

Knowledge Based Area Development

A Step Towards Community Self-Reliance

Dr M Alimullah Miyan

PhD (Manchester, UK), MBA (Indiana, USA)
Vice-Chancellor & Founder

IUBAT—International University of Business
Agriculture and Technology

Dhaka, Bangladesh

About IUBAT

Founded in 1991 by Dr M Alimullah Miyan, the IUBAT—International University of Business Agriculture and Technology in Dhaka, was the first non-government higher education institution in Bangladesh. With a focus upon the creation of a modern curriculum and infrastructure, the goal of IUBAT is to produce well-qualified candidates for the social and economic benefit of the nation. In the years since its inception, the University has forged a reputation for excellence and independent thought.

IUBAT has increased its core courses to include nine programs leading to Undergraduate degrees, an MBA program and two Diploma courses. The university has also invested in the study and promotion of English as the medium of instruction and communication, to enable students to prepare the skills necessary for today's global job market. IUBAT academic standards are accepted worldwide and it enjoys numerous links with other international universities and institutions, including visiting faculty and student transfers. Research and publications have been embedded in the academic culture of the University. The campus include modern facilities, laboratories and ample room for future expansion.

About the Author

Born in Comilla, Bangladesh, Dr M Alimullah Miyan is the Founder and Vice-Chancellor of the IUBAT— International University of Business Agriculture and Technology in Dhaka, the first non-government University in Bangladesh. After completing his Honours and Masters degrees at Dhaka University, he received his MBA at Indiana University, USA and his Doctorate at Manchester Business School ,UK.

Dr Miyan's distinguished and varied academic career has included the positions of Director and Professor at Dhaka University's Institute of Business Administration, and Founder Chairman of the Centre for Population Management and Research (CPMR), also at Dhaka University. Dr Miyan served as President of IUBAT upon its founding in 1991 before moving into his present role of Vice-Chancellor in 1994. Dr Miyan is the author of 51 academic articles and is author/co-author of 15 books on a wide range of topics related to the promotion of business, education, development, disaster management and climate change in Bangladesh. Dr Miyan is also involved in numerous research and consultancy projects, and he has participated in many conferences, seminars and workshops around the world.

Dr Miyan is currently a member of the Executive Committee of the International Society for Labor and Social Security Law in Geneva, Switzerland. He has studied in the United States, Great Britain, worked in Nigeria for a semester and has visited 40 countries as part of his academic activities and in pursuit of excellence for his beloved country.

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For information about activities and publications of IUBAT, contact :

Dr M Alimullah Miyan

Vice-Chancellor and Founder,

IUBAT—International University of Business Agriculture and Technology

4 Embankment Drive Road, Sector 10, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka 1230, Bangladesh

Tel: (88 02) 896 3523-27, 892 3469-70, 891 8412, 01714 014933/ Fax: (88 02) 892 2625

Email:info@iubat.edu | www.iubat.edu

www.iubat.edu/kbad

Knowledge Based Area Development

Bangladesh is endowed with people, but has very limited natural resources and financial capital. By developing the people into human capital, we can overcome some of the limitations of our physical capital and at the same time lay the basis of generating capital resources. Education and skill development are the route for creating human capital.

The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) is making continuous efforts to expand the educational base at primary, secondary, higher secondary and higher levels despite serious resource constraints. The targeted education of women with stipend and tuition waiver upto Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) level is an example of this effort. Although there is an uneven spread of education, most villages of Bangladesh and every urban and semi-urban ward/moholla have

many young men and women with higher secondary level educational qualification, if not higher. However, most of these people are educated in non-marketable skills or cannot pursue higher education due to opportunity/resource constraints, and are unemployed. A way out should be found to transform the investment in their education upto HSC level into productive direction through further investment in marketable knowledge and skills. This is the basic premise of the knowledge based development concept.

The area based development approach (rural and urban) is now going on under the umbrella of micro-credit by the government and non-government organizations (NGOs) targeted to ultra-poor and certain special segments of population. This

micro-credit has obviously contributed to alleviation of poverty to some extent but has not created prosperity for the recipients for many reasons. Most people continue to remain in the cycle of poverty and do not get an opportunity to break out of the poverty trap.

Knowledge Based Area Development (KBAD)

Under the KBAD, youngmen/women from each village/ward would be given an opportunity to go for higher education and acquire a degree / diploma / post-higher secondary certificate in marketable knowledge and skills. Such educated/trained persons would be expected to make efforts to pull up their family neighbors and the village community through access to knowledge for economic and social development. The achievement of the individual will also have a demonstration effect in the village and act as an eye opener

to other young people in the village. This can also bring hopes and dreams to the impoverished village community. The young men or women should have the minimum qualification (HSC, ie. 12 years of formal education) or equivalent to gain entry to an university level institution.

Financing would be a barrier to realization of the Knowledge Based Area Development concept. It is expected that the family of the individual would bear the cost of such education/training. However, the prevailing economic situation may not permit most families to bear the cost. The introduction of an Educational Loan Scheme can partially alleviate this problem. The GOB or/and NGOs should consider developing and operating such an Educational Loan Scheme. Eventually an Educational Bank (Shikkha Bank) may be established to facilitate access of the middle class and poor to market-oriented higher education for social mobility and as a step towards realizing the

vision of Knowledge Based Area Development approach. In this process, it may be possible to break away from the poverty cycle for many. The Education Bank could be the conduit to finance such persons on easy terms but on a repayable basis. This would be a radical approach to break the poverty cycle but this might also work as a catalyst as well as a role model.

The Education Bank can also finance educational institutions on easy terms for institution building but on repayable basis and also provide loans to teachers for higher education and training. The capital for Education Bank can be mobilized through grants and loans from development organizations, share subscription from individuals with expectation of modest return on capital, and philanthropic orientation. Development of human capital of the society would be the intrinsic return to donors, while financial return at a modest rate would be an additional return to

subscribers. The Education Bank is to be operated on business principles but targeted to investment in education, skill development and institution building activities relating to the same. The Education Bank can take the form of an educational cooperative.

IUBAT and KBAD

IUBAT has set out the long term vision of producing one technical graduate from each village/ward under the KBAD concept as a step towards community self reliance. To materialize this vision and to translate the concept into reality, IUBAT has special provision for supplementing the family resources of a student through scholarship, grant, fee waiver, deferred payment, campus job, student loan and the like. It is IUBAT policy to cater to the needs of all qualified students who aspire to higher professional education-regardless of the income level of his/her family through appropriate educational financing arrangements.

To institutionalize the educational financing IUBAT has established an educational cooperative in the form of IUBAT Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd. (IMCSL), with a share capital of 50 million taka divided in 500 thousand shares of Tk 100 each. One of the prime objectives of IMCSL is to mobilize funds for providing educational loan and scholarship to the members and their dependents to help them pursue higher education and professional training. IMCSL can be a prelude to establishment of an Educational Bank with a wider mandate. Anyone can contribute to the share capital by becoming a member and pave the way for educational loan.

IUBAT has also introduced the Career Development Loan scheme for students out of the IMCSL as well as the Financial Assistance Fund (FAF). Besides facilities of deferred fees payment have been introduced at IUBAT. Loans under FAF are free of any service charge, while loans from IMCSL or

deferred payment from the university carry service charges. Students after graduation and employment are required to repay the loan on easy monthly installments, consistent with the earning potential of the degree/diploma/certificate.

Through this process, IUBAT is already practising the concept of Knowledge Based Area Development to a limited extent. To realize the concept on a wider scale, it is proposed to pick up one young man or woman from each village / ward and give him / her a degree / diploma / certificate in marketable skills on the basis of self financing or in combination with deferred tuition payment facilities to be extended by IUBAT or Career Development Loan to be availed from IMCSL or from the FAF of IUBAT.

Extending KBAD

To make the concept operational, each educated member of

Bangladesh society, who made productive use of their education, is urged to motivate one HSC or equivalent passed young man or woman belonging to his/her place of birth (village/ward/moholla) to enroll in any of the degree/diploma /certificate programs of IUBAT. Professional educational programs presently available at IUBAT include subjects like business administration, computer science, engineering, agriculture, economics, hospitality and tourism and nursing.

Besides motivation to enroll, the referee should make an assessment of the individuals/ family's ability to pay the relevant university fees during the study period and recommend to the university authority for granting of a loan under the deferred payment facility of IUBAT or other alternatives for those who do not have the ability to pay the full fees during the study period. Referral may also be made to other universities or institutions

having professional educational programs with financial support facilities.

Furthermore, the concerned member of the society should assist in development of the referred student through encouragement and psychological support during his/her difficult educational transition period. IUBAT will send a copy of the result of the student every semester, until graduation, to the referee for information and continued motivational support. This will enable the individual to observe the outcome of his/her referral effort for development of an individual.

Through such enrollment motivation, facilitation, and encouragement during the study period each educated person will have an opportunity to repay his/her debt to the place of birth by facilitating knowledge/skill acquisition for area development and lay the seeds for community self reliance.

Concluding Remarks

The Knowledge Based Area Development concept is a bold attempt to prepare a section of the population to break out of poverty and enter into an era of prosperity.

This knowledge based development will require considerable financial capital resource as well as institutional infra-structure.

Active participation of every educated individual of the country in building a prosperous Bangladesh based on knowledge will give rise to a drive towards nation building. This will be worth emulating paving the way for development of the country as a prosperous self-respecting nation.

Implementation Progress To Date

KBAD concept has been put into operation in the educational philosophy of IUBAT, although this can be practiced by any tertiary educational institution having commitment to social mobility.

KBAD concept underscores the importance of tertiary education in economic and social development of a country through enhanced participation of qualified young men and women in professional university education.

The concept underscores the importance of coverage of entire geographical area of Bangladesh involving all social classes including the underserved and underprivileged categories. This orientation is reflected in the adoption of a particular policy by IUBAT to cater to needs of all qualified students who aspire for higher professional education regardless of the income level of his/her family through appropriate educational financing arrangements under any of the available windows or through creation of new windows. This essentially means arrangements for special provision for supplementing the family resources of a student through scholarship, grant, free studentship, fee waiver, rebate, deferred payment, campus job

special offer, student loan through IMCSL or service charge free student loan from Financial Assistant Fund (FAF). Over the past years, most of these instrumentalities have been used to enable increased access to higher education by qualified students. In geographical term, the goal is to produce one professional graduate of IUBAT from every Upazila, then from every Union and then from every Village and finally from each of the extended joint family. This would essentially mean attention to not only the number of students admitted in different programs of IUBAT but also their geographical and social spread.

Coverage

To permit wider coverage and to increase accessibility, IUBAT resorted to various mechanisms to give relief on standard fee charges through introducing rebate on the standard fees at different rates for different programs from 2006 and five programs are still continuing to enjoy rebate facilities. Besides, IUBAT introduced merit scholarship for entry as well as

throughout the study period for all categories of students seeking admission from different streams like HSC, Business Management, Vocational, Alim, Diplomas in Agriculture, Nursing, Textile, Forestry, Printing, Ceramics/Glass, Survey, Marine Engineering or Commerce, GCE and GED students as well as masters and bachelor degree holders for entry into the MBA program. As an illustration, information on the merit scholarship rates for HSC certificate holders in different semesters are shown below in tabular form. Similar merit scholarships were allowed for diploma, GCE and GED students as well as for master entry level students.

The above facilities for access, other special provisions mentioned above as well as customized financial assistance provisions have enabled wide participation of students in the educational programs of IUBAT. An analysis of origin of Bangladeshi students who have graduated and/or studying at IUBAT indicate that every district

Table-1 : The following table shows the percentage (%) of students who received 100% tuition fee waiver scholarship under KBAD in different semesters at IUBAT:

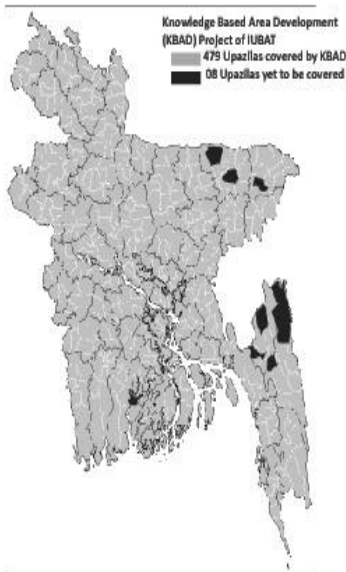
Semester	% of Students	Semester	% of Students	Semester	% of Students
Spring 2013	21.79	Summer 2010	16.99	Spring 2007	14.45
Spring 2012	12.33	Fall 2010	16.59	Summer 2007	17.53
Summer 2012	14.86	Spring 2009	15.43	Fall 2007	15.83
Fall 2012	8.44	Summer 2009	16.12	Spring 2006	8.66
Spring 2011	16.64	Fall 2009	15.65	Summer 2006	11.08
Summer 2011	16.61	Spring 2008	17.74	Fall 2006	11.28
Fall 2011	15.30	Summer 2008	18.35	Fall 2005	0.90
Spring 2010	20.44	Fall 2008	17.26		

of Bangladesh is represented in the IUBAT Community. Accordingly to the latest Banglapedia entry, there are 487 Upazilas in the country and an analysis of the origin of IUBAT graduates and students indicate that they come from 479 Upazilas as can be seen from the distribution map given in page no 11. Thus, in terms of coverage, only 1.64% of the Upazilas are yet to be covered by the outreach program of IUBAT to ensure 100% Upazila coverage. On reaching 100% Upazila coverage, the goal would go for Union/Ward coverage followed by coverage of each village/moholla. Given that there are 87,362 villages in Bangladesh, it may appear to be a formidable task but is doable.

The human resources development mission of the university is being largely achieved not only in terms of coverage but also extensive engagement of its graduates in social transformation through job placement or entrepreneurial engagement at home and abroad. There is no reported significant unemployment among IUBAT graduates.

Financial Assistance

Beside the coverage, the policy of open access has enabled nearly 17% (1,400) financially challenged students to avail professional higher education under the KBAD concept at IUBAT. They have availed facilities to supplement their family resources by availing



financial assistance under different modes in the form of deferred payment, loan from IMCSL or NAID Fund or from Financial Assistance Fund (FAF). A good number have been assisted through campus job in the form of Teaching or Research Assistants or full employment, total number being around 50 students. Around 15 students are given scholarship on merit-cum-need basis every semester out of 13 funds created from donations of well wishers of the university.

A pilot initiative has been taken to

develop orphans as professionals. Under this scheme funded by Nationwide Integrated Development (NAID) of Cardiff, UK, 4 students, who are orphans received funding for maintenance at the rate of Tk. 4,000/- per month as grants, besides service charge free loan to cover tuition fees.

The above groups of students are of special category, since they would not have been able to join university level education without financial assistance. IUBAT has developed detailed procedures for need assessment, documentation, repayment and ancillary support

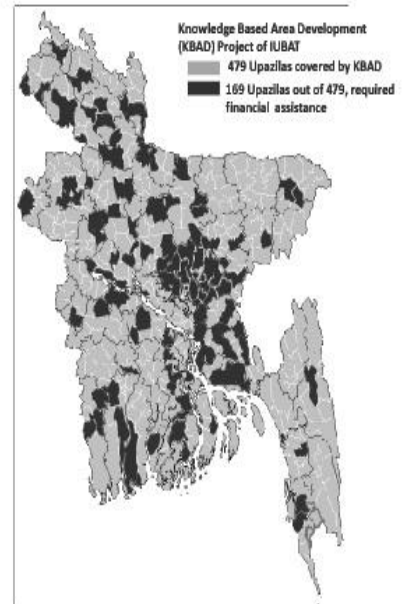
including counseling at pre-admission, study period and on graduation. The system has been tested and is fully operational.

Around 17% of the student body of 8,000+ avail the facility of financial assistance while good number of students as shown in Table-1 received 100% tuition fee waiver scholarships. The geographical distribution of students receiving financial assistance can be seen in the map given below. These students come from diverse locations, from 48 districts out of 64 and 169 Upazillas out of 487

Upazillas. It is to be observed that the KBAD has directly enabled 17% of the students to avail higher professional education.

The Outcome

On the face of large scale so called educated unemployment in the country, a question may arise as to the outcome of study by the students who have received financial assistance, since many of them come from a socially disadvantaged strata of the society. Nearly 40% of the financial assistance recipients have



completed their studies, while 35% are continuing their studies at IUBAT. Nearly 25% discontinued study at IUBAT, some of whom continued study in other institutions. An informal survey indicated the following status of all those who completed the program.

Information available on those who discontinued at IUBAT for different reasons such as academic challenge and English language as medium of instruction; have completed their studies from other institutions or found satisfactory employment on the basis of education received at IUBAT.

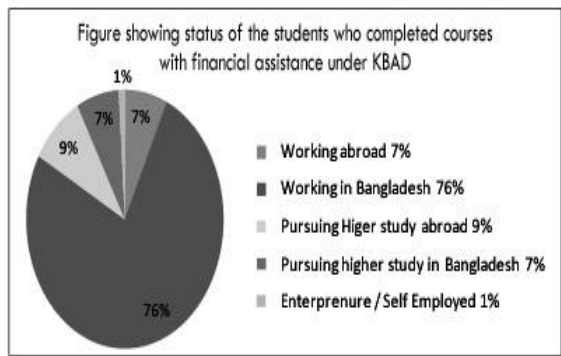
Thus, the financial assistance program not only opened the door for many but also directly contributed to their social mobility, gained respect for professional

education in the community and brought satisfaction to the individual and family. In this process, KBAD is laying the foundation of a knowledge based society on a limited scale.

Examples of Outcome Reflecting Diversity

Story of Diploma in Computer Science (DCS) with deferred payment:

A student came from a remote village of Comilla district from a family with limited exposure to technical education. The person was admitted to the Diploma in Computer Science (DCS) program and had serious difficulty in adjusting to modern methods of study and learning. With considerable patience the faculty oriented the individual to modern living and study habits



leading to achievement of DCS certificate. On completion of the study, the person immediately found employment in a travel agency followed by work as a System Administrator in an airline in Bangladesh, then proceeded to England, earned BSc in Computing and Information System followed by MSc and also a CCNA certification. The person is now an IT professional in the UK and is happily settled there.

Story of Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) with deferred payment:

One young person was referred from the Monga (famine) affected district of Nilphamari to IUBAT for potential employment since the education of the person was interrupted due to Monga condition. Being moved by the situation faced by the person, IUBAT created opportunity for training, employment situation as well as study opportunity upto the HSC level paving the way of entry into the university BBA program with deferred payment facility. This person was provided with work study opportunity for survival and was found to be hard

working and coped well with study requirements. After earning the BBA degree, the person continued study in the MBA program, but the BBA degree has been enabled the person to earn the capacity to bear the cost of the MBA program. The person is first generation graduate in the family and has a very positive effect on rest of the family members who are also now availing opportunity for higher professional education with financial and motivational support of the person. Besides, the person is a catalyst for development work in the community where a non-government organization has been created providing employment to eight people for income generation as well as providing the community with access to technology and information for alleviation of poverty. Thus, the person has become a role model in the community which is a perfect example of the catalytic role envisaged under the KBAD model.

Story of Aspiring BCS Graduate: The person concerned came to IUBAT from Jessore with a

rest of the family members who are also now availing opportunity for higher professional education with financial and motivational support of the person. Besides, the person is a catalyst for development work in the community where a non-government organization has been created providing employment to eight people for income generation as well as providing the community with access to technology and information for alleviation of poverty. Thus, the person has become a role model in the community which is a perfect example of the catalytic role envisaged under the KBAD model.

Story of Aspiring BCS Graduate: The person concerned came to IUBAT from Jessore with a polytechnic diploma to study Bachelor of Computer Science (BCS) program under deferred payment. The person graduated and started working in a non-government university in the country and went to Sweden to earn a Master in Computer Science and on return joined another non-government university and eventually went to UK for doctoral study. The foundation laid by IUBAT Department of Computer

Science and Engineering enabled the person to build a successful professional career with opportunity for higher education in two different countries of Europe.

Story of a Business Entrepreneur: After being medically disqualified by the Inter Service Selection Board for entry into Bangladesh Air Force, this cadet college certificate holder came to IUBAT to join the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program with deferred payment facilities. On completion of BBA degree the person ventured into small business and eventually established a large service organization in the telecom sector creating employment opportunity for nearly seventy people including qualified engineers. The firm continues to grow which is a tribute to the personal trait of the individual and quality of the training provided by the College of Business Administration of IUBAT.

Story of BSEEE: This person came from urban area of Dhaka and joined the Bachelor of Science in Electrical and Electronics Engineering (BSEEE) program with deferred payment facility. On completion of the study, after

limited job experience, the person left for Sweden for studying Masters in the electrical and electronics field. The study program and KBAD facilities enabled the person to relocate himself in an internationally competitive educational environment.

Story of BATHM: The person came from the Monga (famine) affected district of Rangpur and took admission into the Bachelor of Arts in Tourism and Hospitality Management (BATHM) program with deferred payment facility. On graduation, the person gained experience in the local hotel industry then found opportunity to relocate in a good position in an organization in United Arab Emirates, paving the way for the family to move towards prosperity.

Story of BSME: The person came from Mymensingh district and joined the Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering (BSME) program with a polytechnic diploma by availing the KBAD facilities. On graduation, the person moved into an executive position in a large local gas distribution company in the country, paving the way for personal growth as well as work in

the local community.

Story of MBA: The person hailed from Jessore and joined the Master in Business Administration (MBA) program. The study program enabled the person to land in a managerial position in an international non-government organization in the country.

Story of BSAG: The person came from Pabna with a diploma in agriculture to join the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (BSAg) program with the facility of deferred payment. Through the practicum part of the study program, the person landed into a job as an agriculturist with a large group of company in Bangladesh. On graduation, the person is now on the move to a managerial position.

Institutionalization of KBAD

As already been mentioned, IUBAT has established an educational cooperative in the form of IUBAT Multipurpose Cooperation Society Ltd (IMCSL) with a share capital of 50 million taka. The prime objective of IMCSL is to mobilize funds and to utilize the resources for providing educational financing in the form of repayable loans and scholarships to the members and their dependents.

This is a prelude to establishment of a Shikha Bank (Education Bank). Some progress has been made towards realization of this goal through expansion of the membership base to nearly 10,400 individuals. This has resulted in a membership fund of Tk. 2.08 million and a share capital of Tk. 6.2 million as of August 2012. Besides the deposits and savings in accounts is approximately Tk. 5 million. Thus starting with a modest base the IMCSL is gaining momentum to provide substantive support to operationalization of KBAD concept.

IUBAT has established a Financial Assistance Fund (FAF) to facilitate education and training of academically eligible students with serious financial handicap. Such fund is being created out of various form of charity and is being kept segregated and maintained as an independent fund to meet this particular objective. Applicants are granted loans without service charge and collateral and repayment of the loan is made on an easy schedule for recycling the benefits. So far a modest sum of approximately Tk. 430,000 has been raised. IUBAT faculty, officers and staff members are making modest monthly contribution to this fund to

support education of children from destitute families of Bangladesh.

Thus the institutional attempt for educational financing to realize the vision of KBAD has taken the form of developing an educational cooperative and establishment of a FAF. At the same time modalities have been established to operationally support the educational cooperative and to facilitate creation of Shikha Bank.

University Education Extension Unit

In the section of Extending KBAD a call has been made to every educated individual to participate in KBAD in the form of subscribing to share capital of IMCSL and/or motivating individuals to avail higher professional education. To some extent, this task has been carried out informally by the members of IUBAT Community and by the volunteers outside the community. In view of the limited success of this approach as well as to achieve faster progress, IUBAT has recently created a KBAD Extension Unit using the model of agricultural extension being used to motivate farmers to adopt modern

technology and inputs in farming. The main task of the University Education Extension Unit (UEEU) is to motivate and facilitate young man/women with HSC and equivalent qualification to enroll in market relevant educational programs at the tertiary level and if necessary avail the educational facilities and assistance provided by IUBAT under the KBAD concept. According to UNESCO, the participation rate in tertiary education is only 10.6% in Bangladesh i.e. out of 721,979 students who have passed HSC or equivalent examination this year, only a tiny percentage will have opportunity to participate in tertiary education, more particularly in profession tertiary education.

Thus, the task of UEEU is to provide information, carry extension, motivation and facilitate enrolment of young men and women from all corners of the country into IUBAT programs so that the KBAD mission of producing one technical graduate from each village of Bangladesh is realized in the shortest possible time to lay the base of a knowledge based society for prosperity.

Challenges

The challenge ahead is to stabilize the financial assistance program with good feedback for recycling of resources. Raising the remaining share capital of Tk. 43.8 million is also a substantive challenge to achieve the goal of reaching out to every village nay to every extended family unit in Bangladesh.

The KBAD concept has been shared in two international forums abroad and found considerable acceptance, even this was highlighted in the recently concluded Global Microcredit Summit 2011 in Spain. It is also greatly heartening to know that the Government of Bangladesh has established an Education Assistance Trust as of March 2012 with an initial fund of Tk. 1,000 crores through Education Assistance Trust Act of 2012 to facilitate education at tertiary level. Which is definitely a good initiative that reinforces the KBAD concept.