



BIDS newsletter

Vol. 3 Issue 1 June 2015

BIDS Board of Trustees Meeting Held

The BIDS Board of Trustees convened its 95th meeting in the BIDS Conference Room on 31 May 2015. The Chairman of the BIDS Board of Trustees and Minister for Planning Mr. A. H. M. Mustafa Kamal FCA, MP, presided over the meeting. The Chairperson emphasised the importance of conducting high quality policy research by BIDS on priority issues facing the country and to develop a strategy for effective dissemination of research findings to policymakers and other stakeholders. He also underscored the need to start post-graduate academic programmes at BIDS, which he thought would contribute toward the transformation of BIDS into a Centre of Excellence.

Dr. K. A. S. Murshid, the new Director General of BIDS, represented the institute in the meeting and placed a comprehensive research agenda aimed at supporting Bangladesh's strategy of Inclusive Growth as a means to reaching middle-income status by 2021. ■



New Director General of BIDS

Dr. K.A.S. Murshid took over as the new Director General of the Institute from 1 April 2015 replacing Dr. M.K. Mujeri. Dr. Murshid is a former Research Director of BIDS and served as a consultant to ADB and UNDP in Myanmar and Cambodia for the last several years before rejoining BIDS as Director General. He has studied Economics at Dhaka and Cambridge University and has mainly published in the field of food policy and food markets. ■



From the Editor

BIDS began the new year with renewed energy and vigour. During the last six months of the year, a total of 10 research studies were completed and 11 new ones initiated. Current areas of research include macroeconomic and sectoral issues covering a wide range of development challenges facing the country. Commencing from January to mid June of 2015, BIDS organised a number of internal and external seminars, symposiums and workshops on important development issues. BIDS researchers also managed to publish a number of articles in prestigious, peer-reviewed journals like World Development, Journal of Applied Economics, Development in Practice, Climate Change Economics (World Scientific), etc. during this period. Moreover, BIDS researchers have co-authored books with distinguished academicians, that have been published from Oxford University Press and ILO/SAGE. The new Research Agenda adopted is the outcome of intense engagement and in-house review that was led by Dr. K.A.S. Murshid. BIDS is also committed to strengthening its dissemination, advocacy and publication activities under his guidance. It is the constant endeavour of this Institute to create strong research-policy links toward forging a more pro-poor orientation in the country's policy agenda. We are confident that our associates and well-wishers at home and abroad will continue to appreciate our contribution to the policy-making community and civil society. We earnestly hope that they will continue to support us in our future endeavours. ■

Study Highlights

Quality of Seeds and Pesticides in Bangladesh

This study deals with quality of seeds and pesticides in Bangladesh. The importance of the issue hinges on the role of quality seed in enhancing agricultural output, improving food security and reducing poverty.

The study critically reviews the current policy and regulatory framework (particularly the role of the Seed Certification Agency) related to seed, identifies key actors in the seed value chain, assesses loss of agricultural productivity due to low quality seed, reviews the role of extension agents and draws appropriate policy conclusions.

The key component of the study is a survey carried out on 700 farmers selected from seven districts: Thakurgaon, Pabna, Rajshahi, Chuadanga, Jhenaidah, Mymensingh and Netrokona. These farmers were selected from 28 villages (four villages being selected from each upazila).

The seed marketing-distribution system in Bangladesh has an inherent duality, which is also seen in many other developing countries. It consists of a formal system alongside an informal one. The formal system comprises of the breeders (e.g. the NARS system producing breeder seed), the seed multipliers producing foundation and certified seeds (e.g. BADC and the private and NGO sectors) and the marketers (e.g. the registered dealers of different sizes). The informal system predominantly consists of the farmers saving seeds for the next season and local level (unregistered) dealers such as the farmers having surplus seeds to sell to others or the mobile seed vendors who are informal vendors of seeds having no formal registration.

The whole system is governed by a wide range of policies, ordinances and rules, which together they form a seed governance system that aims at increasing the supply of quality seeds to the farmers at the right time and in right amount. The private sector is found to have flourished in the production of vegetables, maize and hybrid rice, whereas the public sector dominates in the list of notified crops such as rice, wheat and jute seeds. The future course of action is likely to move more toward privatisation because the government sector alone cannot increase the supply of quality seeds, particularly at a subsidised price.

The issue is not only production of seeds but also production of seeds that will be readily adopted by the farmers – the case of variety development is a case of technological innovation and as such the success depends on widespread uptake.

The system has not generated enough incentive for private and public sector to innovate. The private sector faces constraints to the development of seed varieties of notified crops although they have developed many varieties for non-notified crops. Lack of support from the government is hindering the growth of the private sector. The private sector is yet to be officially recognised as an industry and get concessionary loans and

other facilities from the government. It also faces uneven competition from the BADC, which is subsidised by the government. Despite government effort to privatise the seed market, the public sector still dominates because of its quasi monopoly in the varietal development of the notified crops. In terms of value and volume of notified and non-notified crops, the government has a hold over 90 per cent of the seed sector by controlling variety development in the sphere of notified crops.

The survey of the retailers has shown that the BADC is the main source of seed not only for the BADC dealers but also for the non-BADC dealers. BADC seeds account for two-third of the formal seed market. The private sector supplies 17 per cent and the NGO sector supplies about 6 per cent of the total seeds. The non-BADC and BADC dealers unanimously identified adulteration during packaging by retailers as a serious challenge. The second source of poor quality seeds is bad sorting.

When a case of poor quality seed is identified, a series of passing the buck takes place where each agent blames the other. Compensation to farmers for poor quality seeds is reported. It mostly takes the form of providing seeds back. When the company has a provision for “money back guarantee”, the incidence of compensation is very high and no blame game takes place.

Seeds are categorised into informal (own saved, purchased from neighbours and mobile vendors) and formal (retailers, BADC dealers, NGO dealers, private companies) seeds. About 52 per cent of the farmers in 47 per cent of land have used formal seeds in the sample. That is, in the sample, the seed replacement ratio is about 47 per cent. In the case of rice, the ratios are 44 per cent, 27 per cent and 60 per cent for Aus, Aman and Boro respectively. The seed replacement ratio is significantly higher for cauliflower, maize, tomato, onion, jute and sugarcane.

The study found that large farms use less formal seeds; the larger the size of the landholdings, the smaller the share of land under formal seeds. The regression results also corroborate this finding. It estimates that 1 per cent increase in land holding decreases the chance of using formal seeds by 0.03 per cent. In the case of rice, a one percentage increase in land holding leads to about 0.02 per cent decrease in the likelihood of adopting formal seeds.

The two major findings – lower use of formal seeds by the large farmers and very little complaint about the quality of seeds prompted to estimate the productivity difference between formal and informal seeds. Controlling heterogeneity in crops, household attributes and regional characteristics, regression results show that use of formal seeds increases revenue per decimal by 11 per cent-14 per cent for all crops, compared to informal seeds. In the case of rice, the productivity gain is about 10 per cent.

Majority of the farmers noted that DAE was not helpful in choosing crops, source of seeds and brand of seeds. About 21 per cent of the farmers reported that DAE did not provide any support and about 44 per cent mentioned that their service was

irrelevant. That is, about 65 per cent of the farmers either did not get any support from DAE or are not aware of their service.

Based on the findings, key recommendation is to increase the supply of quality seeds. It is found that the productivity of rice is about 10 per cent higher for formal seeds. There is a scope of increasing total rice yield by about 5 per cent.

Moreover, an accurate estimate of the total demand for seeds is needed. A strategy to ensure steady supply of quality seeds need to be developed. It is important to improve awareness of the benefits of using formal seeds. Constraints faced by private sector suppliers need also to be addressed along with further liberalisation of the import regime.

The major recommendations for quality of fish seed and feeds are introduction of training and services for stakeholders and creation of agencies for certification of fish seed and feed. Accreditation from BFRI, DoF and University laboratories could be used as certification agencies. Fish seed could be certified by the BFRI and some selected fish seed multiplication farms of DoF, BSTI, AEC and BCSIR could be used as the supportive agencies for the certification. Moreover, introduction of strong traceability mechanism is needed so that the individual or agency involved in introducing low quality of fish seed or feed in the market system could be identified and jailed/punished. Biohazard testing facilities for imported live fish and registration of quality laboratories have become urgent. ■

Completed Studies

Food Safety in Bangladesh: Practices, Impact, Policies and Institutions

The concern for food safety has emerged as a big challenge for Bangladesh. While food becomes unsafe due to naturally occurring toxins, pathogens or unintended contamination in processing and storage, the intentional debasing of food quality and safety is a major public health hazard in the country. This study tries to understand all these aspects of food safety issues and its determinants as well as human health and economic impacts, legal and institutional issues related to ensuring food safety and its complex dimensions. The study also carries out a science-based economic analysis of food safety by taking full cognizance of the existing institutional and legal environment surrounding the issue.

Sustainable Social Housing Initiative in Bangladesh: Stakeholders' Mapping and Assessment Report

The study intends to strengthen local capacities for the integration of sustainable solutions in social housing programmes. This study also tests the SUSHI guidelines in Bangladesh. Broadly, the goal is to study the familiarity, knowledge and capacities of different stakeholders in designing and implementing sustainable social housing in Bangladesh. One of the key findings is that all important stakeholders in the housing sector are willing and interested to promote social housing in Bangladesh. In this context, an important priority of the government is to create a congenial environment through adopting appropriate policies and measures such that social housing can be expanded in the country's housing sector.

Baseline Survey of Safe City Programme

This study identifies, articulates and documents the existing sexual/fear of sexual violence in public spaces faced by women and girls in urban and peri-urban areas and access to gender responsive public services so that changes as a result of interventions under the slogan of "Women: Right to City" can be measured, and the process to bring about these changes can be tracked for future improvement. The study adopts a feminist approach to monitoring and evaluation.

Strategy for Development of the SME Sector in Bangladesh

This study analyses the emerging nature and dynamics of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Bangladesh. It evaluates the current institutional structure and policy framework pursued to help growth of SMEs, with special emphasis on the role of SME foundation. Finally, the study provided a set of policy recommendations to create a SME friendly economic environment in which they can thrive and prosper.

The PEC Report of the Economic Census 2013

The Economic Census 2013 was carried out during March 31 to May 31, 2013. The survey comprised of two phases within this period. The Economic Census 2013 was preceded by a full listing of all households and establishments in the country. The main objective of the census was to assess the current size and composition of the national economy outside the household-based agricultural economy, and to examine how the structure of this component of the economy has changed over the past decade.

The Post Enumeration Check (PEC) involved a sample re-enumeration survey conducted by BIDS, in October 2013, to assess the quality of the 100% count by BBS.

Improving Access of the Poor to Financial Services

Access to finance, especially by the poor, is essential for promoting inclusive economic growth and eradicating poverty. The country's development strategy recognises that socio-economic opportunities in Bangladesh will be undermined if expanded financial services are not available, especially to the disadvantaged groups.

The study suggests that existing financial, credit and payment systems do not serve the poor well, so it is important to reduce their transactions costs as well as increase their ability to withstand financial shocks and improve access to income-generating opportunities. Efficiency gains could be significant if the poor could be digitally connected to financial institutions, government service providers, businesses, the private sector and other stakeholders.

Improving Land Administration and Management in Bangladesh

Land availability and sustainable land management has important implications for overall development in general, and food security, business development and human habitation in particular. The development of an organised and efficient land market is a key requirement for achieving the development goals of Bangladesh, especially given the severe land-constraint faced. The situation is likely to deteriorate further with a growing demand for non-agricultural land. As a consequence, the rate of land transfer and land conversion is also very high in Bangladesh.

The study suggests that attention should be paid to integrate land records' management through DLRS, develop a land information system, develop alternate dispute resolution mechanisms at the local level and improve land governance.

Baseline Study of the Project for Integrated Development of Upazilas

A baseline survey was conducted in 25 Upazilas during September 2014, in order to collect the latest information on local government finance and socio-economic status of the selected Upazilas. The survey collected information on some indicators like socio-demographic status of selected Upazila Parishads, annual budget and income of the Upazilas and Union Parishads, status of donor funds, status of donor funded projects, rural infrastructure situation, and capacity building needs at the local level.

Evaluation of Technical Training Centers/IGA Institutes in the Districts of Bangladesh under Different ADP funded Projects of Various Ministries

The present study evaluates the technical training centres' performance on the skills acquired by the project beneficiaries through training and their employment impact. Survey findings show that the employment outcome of training, across all training centres except those under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, is remarkable. Among the employed graduates, on average, 60 per cent are self-employed while the remaining 40 per cent are in paid employment. The income impact of training conducted by the five study ministries is respectable. There is limited mobility of graduates across areas of specialisation. This could be indicative of programmes being highly specialized. There may be a need to offer programmes to equip graduates with multiple skills.

It is recommended that the training institutions keep databases of their graduates. In updating databases, departments should liaise with the District offices. This will provide an up-to-date and reliable data base on labour market conditions. For credibility of training and skills acquired, it is recommended that training institutions and their training courses are accredited by BTEB. Policymakers should carefully weigh the efficacy of class-size policy against other potential uses of funds. While lower class size has a demonstrable cost, it may prove the more cost-effective policy. ■

Ongoing Studies

South Asia WASH Results Program: Midline Child Survey

A midline child survey will be conducted to measure the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of children under the 'Unilever School of 5' campaign. The programme aims to promote and enable the sustained use of hygienic household toilets, and the practice of hand washing with soap among children. The study will also assess the impact of the programme by comparing results with the Baseline Survey conducted in 2014.

Education and Literacy in Bangladesh: An Analysis from Social Inclusion Perspective

Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in the last twenty years, particularly in the education sector. The main purpose of the present study is to examine: (i) the extent of progress in enrolment and completion in primary and secondary education and (ii) whether the progress has been pro-poor, with enrolment (and completion) rising faster amongst the poor than the non-poor, faster amongst girls than boys, and faster in rural than in urban areas. The main data source will be census data of various years (i.e. Population and Housing Censuses of 1991, 2001, and 2011, and HIES and BDHS data).

Burden of Disease on the Urban Poor: A Study on Morbidity and Utilisation of Healthcare among Slum Dwellers in Dhaka City

In Bangladesh we know very little about the health seeking

behaviour of the urban poor and the disease burden on low-income households. The main purpose of the study is to examine the pattern of morbidity and health care utilisation among the urban poor living in the slums and pavements of Dhaka city. The study will mainly focus on the slum dwellers because they are likely to suffer from higher morbidity (incidence of sickness). They are also more likely to depend on self-care and on traditional treatment compared to their counterparts living in non-slum areas.

Children and Youth in Bangladesh: Human Capital Development and Employment

The proposed population monograph on 'Children and Youth' will focus on the human capital aspect of these groups. The analysis will focus on education and labour-market participation. Specific objectives of the study are to:

- (a) examine educational attainment and enrolment in schools;
- (b) assess health and nutrition of children and young persons;
- (c) analyse the labour force participation (LFP) of these groups disaggregated by sex, location, etc. and examine the determinants of LFP;
- (d) examine the characteristics of youth labour market in terms of sector and type of employment;

- (e) assess the extent of unemployment and underemployment among these groups; and
- (f) make policy suggestions for improvement of human capital and youth labour utilisation.

Inclusiveness of Migration: An Analysis of Socio-economic Background of International Migrants

Everyone does not have equal access to the migrant labour market. The poor face special challenges in this respect thus constraining their ability to move up, limiting the equity-enhancing role of migration. In addition to the socio-economic condition, migration also depends on social capital: access to the network of communication, mutual trust and reciprocity. The most important determinant of migration is likely to be the quality of information available from informal networks, hence the importance of the credibility of the conduit of information. Thus, although migration can act as an effective way to reduce poverty and promote growth in Bangladesh, its inclusiveness by socio-economic groups and by regions will continue to suffer unless some informed policy measures are taken. Informed policy measures require credible research based findings. This study hopes to contribute towards this end.

Tracer Study on the TVET Graduates in Bangladesh

The objective of this study is to assess employment outcomes of the graduates of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Bangladesh. The study will seek to: (i) assess occupation of TVET graduates in relation to their field of training, (ii) determine the means by which graduates acquire employment, (iii) determine the extent of occupational mobility of the TVET graduates, (iv) assess employment opportunities of TVET, (v) assess employment rates of TVET graduates, (vi) assess the difficulties encountered by those graduates that have not been able to find relevant employment, (vii) assess waiting times for first employment and associated reasons, (viii) assess the level of employer satisfaction with regard to TVET graduate employee's skills and level of performance, and (ix) provide comprehensive information on labour market outcome of the TVET graduates.

Study on Agri-Business for Trade Competitiveness in Bangladesh

In a developing country like Bangladesh, the private sector plays a vital role in enhancing economic development. This project will analyse various inclusive market development (IMD) models to understand how the private sector of Bangladesh may be encouraged to make their business practices more inclusive so that they can play a direct role in poverty reduction. The study will mainly focus on the agriculture sector. The main objectives of the study are to (i) analyse the relevance of inclusive business models or inclusive growth models for promoting inclusive growth in the agriculture sector of Bangladesh; (ii) support relevant government agencies to promote the development of rule based, non-discriminatory and inclusive markets by designing incentives and policies that will direct and encourage the private sector to undertake more pro-poor (or inclusive) business; and (iii) provide a supportive policy framework to systemically review options for encouraging and supporting linkages between poor people and business.

Evaluation of Impact of Subsidy Reduction under IDCOL Solar Home System Programme

The Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL) has been implementing a programme to distribute solar home systems (SHS) to rural households since 2003, with the aim of providing electricity to the off-grid regions in rural areas of Bangladesh. Around 50,000 to 60,000 home systems are now being installed every month. IDCOL provides concessionary credit support and subsidy/grant to its partners who are implementing the project. The main objectives of this study are to analyse current subsidies provided by IDCOL, assess the impact of further subsidy reduction given the objective of commercialisation, and make a comparative analysis of the small SHS sold under the IDCOL programme with those outside the programme. The study is sponsored by IDCOL with financing from DFID.

Impact Assessment of Upazila Fiscal Facility Funded Schemes

Upazila Governance Project (UZGP), implemented by Local Government Division, provides Upazilas with additional funds in the form of Performance based Grants (PBG), which allow eligible upazilas to expand the financial resources they normally receive in the form of transfers from the central government. The performance-based grants are being introduced in a phased manner from FY2012-13. With the grant support from UZGP, 14 Upazila Parishads of seven districts implemented a total of 224 schemes during the year 2012-13 and 2013-14. The objective of the study is to assess the results and short term impacts of schemes/projects undertaken through Upazila Fiscal Facility (UFF) Grants at 14 pilot Upazilas.

Evaluation of Service Innovation Fund Projects of A2I

BIDS has signed an agreement with Access to Information (A2I) Programme of the Prime Minister's Office to conduct an Evaluation of Seven Projects funded through Service Innovation Fund. The Service Innovation Fund (SIF) was launched with an aim to create an easier process of accessing and availing public services through better access to information. Another objective of SIF is to start a number of small and medium initiatives that will promote innovations in service delivery.

A Macro-econometric Model for Analyzing Economic Impact of Energy Price Adjustments in Bangladesh

The domestic price of energy products including electricity, oil and natural gas has long been administered in Bangladesh. The government provides subsidy to all these energy products in various forms, the amount of which has been rising rapidly in recent years. Against the backdrop of overwhelming burden of subsidies, the Bangladesh government has intensified reforms of energy prices in order to bring fiscal discipline. This has led to sharp reactions among various quarters worried about possible consequences for the economy. This study aims to assess the impact of energy price adjustments under a macroeconometric modeling framework. The model involves five major channels of transmission, such as macroeconomic channel, price channel, fiscal channel, trade channel and production channel. The effect of energy price changes on macroeconomic outcomes could be predicted under alternative scenarios of reforms for the seventh plan period. ■

BIDS Seminars

National Budget 2015-16

A seminar on National Budget 2015-16 was held at BIDS on 15 May 2015 at 4 p.m. Finance Minister Mr. A.M.A. Muhith, graced the occasion as chief guest. Dr. K.A.S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS presided over the meeting. Four papers were presented in the seminar:

-Addressing Inflationary Impact on Households: Implications for the Budget FY16 by Dr. Monzur Hossain, Senior Research Fellow, BIDS.

-Fiscal Incentives for Export Industries: Lessons for the Coming Budget by Dr. Nazneen Ahmed, Senior Research Fellow, BIDS.

-Revenue Mobilization and Grants to Municipalities: Implications for National Budget by Dr. Mohammad Yunus, Senior Research Fellow, BIDS.

-Financing of FY16 Budget: A Comprehensive Approach By Dr. Abul Basher, Research Fellow, BIDS.

Is Aquaculture Pro-Poor? Empirical Evidence of Impacts on Fish Consumption in Bangladesh

A seminar on "Is Aquaculture Pro-Poor? Empirical Evidence of Impacts on Fish Consumption in Bangladesh" was held at BIDS Conference Room on 1 March 2015 at 11.00 am. The presentation was made by Dr. Kazi Ali Toufique, Research Director, BIDS and Ben Belton, WorldFish. This paper was published in World Development last year.

Research Studies of IFPRI-BIDS Collaboration Project on Policy Research and Strategy Programme (PRSSP)

A seminar on research outputs from the IFPRI-BIDS collaboration project (PRSSP) was held at BIDS Conference Room on 7 January 2015 at 10.00 am. In two technical sessions, five research papers were presented. ■



Report Launching

A formal launching of the 2014 Global Think Tank Index was held at BIDS Conference Room on 27 January 2015 at 11.00 a.m. The index was developed by the Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania. It may be observed that BIDS was ranked 17th among top Think Tanks in South Asia and the Pacific, 24th among top International Development Think Tanks and 97th among Top Think Tanks Worldwide in 2014.

Post Enumeration Check (PEC) of the Economic Census (EC) 2013

A formal launching of the report on "Post Enumeration Check (PEC) of the Economic Census (EC) 2013," was held

at the BIDS Conference Room on 23 April 2015 at 11.00 am. Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) conducted the post enumeration check of the Economic Census 2013 of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). Dr. Zaid Bakht, Research Director (PRL), BIDS, presented the major findings of the PEC report. Mrs Kaniz Fatemah (NDC), Secretary, Statistics and Informatics Division, was the Chief Guest and Mr. Md. Baitul Amin Bhuiya, Additional Secretary, BBS, was the Special Guest at the event. The event was presided over by Dr. K.A.S. Murshid, Director General, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS). ■

R & P Meeting

A special day-long meeting of the Research and Publication Committee (R & P) of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) was convened at the BIDS Conference Room on 12 April 2015. The meeting was presided over by Dr. K.A.S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS. The meeting was useful in developing an independent research agenda for BIDS.

The BIDS Research and Publication Committee met again on 17 June, to review the status of research activities. The meeting was attended by all researchers of BIDS. ■



Professional Staff of BIDS Studying and Training Abroad

Mr Wajid Hasan Shah, *Research Fellow*

Left BIDS on study leave on 1 March 2015 to pursue his Ph.D. degree at the University of Wageningen, The Netherlands.

Dr. S.M. Zahedul Islam Chowdhury, *Research Fellow*

Attending a Training Programme titled “China-Bangladesh Capacity Building Program” organised by the Yunnan Academy of Social Science (YASS), China, during March to September 2015, sponsored by YASS.

News from SANEI

Relocation of the SANEI SECRETARIAT

As per the decision of the SANEI Steering Committee, The Secretariat of the South Asia Network of Economic Research Institutes (SANEI) has been shifted to Kathmandu, Nepal, effective from 1 April 2015. Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS) will host the Secretariat for the next five years and the Executive Director of IIDS, Dr. Bishnu Dev Pant, is the new SANEI Coordinator. ■

BIDS Researchers at International Meetings

Dr. K.A.S. Murshid, *Director General*

- Attended the Sixteenth Global Development Conference on 11-13 June 2015 in Casablanca, Morocco sponsored by GDN. He was the discussant on the SANEI-EADN session on “Agriculture, Food Security and Structural Transformation in Asia: Challenges and Opportunities.”
- Attended the Third Asian Think Tank Summit in Manila jointly sponsored by the ADB and the University of Pennsylvania, held on 20-22 May 2015.
- Presented a paper on Agricultural Value Chain Financing in Bangladesh at a workshop held in Manila on 28-29 May 2015, sponsored by IFPRI and ADB where presentations were also made on China and India.

Dr. Binayak Sen, *Research Director*

- Participated in an Expert Group Meeting held in UN Headquarters, New York, USA during 26-27 February 2015 sponsored by United Nations.
- Participated as a Designated Lead Discussant for “Chapter

2: Economic Policies for Achieving Development Goals” of the World Economic and Social Survey 2014/15 (forthcoming) entitled MDG Lessons for Post-2015, Expert Group Meeting organised by UN-DESA held on 29-30 January, 2015 at UN Headquarter, New York.

- Presented a keynote address on the theme entitled “Microfinance and Rural Poverty Reduction: New Evidence and Challenges” at the First UK-China Microfinance and Rural Finance Conference organized by Southwestern University of Finance and Economics (SWUFE) and held on 28-29 March 2015 Chengdu, China.

Dr. Anwara Begum, *Senior Research Fellow*

- Presented a paper titled “Migration, Vulnerability and Climate Change: An Agenda for Policy Imperatives in Dhaka City”, at a workshop on Deltas, Vulnerability and Climate Change: Migration and Adaption (DECCMA) in Bhubaneswar, India, during 10-22 January 2015 sponsored by Jadavpur University, Kolkata. ■

Condolences

It is with deep regret, we inform that Office Assistant cum Computer Operator Mr. S. M. Kamaluddin passed away on 5 May 2015 due to illness, at his residence (Inna Lillahe Wa Inna ilaihi Raji'un). We pray for his departed soul and hope that his family is able to cope with their loss.

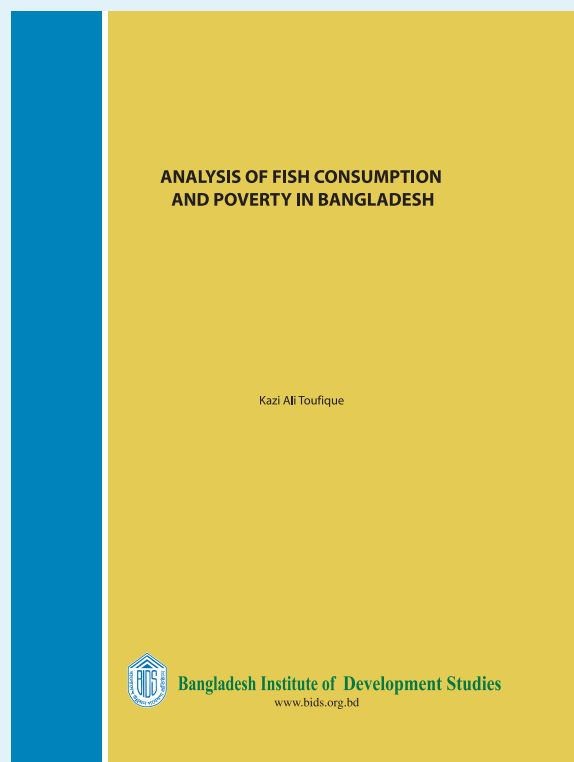
We are also saddened by the untimely demise of Driver Mr Md. Khondokar Haiderul Islam, who met with an accident during noon, on 4 February 2015 (Inna Lillahe Wa Inna ilaihi Raji'un). We pray that his family is able to bear their loss.

Recent BIDS Publications

BIDS-REF Study Series No.15-01: Analysis of Fish Consumption and Poverty in Bangladesh

Aquaculture has grown in leaps and bounds in the last couple of decades in Bangladesh. In a country where food security is becoming increasingly vulnerable due to a fragile fisheries resource system, where catches from the wild have been steadily declining, aquaculture is welcomed by most as increasing fish production is expected to enhance food security. This transformation characterised by the domination of non-farmed by farmed fishes is poorly understood in terms of changes in production, consumption and livelihoods and as a result often misguides towards adopting inappropriate strategies. Key issues need to be understood. What are the major changes in consumption pattern in terms of fish species? Are households increasingly consuming more farmed species? Which ones? Is the growth in aquaculture helping the poor consume more fish? What is the extent and pattern of substitution of non-farmed species by farmed? Some attempts have already been made in the literature to answer these questions but they are limited in scope as they are based either on unrepresentative or on dated or on cross-section data. This report attempts to answer these questions by analysing fish consumption data collected in Household Income and Expenditure Surveys carried out in 2000, 2005 and 2010 in Bangladesh. It is found that rapid expansion of commercial aquaculture lowered fish prices resulting in increased rates of fish consumption by extreme poor and moderate poor consumers. The capture fisheries still play a very important but un-recognised role in terms of consumption although this role is fast declining. Aquaculture has helped the poor households to increase fish consumption although they continue to consume proportionately more non-farmed fishes as compared to the non-poor households. These outcomes are closely linked to the pro-poor nature of national economic growth during this period. However, the

impact of this growth in farmed fishes on capture fisheries still remains unclear. Aquaculture growth has been encroaching on common fishing rights and perhaps stunting the growth of small-indigenous species (SIS), which are a vital source of rich nutrients for the poor. Steps should be taken not only to develop the aquaculture sector in a planned way but also to manage the capture fisheries sustainably. ■



Call for Journal Articles

Articles are invited for the 'Bangladesh Development Studies' (a peer-reviewed quarterly journal published in English) and the 'Bangladesh Unnayan Samiksha' (annual journal published in Bangla) from researchers and academics who are interested in development issues of Bangladesh. The topics could cover a wide range of socio-economic development issues such as agriculture, rural development, industry, population, energy, environment, education, international relations, gender and macroeconomic issues. For details on submission procedure and authors' guidelines, please visit the BIDS website (www.bids.org.bd/publications). ■

Editor

Anwara Begum

Editorial Team

Tahreen Tahrima Chowdhury

Siban Shahana

Md. Meftaur Rahman

Design Layout

Ibrahim Khan Moni

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Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)

E-17 Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar

G.P.O. Box No: 3854, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh

Phone : 880-2-9143441-8

Fax : 880-2-8141722

Email : publication@bids.org.bd

Website : www.bids.org.bd