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## **Sharing TDP Campaign Kit with the Journalists**

### **Report**

**May 24, 2007**

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An easily understandable booklet titled 'Trade Made Easy' (TDP Campaign Kit) was prepared in local language by Unnayan Shamannay, launched and distributed in the national dialogue held on August 31, 2006. As discussed in Nairobi meeting held in March 2007, two small focused group meetings had been planned to organize under TDP project by Unnayan Shamannay in 2007 i) One with journalists in May 2007 and ii) Another with business groups in September 2007. As per TDP activity chart 2007, a day-long TDP Campaign Kit sharing workshop was held on May 24, 2007 at the conference room of Unnayan Shamannay in which the keynote paper was presented by M. Abu Eusuf, Assistant Professor, Department of Development Studies, University of Dhaka and TDP project coordinator, Unnayan Shamannay.

23 journalists representing various print and electronic media attended the workshop. Dr. Selim Raihan, Department Of Economics, University of Dhaka, was present as special guest in the workshop.

After presentation of the keynote paper, the participants were divided into two groups to discuss on the following issues:

#### **Group 1**

- Is there any demand from the public to know about trade related news from the media? What type of trade related news the public look for?
- What is the current status of trade related news covered by the media?
- How media (both electronic and print) can help make trade related news interesting?

#### **Group 2**

- Do journalists require any capacity building support to cover news items related to trade?
- What type of support currently available for the capacity building of the journalists?
- Who could provide such support and how?

**The main findings of the group presentations are as follows:**

- Nowadays people generally desire the right information regarding trade related issues in order to forecast the future economic scenario. But information gathering is unreservedly influenced by the socio-economic condition of a country. For instance, at this moment citizens of Bangladesh are apparently concerned about the price hike and they expect relevant information and guidelines in order to take any pragmatic step to get out this crucial situation.
- In Bangladesh, there is no identical demand for trade related news. But in general people's demand is according to the market condition. Suppose at this moment burning issues are the soaring price of commodities, budget and foreign direct investment (FDI). Among these issues majority of the people like to read price related news in the newspaper.
- Recently, the budget also draws huge attention, as it is closely associated with the financial activities of all people. On the other hand, certain people regularly search for the news of stock market, currency exchange rate, corporate dealings etc. for their professional purposes.
- The media plays a vital role in disseminating trade related news to the general people. The current status of the trade related news covered by the media is quite impressive. Electronic media regularly telecast business news; business talk shows and print media frequently publish analytical news, write-ups of prominent economists in order to create awareness among the people.
- In many circumstances, the way news is presented seems to be difficult for people to understand the actual idea. Not only that, distorted information creates dilemma and sometimes overshadows the reputation of the country.
- General people will be greatly motivated by trade related news if the media make these sorts of news more interesting. In this regard, investigative reporting can play a substantial role to bring unprecedented impact among the people.
- In order to promote the above-mentioned strategies, journalists will need to enrich their knowledge and expertise. In this regard, hands on training workshops can increase their efficiency. Concerned organisations can share this responsibility with media in order to enhance the capacity of the journalists.
- At this moment a capacity building scheme is not widely implemented by the media due to some limitations. But this situation is not equally true for renowned electronic and print media.
- In the case of capacity building, the government can allocate funds for promising journalists to take part in offshore training programs. Apart from this, media can

increase the frequency of the training programs as well as create ample opportunities for fresh graduates of journalism in order to accomplish their internship.

Finally, Dr. Selim Raihan highlighted the importance of training workshops to enhance the quality of trade related reporting by the journalists in Bangladesh. He mentioned that sharing the TDP campaign kit with journalists can improve the standards of economic reporting, facilitate the dissemination of correct, appropriate, and useful information, promote knowledge base, build awareness and so on.

He added that the state of the knowledge of journalists is extremely important as they deal with very delicate issues for the society and economy as a whole. However, the understanding of journalists in Bangladesh is widely recognised to be not satisfactory. Investigative journalism on economic and trade-related issues by journalists is rarely undertaken. Similarly, in the conducted interviews, both the journalists and the electronic media professionals appear to be passive in the presence of any effective interaction. On matters related to such issues as WTO agreements, preferential schemes, regional cooperation, etc. useful and informative economic features are generally absent. Because of these limitations, the newspapers and electronic media cannot facilitate the formation of public knowledge base. Hence, the workshop was intended to change the way economic journalism is carried out in Bangladesh. He also mentioned that this type of workshop should be organised in a regular manner to provide an intensive and interactive training to the journalists on important trade related issues.

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