

BIDS newsletter



BIDS Critical Conversations 2017



Inaugural Session of BIDS Critical Conversations 2017

A two-day long BIDS Critical Conversation 2017 was held during 23 and 24 April 2017 at Hotel Lake Shore in Dhaka, addressing the “Bangladesh Journey: Accelerating Transformation.” The event created an opportunity for the policy makers and a broad spectrum of academics, practitioners, experts and civil society members to be engaged in a genuine conversation on the journey so far, the current state of development, and critical challenges for the future. Spread over a total of eleven sessions, this year’s conversation covered labour market, financial inclusion, mobile financial services, urbanisation and climate change, education quality, child and maternal nutrition, growth and governance, and energy issues. Dr. Mohammed Farashuddin, former Governor, Bangladesh Bank and member of the BIDS Board of Trustees, chaired the inaugural session of the event and Mr. Ziaul Islam, Secretary, Planning Division, was present as the Special Guest. Dr. K.A.S. Murshid, Director General of BIDS made a keynote presentation highlighting various issues that generated renewed interest in the last year’s event. The concluding plenary session “Towards the Industrial Revolution” was chaired by the eminent economist Professor Rehman Sobhan where Mr. H. T. Imam, Political Advisor to the Honorable Prime Minister of the Government, was present as the Chief Guest. The Conference was well attended by eminent scholars, policy makers, development practitioners, civil society members, activists, advocacy groups and journalists and generated a lot of interest and provided an effective platform of engagement and conversation. ■



Concluding Session of BIDS Critical Conversations 2017

From the Editor's Desk

The first half of the year was a busy period as we saw new faces join or rejoin BIDS and younger researchers learning to grapple with initiating and defending research proposals, handling large data sets and getting used to making presentations. We were glad to see the return of colleagues from abroad, after completion of their post-graduate/doctoral studies. We have also welcomed aboard a few new researchers, including three Research Associates (all with a Masters in Economics from University of Dhaka), a Post-doctoral Fellow with a Ph.D. from the University of London, and an ‘Abu Abdullah Fellow’ who is engaged in research on agriculture. Thus, the gap in research capacity that had briefly developed is well on its way to being bridged.

While much of the research conducted by BIDS remains externally funded, a decisive shift is now underway as increasingly independent, self-financed research initiatives come on stream. A total of 6 new studies have already been identified or initiated on a variety of subjects, which is fully own-financed. This will go a long way in driving an independent research agenda.

This year’s “Critical Conversations” conference was a bigger success than last year’s and generated a great deal of excitement from our stakeholders, including the media and the research and advocacy community. Our aim was to create a neutral, friendly space where everyone could freely come in and participate without feeling threatened—an objective that we can claim to have been largely achieved. We aim to take advantage of this momentum, and are now already looking ahead to our next flagship event in December—the BIDS Research Almanac. Our researchers are hard at work in preparation for that event making certain that their on-going research will be completed in time.

A list of four completed studies has been provided along with a short description. In addition, one study has been specially “highlighted” and given a slightly more detailed treatment in this newsletter. A total of eleven on-going studies have been listed as well, and briefly described.

We trust this newsletter will help provide an insight into BIDS research to our readers. ■

Higher Fish but Lower Micronutrient Intakes: Temporal Changes in Fish Consumption from Capture Fisheries and Aquaculture in Bangladesh

Introduction

Malnutrition and poor diet are the leading causes of the global burden of disease, with nearly 800 million people suffering from hunger and two billion people suffering from micronutrient deficiencies. Bangladesh experiences amongst the worst malnutrition rates in the world. The most recent estimates show that 36 per cent of children under 5 years are stunted, 33 per cent of children under 5 are underweight, 19 per cent of adult women are undernourished, and millions live with various micronutrient deficiencies. It is estimated that this costs Bangladesh US\$ 1 billion each year in economic productivity forgone. Fish is an essential component of diets around the world, providing more than 3 billion people with around 20 per cent of their animal-source protein, and an even greater contribution in many developing countries. In Bangladesh, fish is by far the most important nutrient rich food in the diet, across all population groups, urban and rural, rich and poor, female and male, young and old. A rarely recognised nutritional characteristic of fish is that micronutrient content varies widely by species. Common farmed species are generally of lower nutritional quality compared to non-farmed species harvested from capture fisheries, as shown by analyses from Bangladesh.

Global fish supply is undergoing a profound transition. Aquaculture now provides more than half of the global supply of fish available for human consumption, whereas capture fisheries production peaked in the 1990s and has plateaued. This global transition is mirrored at the national level in Bangladesh, where the share of aquaculture in Bangladesh's fish supply increased from 23 per cent to 55 per cent between 1990 and 2013 and the quantity of farmed fish produced grew 810 per cent. The scale of this transition has given rise to concerns over the implications for nutrient supply and associated nutrition outcomes, but its effects have never been examined empirically. This leads to pose the question, how has the transition from capture fisheries to aquaculture affected micronutrient intakes in Bangladesh?

To answer this, the study combined detailed fish consumption data from nationally representative household income and expenditure surveys (HIES) over a 20 year time series from 1991 to 2010, with comprehensive species-specific nutrient composition data for fish. It is hypothesized that, either: 1) gains in farmed fish intakes should have raised micronutrient intakes from fish in Bangladesh, or; 2) the inferior nutritional quality of farmed fish has been insufficient to offset declines in nutrient intakes from capture fisheries. Both possibilities have important policy and health implications for Bangladesh and other developing countries where fish makes an important contribution to diets.

The study describes trends in apparent fish consumption patterns from 1991 to 2010. It then estimates changes in nutrient intakes from fish over time. The key micronutrients of interest are: iron and zinc, both considered "problem nutrients" in developing countries; calcium, as fish is known to be an important dietary source in Bangladesh; and vitamin A and vitamin B12, as deficiency of both these micronutrients is widespread in Bangladesh. It also examines results within extreme poor, moderate poor and non-poor households, and rural and urban areas to further understand the importance of nutrient intake from fish among different socioeconomic groups.

Household surveys

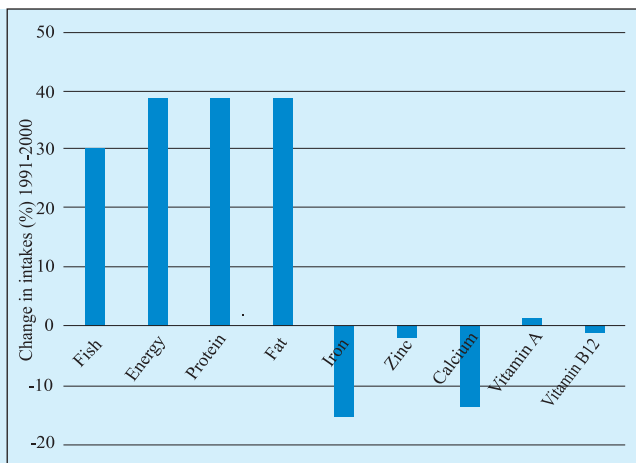
Nationally representative household food consumption data from the Household Expenditure Survey 1991, and HIES 2000 and 2010 in Bangladesh were used to estimate apparent fish consumption. Fish species recorded in the survey were grouped according to their dominant production sector, either capture fisheries (non-farmed) or aquaculture (farmed), for each survey year, allowing comparison of the relative contribution that each sector makes to fish consumption over time. Results are presented per Adult Male Equivalent (AME). AME reflects the energy requirements of individual household's members, based on age and sex, as a proportion of an adult male, providing a more accurate estimate of the adequacy of household food consumption compared to per capita intake. Data on the quantity of each fish species consumed were then combined with species level nutrient composition data to estimate apparent nutrient intakes from fish, at each time point.

Fish consumption

Analysis of total fish consumption nationally shows no significant change between 1991 and 2000, followed by an increase from 53.7 g/AME/day in 2000 to 68.2 g/AME/day in 2010. Between 1991 and 2000, there were no significant changes in fish consumption among all poverty groups and rural households, but a significant decrease among urban households. From 2000 to 2010, fish consumption increased significantly among urban, rural and non-poor households, and increased slightly, but not significantly, among extreme and moderate poor households. Overall, national mean fish consumption increased by 30 per cent between 1991 and 2010. The relative increase between 1991 and 2010 was greatest among extreme poor households (19 per cent, given their much lower intakes in 1991 compared to other poverty groups). Consumption of non-farmed fish decreased significantly, both nationally (-33 per cent) and across all poverty and location groups, between 1991 and 2010, whereas consumption of farmed fish increased significantly for all poverty and location groups, from a national average intake of 2.1 g/AME/day in 1991 to 34.5 g/AME/day in 2010. Farmed fish made up a larger proportion of total fish consumption for the non-poor (5-51 per cent) compared to the extreme poor (3-47 per cent), consistently over time.

Nutrient intakes from fish

There were significant increases in average energy, protein and fat intake from fish, in line with increasing total fish consumption, both nationally and for all poverty groups between, 1991 and 2010 ($P < 0.01$), except for protein intake among moderate poor households in which there was no significant change. However, there was no significant change in average intakes of zinc, vitamin A and vitamin B12; and consumption of iron and calcium significantly decreased ($P < 0.01$), despite a national increase of 30 per cent in the total quantity of fish consumed (Figure 1). When comparing changes among poverty groups, the moderate and non-poor experienced smaller increases in energy, protein and fat compared to extreme poor households, which are consistent with lower proportional increases in total fish consumption among the moderate and non-poor. Moderate and non-poor households show larger proportional decreases in zinc, calcium, vitamin A and vitamin B12 over time compared to extreme poor households. This could be a result of larger proportional decreases in consumption of non-farmed fish by these groups. Absolute intakes of nutrients from fish by extreme-poor households are far lower than moderate and non-poor households in each survey year, which is consistent with lower intakes of total fish.



Discussion

Fish consumption has significantly increased from 1991 to 2010; rapid growth in aquaculture has more than compensated, in terms of quantity, for a decline in availability of fish from capture fisheries. However, growth in aquaculture has not sufficiently compensated for the decline in capture fisheries in terms of nutritional quality. In the case of animal protein, fat and energy intakes from fish, growth in these nutrition intakes is in line with growth in fish consumption. However, despite an increase in quantity of fish consumed, results show decreased intakes of iron and calcium from fish, and no change in intakes of zinc, vitamin A and vitamin B12 between 1991 and 2010 (results were robust to sensitivity analysis). Based on analysis, the only likely explanation for this finding is lower overall nutritional quality of the fish species being consumed in 2010 compared to 1991, related to a greater proportional contribution of farmed fish over time. This is supported by research that has demonstrated the higher nutritional quality of non-farmed species compared to commonly farmed species, with regard to certain micronutrients, including iron, zinc, calcium, vitamin A and vitamin B12.

Given the importance of fish in diets, this reduction in nutritional quality is likely to have exacerbated existing widespread micronutrient deficiencies. The most recent estimates from Bangladesh in 2011-12 show that among non-pregnant, non-lactating (NPNL) women, 57 per cent were zinc deficient, 22 per cent were vitamin B12 deficient, 7.1 per cent were iron deficient and 5.4 per cent were vitamin A deficient. If nutritional quality of the fish supply in 1991 had been maintained, and consumption was still able to grow to 2010 levels, the average NPNL women would be consuming an additional 21 per cent of the recommended nutrient intake (RNI) for vitamin B12, 17 per cent of the RNI for calcium, 4 per cent of the RNI for zinc, and 3 per cent of the RNI for iron. Given that NPNL women, on average, meet only 25 per cent of the daily iron RNI and 51 per cent of the daily zinc RNI, this reflects an important contribution.

It could be reasoned that declines in nutrient intakes from a particular food source are of little concern if they can be met from other foods in the diet. The HIES reports published elsewhere show that consumption of animal source foods (ASF) excluding fish increased by 13 g/capita/day from 1991-2010 mostly from increases in poultry, potentially compensating, to some extent, for the reductions in certain micronutrient intakes from fish. This cannot be said for the poor, given that in 2010, more than 80 per cent of extreme poor households had consumed no poultry in the two weeks' survey period (compared to <4 per cent who consumed no fish). Furthermore, nutritional profiles of ASFs differ, and therefore cannot be considered nutritionally equivalent. For example, fish is often a rich source of long-chain omega 3 fatty acids (not found, or found in small quantities in other ASFs),

which are particularly important for cognitive development in children. Vitamin B12 is an essential nutrient required for brain and nervous system function, which cannot be produced by the body and is found almost exclusively in ASFs, of which fish is often the richest source. The haem iron content of red meat is approximately 40 per cent (of total iron) and can be up to 70 per cent; recent analysis of SIS in Bangladesh has shown haem iron content as high as 93 per cent. Given the importance of fish in diets in Bangladesh (in terms of quantity, nutritional quality and frequency of consumption), this reduction in nutritional quality in fish supply at population level is undoubtedly of concern. In the context of widespread micronutrient deficiencies, even if the negative impacts of declines in nutrient intakes from fish are partially averted in some population groups by substitution with other ASFs, from a population perspective, this still represents an opportunity forgone to improve overall diets.

These results emphasize not only importance of dietary diversity, in terms of food groups, as it is often understood, but also diversity of foods within food groups (e.g. consumption of a diversity of fish species given their unique nutritional profiles). This point is particularly relevant given the above-mentioned transition in aquatic food systems, away from diverse capture fisheries towards less diverse aquaculture systems. Food production systems, which promote diversity such as pond polyculture, should be prioritised. Public investments in research on the artificial reproduction of key nutrient-rich SIS and the transfer of this technology to private sector hatcheries must be central to this approach. Nutrition-sensitive aquaculture must be a complement to diverse capture fisheries, not a substitute for it. Conserving and rebuilding inland, coastal and marine fish stocks through improved management are also essential. Other factors that influence the nutritional quality of fish species may provide opportunities to improve the contribution of aquaculture systems to nutrition. For example, in response to increasing pressures on marine fisheries as a source of fish meal in aquaculture systems, modifications in fish feed composition are being investigated as a means to improve the fatty acid profile of farmed fish.

In conclusion, it may be said that the valuable role of aquaculture in Bangladesh in securing the availability and affordability of fish is unquestionable. If growth in this sector had not occurred, declines in nutrient intakes described here would undoubtedly be much more severe. However, the results presented here highlight unintended negative consequences of policy decisions and agricultural investments which are narrowly focused on maximising production and productivity. In doing so, the results challenge the dominant rhetoric that increases in food supply automatically lead to improvements in diet and nutrition. As aquaculture becomes an increasingly important food source for many, it must embrace a nutrition-sensitive approach, by considering how changes in food supply affect nutritional quality of diets. To do so requires greater knowledge of the nutritional value of indigenous foods at species/varietal level, and the contributions these foods make in terms of nutrient intakes and dietary patterns, specific to age and sex groups, as well as to differences in rural/ urban locations and geographic regions. Indicators used in the monitoring and evaluation of agricultural interventions must go beyond production and productivity and also nutritional quality. If the intrinsically linked issues of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition are to be truly addressed, and for the SDGs to be achieved, agricultural policies must integrate strategies to mitigate trade-offs across multiple sectors, including (but not limited to) nutrition and health. ■

**The study was conducted in collaboration with WorldFish.*

Completed Studies

Inclusive Market Development in the Agriculture Sector of Bangladesh: Challenges and Opportunities

This study attempts to explore and understand various concepts of inclusive market development (IMD) and associate those concepts with various sub-sectors in agriculture to enable the development of a guideline for introducing and encouraging inclusive business in these sub-sectors. The analysis covers the basic principles of the IMD approach and its role in poverty reduction, its application in three sectors (fisheries, vegetable and agricultural inputs, namely seed and fertiliser), and the possibilities of promoting the IMD approach further in Bangladesh by making the policy environment more suitable for the private sector to practice this model. The study proposes a guideline to assist in facilitating IMD in different agriculture sub-sectors of the economy.

Impact Analysis of the Project “Construction of Small Bridges/Culverts on the Rural Roads (3rd phase)”

Adequate infrastructural support is a pre-requisite for accelerated economic development. “Construction of small Bridges/Culverts on the Rural Roads” is an important rural-infrastructure development programme of GoB, being implemented by the Department of Disaster Management, under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR). The project is completed, and a total of 4,928 bridges and culverts have been constructed during the project duration (July 2012 to June 2015), covering 61 districts and 459 upazilas in the plain land. BIDS has been given the responsibility to assess the impact of the project. This study assesses the impact of the project on various economic and social sectors, and the nature of infrastructural changes occurring in the villages in the project areas focusing on connectivity with cyclone shelters/growth centres/ educational institutions / health care facilities, improvement in water

-logging situation, employment opportunities/labour market participation, school enrolment/attendance/utilisation of health facilities and empowerment of women (including the sick and the disabled). In addition to analysis of secondary sources of information, data were collected from a range of organisations and different stakeholders (including policy makers, service providers, communities and, of course, the beneficiaries of the surrounding villages).

Managing Fisheries for Food Security: Implications from Demand Analysis

The rapid rise of aquaculture and concurrent stagnation or decline in capture fisheries output are widely recognised global phenomena, but the food and nutrition security implications of these trends remain the subject of considerable uncertainty. The study uses the latest (2010) nationally representative household income expenditure data from Bangladesh to estimate elasticities of demand for fish by using the QUAIDS model. It estimates elasticities of demand for fish, categorised by their origin (inland capture fisheries, marine capture fisheries, aquaculture), for poor and non-poor households in Bangladesh and analyses implications for food security and fisheries management. The study finds that demand for fish from all sources and by all poverty groups will increase with income. Elasticities of demand for aquaculture and inland capture fish are found to be higher for poor households than non-poor. The case of Bangladesh presented in this study adds to knowledge on how these trends may affect food security in developing countries, with associated implications for fisheries resource management strategies. Technological progress has driven reductions in the real price of farmed fish. Effective management of all sources of fish is important for food security, but increasing supply from aquaculture and inland capture fisheries will have the largest impact on food security. ■

Ongoing Studies

Impact of Migration on Nutritional Condition of Rural Households in Bangladesh

The purpose of this research is to gather rigorous quantitative evidence in order to explore the relationship between international and internal migration and its impact on the nutritional status of rural households. More specifically, this study aims to explore:

- Whether worker’s remittance has contributed to improving the nutritional condition of children and women (18 to 49 years) in rural areas.
- Whether there is any difference in nutritional status between households with internal migration and international migration.
- Whether income from migration/remittance is the only reason of differential nutritional status in rural households.

Impact of Government Incentives on Some Selected Exporting Industries of Bangladesh

The excessive dependence of the economy on the RMG sector is a growing cause of concern as this essentially leaves the country vulnerable to heightened risk arising from the external sector, and remains a source of concern. This issue points to the urgent need for diversification of our exports. In this regard, it is necessary to identify those potential export products (other than

the well-established RMG products) that could be supported through additional policy interventions (e.g. through funding, tax cuts, cash incentives, backward linkage facilities, etc.).

There is in existence a variety of schemes/programmes provided by the government, but these are largely focused on RMG. It is necessary to examine how these incentive packages are helping other sectors, if at all, and what additional measures could be justified.

Total Factor Productivity in Bangladesh: Impacts and Determinants

Considering the stagnant investment-GDP ratio and a large pool of unskilled labour with low participation in secondary education, it is necessary to explore the contribution of labour and capital stock in the growth of Bangladesh. Moreover, Total Factor Productivity (TFP) is an endogenous variable and can be influenced by government policies. Apart from estimating the contributions of labour, capital and TFP to economic growth, exploration of determinants of TFP also becomes a useful exercise in itself.

This study will explore the dominant sources of persistent growth in recent times in Bangladesh. The study will also carry out an exercise to analyse the determinants of TFP in Bangladesh in the last decade.

Post Enumeration Check on the Census of the Undocumented Myanmar Nationals Staying in Bangladesh

Census of the Undocumented Myanmar Nationals Staying in Bangladesh has been conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) during 02-14 June 2016 in six districts i.e. Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Rangamati, Khagrachhari, Bandarban and Patuakhali. Insofar as census involves collection of large scale data, it is prone to various types of non-sampling errors including coverage and content errors. One standard approach to addressing such errors is to conduct post enumeration check (PEC) within a short period after completion of the census, and use the estimates of the PEC to adjust the overall size of the population and its major attributes.

The primary objective of the PEC is to determine sources and magnitude of coverage error and content error. The specific objectives are: (a) to measure under-coverage and over-coverage, and (b) to measure levels of agreement for responses to questions on selected characteristics, such as sex, age, marital status, education of household members, sources of drinking water and type of toilet facilities.

End Line Survey of the First Phase of 'SWAPNO'

The main objective of this study is to conduct an end line survey on the 1,200 households surveyed in the base line study including 800 beneficiary households and 400 control households in order to evaluate the impact of the SWAPNO project.

Estimating Potential Growth for Bangladesh and the Impact of Policy Shocks on Potential Growth in Bangladesh

The study will assess the sensitivity of potential growth to change in policy by setting different values of parameters consistent with policies. The study will also investigate the impact of policy shocks on potential growth. In terms of methodology, the study intends to follow mainly the CBO (Congressional Budget Office of the US) and the IMF methods, which gives more weight on theory-based approaches instead of relying largely on statistical or mechanical methods, for calculating potential growth for Bangladesh. The project will follow the guidelines of CBO (2001, 2004, 2014, and 2015) and Mitra et al. (2015). Nevertheless, the study will also examine other widely used statistical and econometric methods for the robustness check on the outcome of the theory-based methodology.

Socioeconomic Impact of Migration: An Empirical Approach

The purpose of this study is to explore how international migration generates a differential impact on socioeconomic condition of households. The paper asks the following type of questions:

- Does it have a differential impact on sanitary habits compared to non-migrant and internal migrant households? Is there a greater probability for households with international migrants to use sanitary toilets and better hygiene practices?
- Does it have a differential impact on savings and investments? Does household with international migrant have a higher probability to save and invest?
- Does international migration cause a differential impact on children's education?

Such impacts will also be analysed among different geographical regions in Bangladesh and across poverty groups.

Stylized Facts of the Statistical Properties of Risk and Return of the Dhaka Stock Exchange: 1990-2015

The role of the security market is mostly absent in the development discourse of Bangladesh and has not received due

attention in policy domain, largely because there is hardly any robust analysis on it. Therefore, constructing a set of stylized facts of the capital market of Bangladesh with regard to return and risk (volatility) is essential for providing feedbacks into the broader discussion on the nexus between method of finance and economic growth in Bangladesh. Besides, having a general understanding of the stylized facts of the return and risk of the market is also important for the small investors who are susceptible to market manipulation. This study will investigate the risk-return relationship for DSE index as well as for sectoral indices, using daily stock market data for all listed securities from Dhaka Stock Exchange for the period 1990-2015. For the estimation purpose, the study will use a very popular model from the GARCH (Generalized Autoregressive Conditional Heteroscedasticity) family, namely the GARCH-in-mean model.

An Overview of the Bangladesh Handloom Industry

Presently, looking at the trends in the number of units, number of looms and their operational status, obtained from two successive censuses (1990 and 2003), have made us believe that the industry is on gradual of dwindling. This needs careful examination with in-depth studies to formulate any pragmatic policies regarding the phenomenon. To start with it is needed to identify the problem by having a quick overview on the industry. With this objective, BIDS has initiated a study to understand the current situation of the handloom industry of Bangladesh.

Assess the Monitoring, Evaluation Procedure of BCCT and the Impact Assessment of CCT Projects

This study will conduct an independent evaluation of selected projects funded by the Climate Change Trust Fund (CCTF). This independent evaluation will help CCTF to formulate effective monitoring framework for CCTF projects and diagnose strengths and weaknesses of these projects, so that future projects could be adopted and implemented in a more effective and robust way. The independent evaluation of the projects funded by CCTF will be diagnostic in nature and will cover the process, implementation strategies and results achieved by the projects. The evaluation will be conducted on 27 selected projects.

Exposure to Violence Faced by Adolescents in Bangladesh

Violence is generally described as behaviour intended to cause harm and exercise forceful control over household members, intimate partners, colleagues, individuals or groups. The over-arching question is, whether economic and social transformation is resulting in heightened tensions and pressures at the domestic and societal level and is contributing to violence, and perhaps even altering the nature, form, and type of violence seen. Specifically, has rapid socio-economic change disrupted traditional social formations and familial norms leading to tensions and conflicts? Has economic growth aggravated violence? Have migration and urbanisation been contributory factors? Have factors like technology, industrialisation, education of girls, empowerment of women, NGO-led rural development, and women in the labour market have had similar impacts? The proposed study is exploratory in nature, given the paucity of knowledge in this area in Bangladesh. The objective is to assess the nature and type of exposure to violence experienced in a range of socio-economic settings, including urban slums and villages. It is expected that the study will also be able to generate a number of hypotheses related to the underlying processes that shape violence. ■

BIDS Seminar

Formal-Informal Labour Nexus and Bangladesh's Growth

BIDS and BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) jointly organised a workshop titled “Formal-Informal Labour Nexus and Bangladesh’s Growth” on 28 March 2017 at the BIDS conference room. Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud, eminent economist and former Adviser to the Caretaker Government, graced the programme as the Chief Guest. Dr. K. A. S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS and Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, Executive Director, BIGD, Brac University chaired the two sessions of the workshop. Three papers were presented at the workshop:

- The Formal-Informal Labour Nexus and Growth in Bangladesh by Dr. Krishna Kumar
- What Do Workers Value about Formal Employment? Results from a Worker Survey in Bangladesh by Dr. Shanthi Nataraj, RAND Corporation
- Employee and Employer Preferences for Worker Benefits: Results from a Matched Survey in Bangladesh by Dr. Minhaj Mahmud, Senior Research Fellow, BIDS. ■



Workshop on Formal-Informal Labour Nexus and Bangladesh's Growth

Sunday Talk Series

Dr. Azizur Rahman Khan Visits BIDS

Dr. Azizur Rahman Khan, Professor Emeritus of Economics, University of California Riverside, USA visited BIDS and gave a talk on “Bangladesh: The Next Asian Tiger?” on 12 February 2017 at 3 pm at the BIDS Conference Room. In the seminar Dr. A. R. Khan talked about possibilities of Bangladesh being the next Asian Tiger. He also presented some facts and figures on the social indicators of development, employment scenario of Bangladesh and India, growth rate,

export-GDP ratio, investment and savings and trend in the tariff rates. An interesting Q&A session wrapped up the seminar. BIDS researchers attended the seminar and shared their views with him. Prof. Rehman Sobhan, Dr. Rizwanul Islam, Dr. Zaid Bakht, Dr. Biru Paksha Paul, Dr. K. A. Toufique and other senior researchers of BIDS had a useful interactive session with Dr. Khan. Dr. K. A. S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS chaired the seminar. ■

BIDS Events

BIDS- Bonik Barta Felicitates Professor Rehman Sobhan

BIDS and Bonik Barta jointly organised “Gunijon Shangbardhona- 2017” on 16 March 2017, where renowned Economist Professor Rehman Sobhan was felicitated for his life-long contribution as a professional economist, researcher, policy maker and social reformer in Bangladesh. Finance Minister Mr. A. M. A. Muhith, Planning Minister Mr. A. H. M. Mustafa Kamal, State Minister for Finance and Planning Mr. M. A. Mannan, Eminent lawyer and politician Dr. Kamal Hossain, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Mr. Rashed Khan Menon, former Advisor to the Caretaker Government Dr. Wahiduddin Mahmud, Former Finance Minister Mr. M. Syeduzzaman, Former Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Dr. K.A.S. Murshid and Bonik Barta Editor Mr. Dewan Hanif Mahmud were present, among others, at the event and recognised the contribution of this inspiring and honoured

economist. The event was attended by academicians, researchers and eminent people from all walks of life to pay respect to this living legend.



Professor Rehman Sobhan and other Guests at the Reception

Celebration of Bangla New Year 1424

Bangla New Year 1424 was celebrated with fun and fervour on 16 April 2017 at the BIDS premises. The staff of BIDS organised a potluck event with a cultural programme. The event became joyous and colourful with traditional attire, traditional dishes like ‘muri-murki’, sweets, green mango juice, pitha-puli, jilapi, etc. and music and poem recitation. Dr. K. A. S. Murshid, head of the Institute congratulated the staff for successfully arranging this New Year celebration event and wished them good health and success in the upcoming days.



Celebrating Bangla New Year at BIDS



Cultural Event and a Section of the Audience

BIDS Annual Picnic 2017

BIDS arranged its annual picnic event of 2017 on 4 February for the staff and their families. The picnic spot was Padma Resort in Louhaganj. The whole day passed with fun and fervour. There were enjoyable activities like cricket tournament, a football tournament and various other games for the staff, their spouses and children. The day ended with a cultural programme, followed by prize distribution to the winners and raffle draw.



BIDS Annual Picnic: Some Joyful Moments

BIDS Book Stall at the “Bangla Academy Amar Ekushey Grontho Mela 2017”

BIDS set up a bookstall in the Bangla Academy premises this year too as part of the annual “Boi-Mela” held in commemoration of the martyrs of the language movement of 1952. The fair draws a large number of book lovers, academics, poets, novelists and writers along with students and members of the general public. This is an occasion for BIDS to build stronger links with the broader community by making our publications accessible to all. Dr. K. A. S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS inaugurated the stall officially, in the afternoon of 2 February 2017, in the presence of researchers and staff of the institute.



Reminiscing about the life and work of Just Faaland

Just Faaland Memorial Meeting Held

BIDS and CPD jointly organised a memorial on 4 April 2017, in remembrance of Just Faaland, who was a distinguished political economist from Norway. After Independence, he had worked with the first Planning Commission and developed a close association with Bangladesh, which continued throughout his life time. Chaired by Professor Rehman Sobhan, the memorial started with the opening remarks by Dr. Kazi Ali Toufique, Research Director, BIDS and Dr. Fahmida Khatun, Executive Director, CPD. Professor Sobhan discussed the life and achievements of Just Faaland and his contributions to Bangladesh’s policy environment. The Memorial ended with paying deep respect to the departed soul.

BIDS Ranked 16th in the Southeast Asia and the Pacific Region

The 2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index (GGTTI) marks the tenth year of continued efforts by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) at the University of Pennsylvania to acknowledge the important contributions and emerging global trends of think tanks worldwide. Every year the rankings are done including the public-policy research analysis and engagement organisations that generate policy-oriented research, analysis, and advice on domestic and international issues, thereby enabling policy makers and the public to make informed decisions about public policy. BIDS was ranked 104 among the 6,846 think tank institutes in the ranking of Top Think Tanks Worldwide (Including USA) and 16th in the ranking of Top Think Tanks in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. BIDS also received similar recognition over the last few years. ■

BIDS Researchers at International Meetings

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

- Attended the “Belt and Road Global Think Tank Forum” held in China on 14 May 2017, sponsored by China Center for International Economic Exchanges (CCIEE).

Dr. Kazi Ali Toufique, Research Director

- Attended the workshop on “Aquaculture and the Poor: Improving Fish Production, Consumption and Nutrition Linkages” held in Penang, Malaysia during 19-21 April 2017, sponsored by WorldFish H.Q. Malaysia.

Dr. Anwara Begum, Senior Research Fellow

- Attended the workshop on “Deltas, Vulnerability in Climate Change: Migration and Adaptation” held in Southampton, UK, from the 16 of January until 21 January 2017, sponsored by IDRC/DFID.

Dr. Mohammad Yunus, Senior Research Fellow

- Attended the “Bangladesh-India Friendship Dialogue” held in India from 31 March 2017 to 02 April 2017, sponsored by Bangladesh Foundation for Regional Studies.

Dr. Kazi Iqbal, Senior Research Fellow

- Attended the international joint research project “Impact of Political Protests: A Case Study on Bangladesh” held in Japan from 22 February 2017 to 02 March 2017, sponsored by Institute of Developing Economics, Japan External Trade Organisation (IDE-JETRO).

- Participated in the course on “Ambassadors of Evidence-based Policy: Training of Trainers (ToT)” held in Nepal from 15 March 2017 to 17 March 2017, sponsored by UK Department for International Development’s BCURE Programme.

Dr. Minhaj Uddin Mahmud, Senior Research Fellow

- Participated as a Visiting Scholar at JICA Research Institute, Tokyo, Japan during 20-26 February 2017, sponsored by JICA Research Institute (JICA-RI), Japan.

Dr. Mohammad Mainul Hoque, Research Fellow

- Attended the international joint research project “Impact of Political Protests: A Case Study on Bangladesh” held in Japan from 22 February 2017 to 02 March 2017, sponsored by Institute of Developing Economics, Japan External Trade Organisation (IDE-JETRO). ■

New BIDS Professional Staff

Dr. Minhaj Mahmud, Senior Research Fellow

Joined BIDS as Senior Research Fellow in December 2016. He received his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Gothenburg in 2005, Sweden and M.A. in Economics from the University of Manitoba in 1999. Previously, he held academic and research positions at Queens University Belfast and Keele University in the United Kingdom, and BIDS, BRAC University and Jahangirnagar University in Bangladesh.

Md. Wahid Ferdous Ibon, Research Associate

Joined BIDS as a Research Associate in March 2017. He completed his B.S.S (Honours) and M.S.S in Economics from the University of Dhaka respectively in 2014 and 2015 with distinction. Prior to joining BIDS, he worked at South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) as Research Associate. He also served Bureau of Economic Research (BER), University of Dhaka.

Shahidul Islam, Research Associate

Joined BIDS as a Research Associate in March 2017. He completed his B.S.S. (Honours) and M.S.S. in Economics from the University of Dhaka respectively in 2014 and 2015.

Md. Nahid Ferdous Pabon, Research Associate

Joined BIDS as a Research Associate in March 2017. He obtained his Master's and Bachelor's degrees in Economics from the University of Dhaka respectively in 2015 and 2014 with distinction.

Dr. Neelopal Adri, Post-Doctoral Fellow

Dr. Neelopal Adri has specialisation in conducting research in the areas of social dimension of climate change, disaster management, migration, gender and urbanisation. Dr. Adri holds a Ph.D. in Human Geography from Royal Holloway, University of London, UK, for her dissertation "Climate-induced Rural-Urban Migration in Bangladesh." ■

Professional Staff Re-joins BIDS

Dr. Zabid Iqbal, Research Associate

Rejoined BIDS after completion of his Ph.D. in Economics from Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, USA in Spring 2017. Before that, he completed his M.S.S in Economics from University of Dhaka, Bangladesh in 2007. He is trained in agricultural economics, applied econometrics and international trade.

Mohammad Golam Nabi Mozumder, Research Associate

Rejoined BIDS on 9 May 2017. He is in the process of obtaining his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Pittsburgh, USA. ■

R&P Meeting Held

The BIDS Research and Publication Committee (R&P) met on 5 April 2017 at the BIDS Conference Room to review the status of research activities and progress of publications of BIDS. The meeting was attended by all BIDS researchers, and several decisions were taken to further streamline research and publication activities of the Institute. Dr. K. A. S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS presided over the meeting. ■

BIDS Publications

Research Report No. 188: Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations in the Readymade Garments (RMG) industry in Bangladesh

The study, commissioned by the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoL&E) to Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), makes a comprehensive assessment of the current status of the RMG industry in Bangladesh with respect to industrial relations, workplace safety and compliance issues.

The study revealed that the main problem of workplace safety and labour standard in the export-oriented RMG industries in Bangladesh is not so much with respect to the inadequacies of the Labour Laws, as it is with the implementation of whatever law that exists currently. It is integral to develop an effective monitoring and follow-up mechanism to ensure quick and full implementation of all aspects of workplace safety and labour standard, starting with the areas of concern indicated in this report. Along with the drive towards developing an effective monitoring and follow-up mechanism, medium and long run strategies also need to be worked out for bringing about improvements in the areas involving infrastructure, housing, transportation and related needs.

Research Report No. 189: Situational Analysis of Strengthening the National Menstrual Regulation (MR) Programme in Bangladesh

This study examines the impact of the MR intervention, i.e. to assess the extent to which the implementing agencies-Marie Stopes Clinic Society (MSCS) and Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB), have achieved their desired objectives. Three independent indicators have been used for the evaluation—how far the programme has been successful in: (a) increasing awareness regarding timeline for safe MR, (b) enhancing access to services to get rid of unwanted pregnancy, and (c) reducing the incidence of unsafe abortions, early marriage, and violence against women. Findings suggest that, overall, the MR initiative has been successful in achieving the targets. Respondents in the intervention area are much better off in terms of awareness regarding timeline of safe MR (79 per cent of women and 88 per cent of the MR clients) compared to their control group counterparts (51 per cent and 74 per cent respectively), access to skilled provider for termination of unwanted pregnancy, and fewer incidences of unsafe abortions as a way of pregnancy termination. People belonging to different age groups (adolescents, adults, the aged) and socioeconomic categories (rich/poor, educated/illiterate) get the relevant message regarding why, when, where, and by whom the MR procedure should be performed. The implementing agencies have played a crucial role in promoting safe MR in their respective working areas in the aspects of awareness creation, capacity development, infection prevention, standard guideline on MR, enabling environment, and rights based approach. However, there still remains scope to improve quality of care. ■

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 socioeconomic 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). ■

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