of literature shows very few instances of adopting the SLA as a major initiative in many countries. Why is this so is a vital question, especially if the proposition is put forward that SLA can be a way of addressing the issue of building the bridge between skills, jobs and poverty reduction.

The protagonists of SLA did not offer it as a panacea. Nor can the obstacles and constraints to eliminating large scale rural poverty in the world, with their structural and historical roots, can be so underestimated that the articulation of a conceptual framework would show the road to success. All that can be said that articulation of the relevant concepts and strategies would be the first steps towards progress in the right direction. Moreover, not being able to do so

Box 2.4 The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach – ADB Formulation

The sustainable livelihoods approach is a way of thinking about the objectives, scope, and priorities for development activities. It is based on evolving thinking about the way the poor and vulnerable live their lives and the importance of policies and institutions. It helps formulate development activities that are:

- People-centred
- Responsive and participatory
- Multilevel
- Conducted in partnership with the public and private sectors
- Dynamic
- Sustainable

The sustainable livelihoods approach facilitates the identification of practical priorities for actions that are based on the views and interests of those concerned but they are not a panacea. It does not replace other tools, such as participatory development, sector-wide approaches, or integrated rural development. However, it makes the connection between people and the overall enabling environment that influences the outcomes of livelihood strategies. It brings attention to bear on the inherent potential of people in terms of their skills, social networks, and access to physical and financial resources, and ability to influence core institutions.

Types of Assets

The sustainable livelihoods framework helps to organise the factors that constrain or enhance livelihood opportunities and shows how they relate to one another. A central notion is that different households have different access livelihood assets, which the sustainable livelihood approach aims to expand. The livelihood assets, which the poor must often make trade-offs and choices about, comprise:

- **Human capital**, e.g., health, nutrition, education, knowledge and skills, capacity to work, capacity to adapt
- **Social capital**, e.g., networks and connections (patronage, neighbourhoods, kinship), relations of trust and mutual understanding and support, formal and informal groups, shared values and behaviours, common rules and sanctions, collective representation, mechanisms for participation in decision-making, leadership
- **Natural capital**, e.g., land and produce, water and aquatic resources, trees and forest products, wildlife, wild foods and fibres, biodiversity, environmental services
- **Physical capital**, e.g., infrastructure (transport, roads, vehicles, secure shelter and buildings, water supply and sanitation, energy, communications), tools and technology (tools and equipment for production, seed, fertiliser, pesticides, traditional technology)
- **Financial capital**, e.g., savings, credit and debt (formal, informal), remittances, pensions, wages

Source: Olivier Serrat (2008): *Sustainable Livelihoods Approach*, Asian Development Bank, November 2008.

would trap countries and their international partners in a circle without an escape.

Indeed the work, so far limited, to develop an understanding of the concept itself and its application have pointed at the complexities. Major difficulties, commensurate with the multidimensional manifestations of the causes and consequences of poverty, arise in applying SLA and in understanding and addressing the multifaceted vulnerabilities of the rural poor. The complexities, as mentioned, are structural and historical, such as, negative macroeconomic trends or a conflict situation, limitations to expanding and generating capital assets, dealing with rural power structure and governance deficits, clash of interests among groups of poor themselves, and inequality rooted in history and social norms that undermines people's confidence, hope and self esteem and confidence (Serrat: 2008).

Overall, the biggest questions relate to the implications of the SL approach for development planning and project development rather than to any conceptual questions. Learning processes are central to the SL approach. Changes over time in the opportunities and constraints influencing the livelihood options of the poor need to be mapped out and course corrections incorporated. As observed in respect of projects in Andhra and Orissa in India, iterative approaches to project design and implementation can only work if funding agencies (DFID and the Indian Government) and implementing partners (Orissa and Andhra Pradesh governments) can cope with the demands of greater flexibility (Turton: 2000, p.24).

It is not surprising that SLA has not spread or has not evoked great enthusiasm, but is there an alternative to grabbing the bull by the horns? Difficulties and complexities are not good enough reasons to neglect or ignore the relevance of the idea, considering the high stake in well-being, rights and dignity of a large part of humanity.

It is necessary to resuscitate SLA, building on at least a decade of development of ideas and practices and give it a new lease of life, elaborating and reformulating it, where necessary, in the context of the new urgency to combat rural poverty and promote rural transformation.

The implications of SLA, especially skills development and

capacity building of rural people with sustainable livelihoods as the defining criteria of relevance, in respect of organisations and, responsibilities for achieving results will be considered in chapter 5. Two critical areas that must be examined in applying SLA to transformative changes in rural areas – food security and food production and building the green future – are discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

Continuing with issues of the links between skills and capacities and lifting rural people from poverty, the special characteristics of the youth, the gender dimension and the question of movement of people in search of work from rural areas are discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

2.5 Cross-Cutting Concerns – Youth, Gender and Migration

Youth – an often neglected agenda

Skills and jobs for young people, especially in the rural areas of developing countries, are a challenge for which few countries appear to be well-prepared or have developed workable concepts and tools to address it. As a group, the number of 15-24 year-olds is expected to rise by 10 percent between now and 2050 in developing countries, but in the LDCs where the vast majority of the population is rural, the number will double in the same period. As this age cohort advances through life, the working-age population (15-64 year-olds) will rise from approximately 450 million today to 1.1 billion in the 50 LDCs. In 2030, still almost 60 percent of them are expected to be in rural areas. About 130 million young people in developing countries (15-24 years) are classified as 'illiterate' with women representing 59 percent (UNESCO: 2008). The high number of illiterate youth and those with low schooling are mostly living in rural areas and are badly prepared for productive work (Atchoarena and Gasperini: 2003). Addressing the challenge of rural youth employment today is necessary to improve prospects for decent work for future generations (ILO: 2008, p.30).

Who are rural youth?

Age and location are the two key defining characteristics of rural youth. The United Nations defines youth as individuals aged between 15 and 24. The 2007 World Development

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

Report about “the next generation” extends the age-range downward to 12. Distinguishing between who is rural and urban is complex, as we have seen, particularly for young people who have a greater tendency to be migrants than older people (World Bank: 2006).

With a few exceptions (such as South Africa), youth as a group is not particularly a policy priority of most governments in developing countries. Ministries of Youth are generally very poorly resourced and are usually bracketed with other responsibilities, such as, culture, sports and education. Youth, especially in rural areas, do not constitute an organised and vocal constituency with the economic and social clout and lobbying power (Bennell: 2007, p.3).

As with the rural population as a whole, rural youth are engaged in a diverse range of productive activities, both agricultural and non-agricultural. Statistics are inadequate, but the proportions of rural youth engaged in wage and self-employment in both these main areas of activity varies considerably across countries.

The livelihood assets for them can be broken down into four main types: political and social, physical and natural, human, and financial. A number of livelihood improvement interventions supported by IFAD, it was reported, were related to interventions that improved physical and natural and financial assets as well as job-related human capital through skills training (Bennell: 2007, p.7).

Human capital – skills development for youth

The greatest contribution to improving the future employment and livelihood prospects of disadvantaged children and youth in rural areas, as in urban areas, is to make sure that they stay in school and become at least functionally literate and numerate. Expanding quality education opportunities for girls is another priority. Good quality post-school skills training (both pre-employment and job-related) can be built only on the foundation of good basic general education and should follow it, but remains very limited in most rural areas. Many countries have plans to establish or expand existing networks of rural training institutions, but are stymied by resource scarcity. At the same time, it has been found from evaluations that the cost-effectiveness of most youth-related rural training which exist now is low (see Middleton *et al.*: 1993 and Bennell: 1999).

In short:

Typically, training services are fragmented and no coherent policy framework exists, which provides the basis for a pro-poor rural training system. There are some notable exceptions, mainly in South America (for example, the countrywide rural training and business support organisation, SENAR, in Brazil). The key challenges in providing high quality training and extension services for rural youth are low educational levels/poor learning outcomes, scattered populations, low effective demand (from both the self-employed and employers), and limited scope for cost-recovery (Bennell: 2007, p.8).

Engendering skills and jobs

At the heart of reducing unemployment and eradicating absolute poverty in the developing countries lies the economic empowerment of women who are the majority of population and continue to be disadvantaged for historical and contemporary reasons. Girls and women are often in “double jeopardy”, because they are already part of the poor and otherwise disadvantaged groups of society along with the disadvantaged males, and because they are females. The national agenda for development cannot succeed unless significant positive changes in many different ways can be brought to the ordinary lives of women, particularly for those in rural areas.

Life is very different for women and men in rural areas of the developing countries, with women usually enjoying far fewer rights and resources. These inequalities limit women’s abilities, opportunities, and achievements. Research evidence shows that in rural areas of the developing countries, girls’ and women’s access to the existing development initiatives is constrained by (i) social and cultural bias; (ii) inadequate technological infrastructure; (iii) women’s lower education levels (especially in science and technology education) and fear of or lack of interest in technology; and (iv) women’s lack of disposable income to purchase modern farming tools and equipments and other essential quality of life improving services, such as education, health, sanitation and hygiene (IFAD: undated and Prakash: 2003).

What is true for women in the developing countries is equally true for the women of developed countries.

The rural areas of the European Union are strikingly varied in terms of social and economic structure, geography and culture. Rural women too are not a homogeneous group. They have different roles and occupations, on farms and in family businesses, in employment and in community activities. Their needs and interests differ too, particularly from one age group to another, and depending on the size and composition of their family and age of their children. The economic and social changes that rural areas are undergoing do not affect all women in the same way: offering opportunities to some, to others they bring difficult challenges (European Commission: 2000).

Rural girls and women do not have sufficient access to vocational training and skills development services and their overall low enrolment in education constricts seriously their prospects for better paying wage employment and occupational skill training. Poor women are not participating in equal numbers as males in formal and informal TVET and continue to be disadvantaged, because of their low level of schooling and functional literacy skills, in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States and in South and West Asia. Any training and youth and adult education activity faces the challenge of adjusting and adapting training methods, curricula and pedagogy to the needs of the target population. The challenges are multiplied many-fold when the participants are poor, illiterate, have limited schooling, speak a minority language, and, on top of all these, female with burdens of inescapable household chores and generally possessing low self-confidence and self-esteem.

Training projects and programmes for the poor have generally replicated the policies and practices of training for the formal sector, which often have not worked effectively. Many forms of training involve passive or rote learning and little practical engagement and experimentation (Palmer: 2007). They have been a largely “top down” supply driven process of skills transfer which has ignored the knowledge and skills of the poor, especially poor women, whose particular circumstances and needs are not the same for men.

Young women and girls are often directed towards

stereotyped training and occupations (Bennell: 1999 and Mayoux: 2005). Women continue to be under-represented in formal business training programmes and longer term career development opportunities. Poor and vulnerable women are usually more interested in skills training that meet their immediate “practical gender needs” as opposed to capacity building that may help tackle the underlying causes of female subordination. Women, therefore, are often concentrated in handicrafts, basic food processing and sale which are traditionally considered to be women’s domain. As a result, these sectors are often saturated, and do not fulfil standards of decent work and production quality standards and yield low returns (The World Bank, FAO, IFAD: 2008 and Hartl: 2009, p.4).

For women in particular, overcoming economic vulnerability embraces a much wider set of abilities than just conventional technical and managerial competency. These include basic literacy and numeracy, social and gender awareness and life skills. It is generally accepted that enterprise development and income-generating projects require a more complex combination of capacities with heavier emphasis on social and management skills than narrowly defined technical competencies (Bennell: 1999, p.11).

Traditionally male-dominated artisan training courses (plumbing, metalwork, carpentry etc.) have predominated in TVET in most countries. Training for women is often offered in a narrow range of traditionally female-dominated activities. Training in social and business skills has also been fairly limited, particularly for women (Mayoux: 2005).

In rural societies, women are the primary caregivers, while they are also compelled to perform a large part of the agricultural work. Their work days are long and hard, but despite their major contribution to food production, to survival and well-being of their families, and to the rural economy as a whole, women’s economic roles remain largely invisible and unrecognised. Some of the inequalities that women face in agriculture are shown in Box 2.5.

A recent study analysing gender gaps in rural wages from 13 countries from Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America (Fontana and Paciello: 2009) found that in almost all cases, women’s hourly wages ranged between 50 and

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

Box 2.5 Gender Inequalities in Agriculture – Some Examples

- Men's landholdings average almost three times the size of women's landholdings (globally).
- Fertiliser is more intensively applied on men's plots and is often sold in quantities too large for poor women to buy.
- An analysis of credit schemes in five African countries found that women received less than one-tenth of the credit that was received by men smallholders.
- In most developing countries, rural women's triple responsibilities – farm work, household chores and earning cash – often add up to a 16-hour work day, much longer than their male counterparts. However, women continue to lack access to important infrastructure services and appropriate technologies to ease their work loads.
- Women-owned businesses face many more constraints and receive far fewer services and support than those owned by men. In Uganda, women's enterprises face substantially higher barriers to entry than men's, although those that exist are generally at least as productive and efficient as men's in terms of value added per worker.
- In Guatemala, women hold only 3 percent of snow pea production contracts but contribute more than one-third of total field and virtually all processing.

Source: World Bank, FAO and IFAD: 2008, p.61.

100 percent of men's. This appears to be the result of disadvantages at the household and social levels, which result in fewer, lower skilled, less stable or less rewarding employment opportunities for women. Girls, as noted, also have less access to education and skills development opportunities, particularly beyond primary schooling (IFAD: 2011, p.61).

Women's poverty is largely a function of who has control over assets (including financial assets) and how decisions are made within the household. The above survey also showed that rural women have fewer critical assets (especially land), or less secure access and control over them. They also have less access to education, health care and financial services. In many rural areas, women raise relatively secure access and control over certain types of livestock and take care of them, yet they may not have control over the income generated through the livestock.

Rural women are less represented than men in governance processes and in rural organisations, particularly in leadership roles – sometimes, their attempt to participate expose women to social backlash or even violence. This lack of representation contributes to the fact that the voices are not attended well at global levels. In many countries, rural women face obstacles to migrating or from

accessing gainful and rewarding employment due to a variety of ways – prevailing male-dominated social norms, low access to assets, lack of education and lack of time and energy being burdened by household responsibilities, not shared by male members of the family (IFAD: 2011, p.46). A critical factor of risk and vulnerability for women and girls is associated with early marriage and a high total fertility rate, which is a major factor in preventing access to education and better wage employment.

Lower levels of gender inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean are linked to the structural economic changes that have brought women into employment, and to a long history of policy measures designed to equalise access to education and other services (Fontana and Paciello: *ibid.*). Nevertheless, although Latin American countries are leading the way in establishing women's land rights (Quan: 2006), gender inequalities in asset distribution are very prominent here too – for example, women comprise only between 11 and 27 percent of all landowners across the region (World Bank: 2007).

The broad message from these findings is that achieving gender equality requires challenging and changing many of the existing social institutions and their norms in order to address interlocking deprivations which result in poverty for rural women and more general poverty. There are many cases where governments have taken important initiatives to change norms and institutions contributing to poverty through gender inequalities. The overarching concern is to make these initiatives work, given that the obstacles and constraints are often daunting.

A related concern is that at the local level the obstacles to change manifests in many specific forms and the gender norms tend to change slowly (Quisumbing and Pandolfelli: 2010), despite progressive policies. Change at this level occurs usually as a combination of women's economic empowerment; women's awareness of their rights as individuals and citizens, better access to education and skills development, and capacity building in general for women and women's organisations all together can propel the forces of change in every community and every locality.

The argument has been made with strong justification in many developing countries that gender discrimination in

markets has led to a “feminisation of bad jobs” in agriculture and beyond (Jütting and Morrisson: 2009). Reversing this trend to the extent it prevails, calls for macro-level policy and local level actions both in building skills and capacities for productive and gainful work and creating the enabling environment for this to happen.

Rural out-migration and skills development

The acceleration of migration of people out of rural areas of developing countries into urban areas is a defining feature of demographic, economic and social change with profound implications for national development, poverty reduction and rural transformation. Migration is a pervasive feature of economic development. Temporary or permanent mobility of people is a routine part of agricultural activity in many countries. Migration clearly has great impacts on individuals, households and regions within countries and among countries. The pervasive and growing phenomenon of migration, temporary and longer term, within countries and among countries and the large one-way flow out of rural areas merit better understanding of motivations and impacts, costs and returns, winners and losers and how this phenomenon can be turned into a positive force of change to promote rural transformation.

It is estimated that there are 200 million temporary and seasonal migrants in India, and 120 million internal migrants within China. Most migration, and especially mobility of the poor, takes place within and between neighbouring developing countries. For example, several African countries simultaneously serve as both source and hosts to large number of migrants (Lucas: 2005b). Generally within countries, movement from rural to urban areas far outweigh mobility across borders, but the latter is a significant factor in some regions, such as West Africa and South-East Asia. Many countries in South-East Asia rely on cheap migrant from across their borders. International migration from Vietnam between 1994 and 1999 was 300,000; internal migrants in Vietnam over the same period were 4.3 million. Urbanisation is fed by large volumes of rural-urban migration within countries as well as migration from rural hinterlands of large cities from neighbouring countries (IOM: 2003).

Movements of workers from less developed to more developed

countries have become a major and growing phenomenon. Demographic trends suggest that this will intensify for the next several decades with larger movements from South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe, West Asia and East and South-East Asia until a relative stability is established globally in demography and economic structures.

One hundred seventy-five million people – 2.9 percent of the world’s population – lived outside their country of birth at the beginning of this century. The number of migrants has more than doubled since 1975. Sixty percent of the world’s migrants currently reside in the more developed regions, with 40 percent living in the less developed regions (UN: 2002). South-north migration has important implications for development and poverty reduction in developing countries. But it is dwarfed by rural-urban migration within developing countries themselves or among neighbouring developing countries.

A significant proportion of international migrants, perhaps even the majority, migrate on a temporary basis, either for a number of years before returning home, or migrating to and from between countries each year (IOM: 2005). For instance, many Haitians go backwards and forwards between their home country and the Dominican Republic. Much south-south international migration, especially temporary, circular and seasonal migration, falls between the cracks, with migration unrecorded and migrant undocumented (see below). The primary impact of migration on sending regions is conceived in terms of remittances. Global remittances have grown steadily and have come to be a major source of international finance for developing regions. Systematic data exist only on the formal flows and thereby they are very much underestimated.

Micro-studies or village level studies have shown a spectrum of temporary migration including seasonal migration, circular migration and commuting. They are all forms of short-term migration. Seasonal migration refers to fixed-period contracts related to agricultural cycles. Circular migration refers to the process of migration followed by return to the original home area, either the same place or at least the same original region (Lucas: 2005). Commuting, on the other hand, has become a feature in many peri-urban areas and villages near cities and metropolises. Given

Chapter 2

Education, Training and Skills to Combat Rural Poverty

improved communications, roads and new economic opportunities arising from urbanisation, it is a growing phenomenon involving rural households (IOM: 2005). In India, temporary, circular, and seasonal migration, with people moving in response to opportunities for agricultural work, or for off-farm rural employment in construction and services, has long been part of poor people's lives (Rogaly: 2002).

Out-migration from rural areas, especially of youth who are relatively more educated and trained, changes significantly the rural landscape, brings noticeable social and demographic changes, and impacts the rural society in several ways. It results in the growth of small towns and medium-size cities with strong economic ties to the rural inhabitants who stay behind. Evidence suggests that in many countries, the economic activities generated by this new "rurality" provide the engine for the creation of rural non-agricultural employment, which brings certain aspects of the urban quality of life closer to rural inhabitants.

A wide range of variables associate with migration interacts and influences the cross-effects of workforce loss, financial transfers, investments, asset acquisitions and demographic changes. Research evidence demonstrates that in densely populated regions, out-migration may be a way to alleviate underemployment in agriculture and protect the livelihoods of the farmers who remain behind (IOM: 2005). Seasonal migration allows for a better deployment, since those who are underemployed during the agricultural lean season can find work in towns or in other areas, thereby increasing their incomes. On the other hand, more lasting out-migration can deprive rural areas of critical agricultural during farming seasons. To an extent, remittances can compensate for the negative impact of out-migration by allowing hired to replace the force lost. Out-migration can also cause the drain of skills and the loss of innovative community members from rural areas (IFAD: 2007).

There are different ways in which migrants contribute to the development of their place of origin. For instance, they can contribute through collective donations of time, business networks, investments and the transfer of skills, culture, knowledge and experience. Migrant networks can form a bridgehead for local products or for enterprises seeking to market goods and services. These networks can

also facilitate migrants' investments in their communities of origin. Through community cooperatives and other local associations, for instance, migrants often provide collective financial support, skills and knowledge to local development projects. Migrant groups have supported health clinics, built schools, repaired roads and more recently started investing in income and employment-generating projects in their home communities.

The impact of out-migration for women is different and often negative, unless mitigated by appropriate policies, as compared to men. It leads to increased feminisation of the agriculture force, as indicated above. In industries, when women work, they are subjected to weaker application of regulations of safety and working conditions and lower wages than in industries dominated by a male force. For instance, the women workers from Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the Philippines in the Gulf States have less control than male workers over how their remittances are used. Protection of women in relation to migration requires attention in several areas: the prevention of exploitative feminisation of agriculture; careful balancing of the protection of migrant female workers in the urban market without "pricing them out"; and long-term reforms of institutions and policies to secure a better gender balance in property rights (NEF: 2006).

Migration in search of work is an essential and important feature of both rural transformation and accelerating urbanisation. Orderly migration with well-considered policy measures and planned action at both the sending and receiving ends of migration can turn migration into a major positive force in reduction of poverty and rural transformation. These measures relate to building the human and personal capital assets – appropriate and effective education and training for new opportunities for gainful work both in the rural areas and outside within the country and abroad – and appropriate integrated development planning with a territorial perspective that links rural, peri-urban, and urban areas and smaller and larger hubs of growth. We return to these issues in later chapters.

The issues of applying operationally the sustainable livelihoods approach as the conceptual bridge for skills and capacity development and fighting rural poverty and promoting rural transformation is discussed in chapter 5.

Before that, two key concerns, which have been hinted at – skills and jobs for food security and the implications of the broader perspective of green development and rural transformation are discussed in chapters 3 and 4.



A capacity building workshop for women in Yunnan province, China.
Photo : © Li Jinsong.



Kids showing their paintings happily and proudly.
Photo : © UNICEF.



A visiting group from Bangladesh National Agricultural University in Taihang Mountain, Hebei province, China.
Photo : © Wang, Li.