

Why is Poverty Increasing in Some Regions?

Trigger presentation made at BIDS Critical Conversations 2019 – Bangladesh Journey: Moving Beyond LDC

Zulfiqar Ali

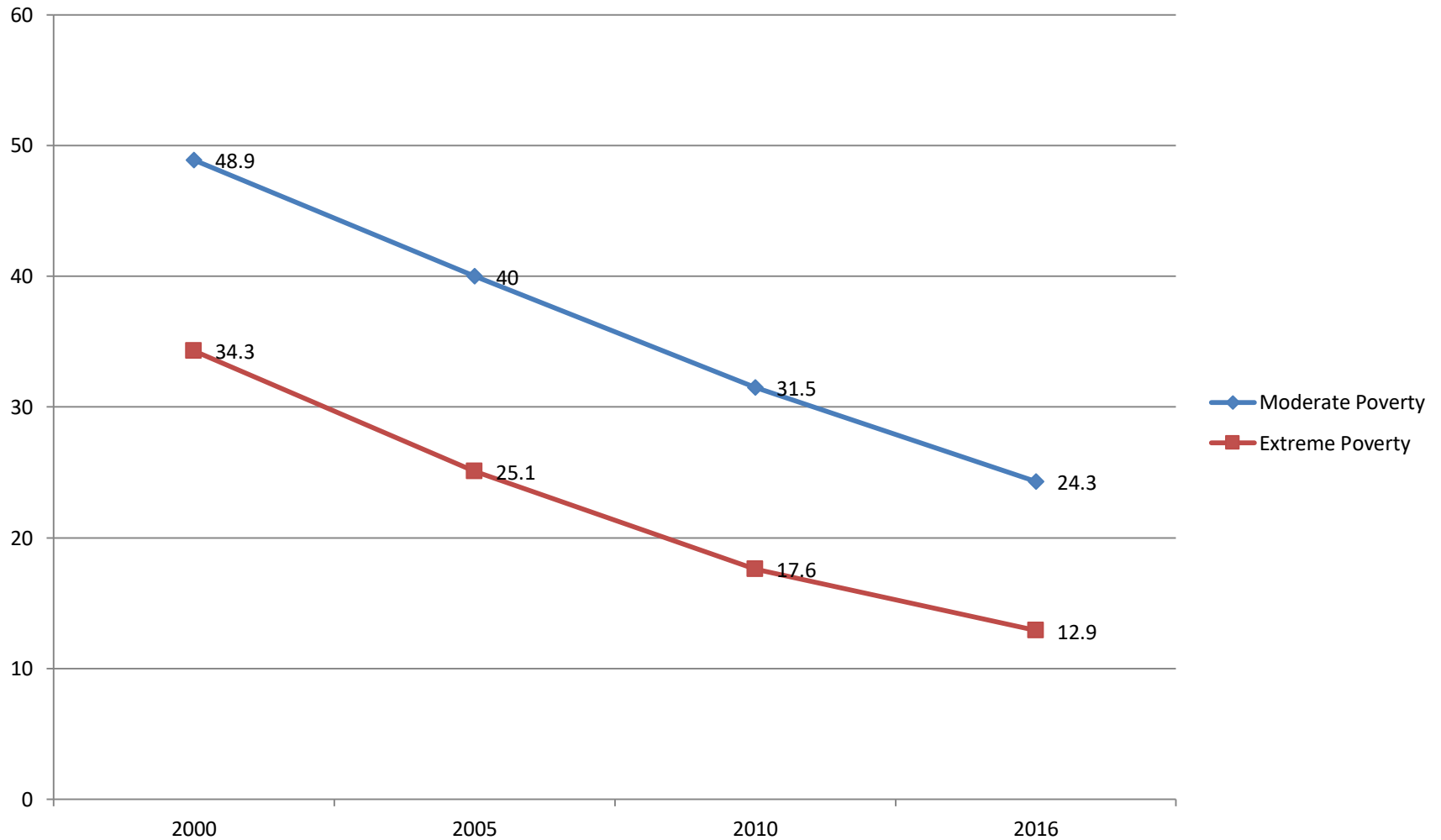
Senior Research Fellow, BIDS

28 April 2019

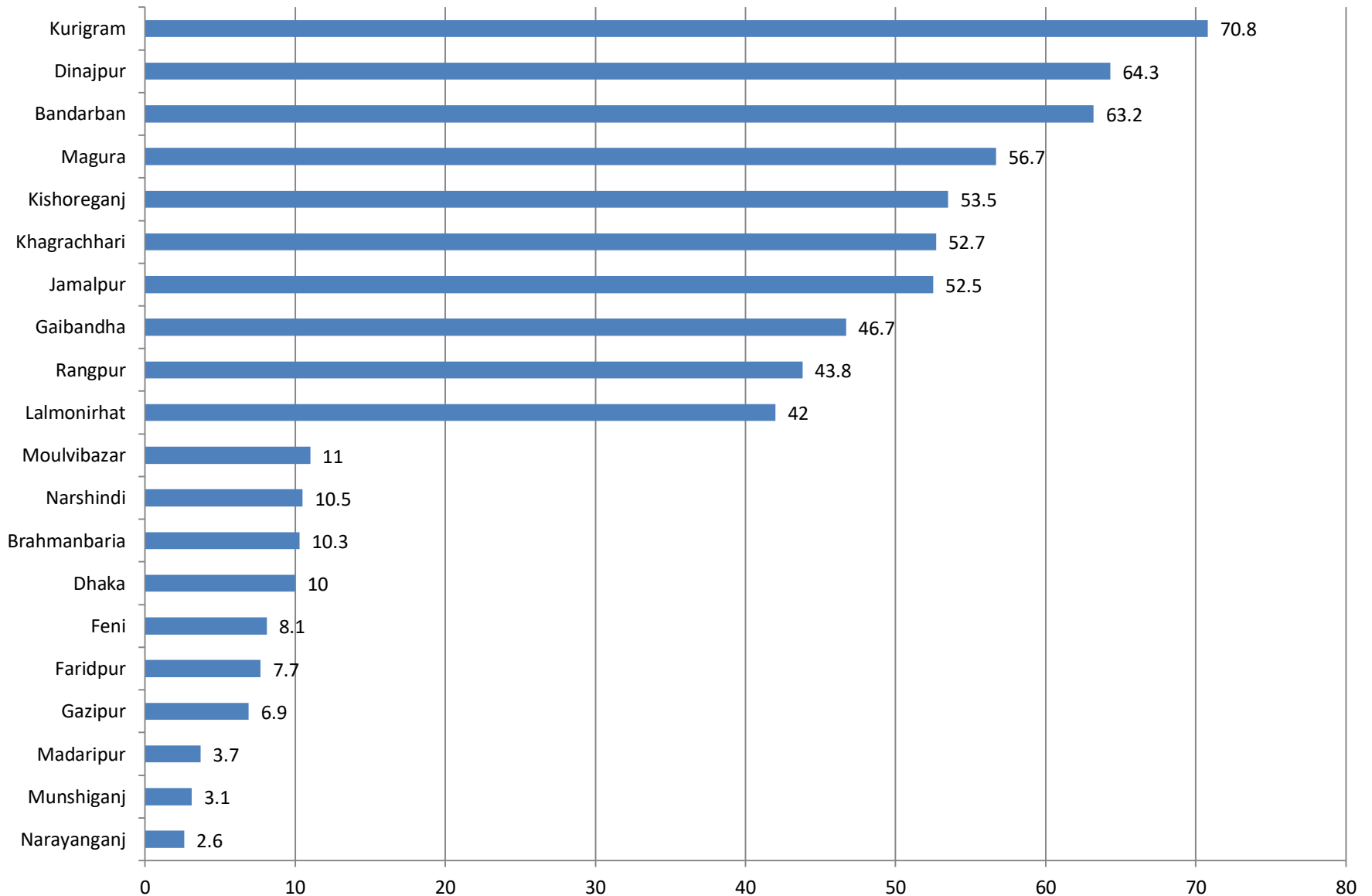
The Context

- Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in reducing poverty over the past decades;
- However, according to HIES 2016, there are districts where poverty is still pervasive;
- Poverty has also increased in some districts over the past several years;
- It is, therefore, important to identify and discuss critical issues around increased regional poverty and, hence, this presentation.

Trends in Poverty: 2000-2016



Top 10 Poorest and Richest Districts, 2016



Districts with Increased Poverty during 2010-2016

Khagrachhari	27.20	Bogra	10.60
Dinajpur	26.40	Rangamati	8.20
Kishoreganj	23.20	Lalmonirhat	7.50
Bandarban	23.10	Kurigram	7.10
Meherpur	16.30	Barguna	6.70
Naogaon	15.30	Chuadanga	4.20
Nawabganj	14.30	Chittagong	2.20
Kushtia	13.90	Jhenaidah	1.80
Noakhali	13.70	Pabna	1.50
Manikganj	12.20	Jamalpur	1.40
Patuakhali	11.40	Lakshmipur	1.30
Magura	11.30		

Districts with High and Increased Poverty, 2016

Kurigram	70.8
Dinajpur	64.3
Lalmonirhat	42.0
Bandarban	63.2
Khagrachhari	52.7
Kishoreganj	53.5
Jamalpur	52.5
Magura	56.7
Rangpur	43.8
Gaibandha	46.7

Critical Questions

1. Is this really the case? Is poverty still so pervasive and even increasing in some districts?
2. If it is really so, what are the probable causes for this?
3. Even within the same agro-ecological zones, some districts are doing better than others – what explains these differences?
4. What needs to be done in order to reduce spatial disparities in poverty reduction?

Some Early Reflections from Field

- Considered Kurigram and Dinajpur as the case study districts;
- Respondents were divided about both the levels and changes in poverty in these districts;
- While they were somewhat in agreement about the situation in Kurigram, it came as a surprise to many of them why poverty situation is that bad in Dinajpur;
- However, they identified some factors that might have contributed to the deteriorating situation in these districts.

Some Early Reflections from Field (contd.)

- For Kurigram:
 - Changes in pattern and intensity of natural hazards;
 - Increased abandonment of family members by the income-earning members of the family;
 - Lack of access to institutions and resources;
 - Lack of skills and sustainable livelihood options;
 - Poor infrastructure and market linkages.
- For Dinajpur:
 - High production cost in agriculture;
 - Changes in land tenure system;
 - Drew little attention for development;
 - Presence of socially marginalized communities;
 - Cultural barriers: driven by inward-looking attitude;

Thanks