

# BIDS newsletter



## BIDS Research ALMANAC 2018 Held



BIDS Research ALMANAC was held on 11-12 November 2018 at Lakeshore Hotel in Dhaka. The aim of this annual flagship event is to provide an opportunity to highlight new research ideas and findings and to undergo public scrutiny of BIDS work.

Spread over a total of five technical sessions, this year's ALMANAC had 17 papers by BIDS researchers covering a wide range of subjects, including agriculture and employment, SME productivity, financing and women entrepreneurs, quality of growth and human development, urbanisation, disaster vulnerability and social safety nets, energy use, and migration and household welfare.

Dr. Mashiur Rahman, Economic Affairs Adviser to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, inaugurated the event as the Chief Guest and Begum Kajal Islam, Additional Secretary, Planning Division was present as the Special Guest. Dr. K. A. S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS chaired the session.

The concluding session titled "The Development Outlook - Key Messages for the Next Government" was chaired by Dr. Mohammed Farashuddin, Former Governor, Bangladesh Bank. Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud, Former Adviser for Finance and Planning to the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh, graced the event as Chief Guest. The distinguished panelists of the session included Dr. Zaid Sattar, Chairman, Policy Research Institute (PRI), Dr. M. A. Taslim, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, Dr. Mohammad Tareque, Director, Bangladesh Institute of Governance and Management (BIGM), Dr. Zahid Hussain, Lead Economist, World Bank and Professor Shapan Adnan, National University of Singapore.



## EDITORIAL

*The second half of 2018 was marked by holding of the annual BIDS Research Almanac, completion of 8 important research works and organising a workshop on experiments in development economics. The BIDS Research Almanac has now become a regular annual event which is perhaps the best academic conference on economic issues in the country. This Almanac held in November 2018 showcased 17 academic papers of BIDS researchers, on a wide range of socioeconomic issues, and the papers were critically examined by the eminent scholars of the country. Producing a large number of new research papers and holding such a big academic event every year is a testament of the research capacity of BIDS and the unceasing engagement of the researchers with concurrent socioeconomic issues.*

*The workshop on experiments in development economics was the first of its kind in Bangladesh which explained with examples how experimental techniques can be used in development economics to draw a causal relationship for better policy making. Three papers on education, migration and mobile banking, and role of training in enhancing business outcomes were presented in this workshop.*

*Each issue of the newsletter highlights one study, which is deemed to be of greater interest to our esteemed readers. In this issue we have picked "Adolescent Exposure to and Attitudes toward Violence: Empirical Evidence from Bangladesh" for its strong relevance and conceptual rigour. This paper studies the types and prevalence of violence, types of attitudes toward violence, role of exposure to violence in forming attitude about violence and correlates of exposure to violence. Overall, findings suggest high prevalence of violence in the social environment, which is at the root of creating a culture of fear, while invoking violent responses from those exposed to violence.*

*The second half of 2018 saw 8 completed and 4 on-going studies and a brief summary of these studies are presented in this issue. Six academic seminars and one public lecture were also held during this period.*

## Study Highlights

### Adolescent Exposure to and Attitudes toward Violence: Empirical Evidence from Bangladesh

[Study Team: K. A. S. Murshid and Nadine Shaanta Murshid]

#### Introduction

Violence is widespread in today's world and persists amidst high economic growth, widening inequality, rapid urbanisation and migration, and technological shifts. Violence occurs in both private and public domains and its news and images are carried prominently by both the old and new media. Low-income countries like Bangladesh are no exception and exposure seems high although there is little systematic evidence on prevalence, nature, structure, tendencies or trends, especially in the context of adolescent experience. This is important to estimate given that exposure to violence normalises violence, extant research shows, which is socially reproduced and intergenerationally carried over. Theory suggests violence is a socially learned behaviour; individuals exposed to violence are more likely to have violence-prone schemas and scripts that they learn to use as a tool of conflict management. This occurs through a mechanism that first informs individuals' attitudes about violence.

In Bangladesh, research on violence has predominantly focused on violence against women and experience of sexual violence as children. The role of exposure to other forms of violence, such as neighbourhood, street, or gang violence, remains understudied. This is an important line of inquiry given that parents and communities are often unaware of the exposure that their children have to violence, or of the effect that exposure to violence has on their lives. It is also important to locate specific forms of violence (e.g. sexual violence against children) within the broader social context where many forms of violence coexist.

The key area of inquiry in this study is to estimate the prevalence of exposure to violence and show how exposure from various sources inform adolescents' attitude towards violence in Bangladesh. This study extends the use of social learning theory in a low-middle-income country context where violence has taken on new forms with religious underpinnings. This examination adds to the knowledge base of a growing body of work that shows that those who use violence favour a culture of violence. We argue that exposure to violence acculturates and desensitizes individuals to violence (Tarabah, Badr, Usta, & Doyle, 2016). Having accepting attitudes toward violence is associated with increased perpetration and victimization of violence, and other maladaptive behaviours which makes it an important area of study (Caputo, Frick, & Brodsky, 1999; Eckhardt, Samper, Suhr, & Holtzworth-Munroe, 2012). This study provides a systematic investigation of the association between exposure to violence and attitude towards violence among adolescents in Bangladesh using cross-sectional data. It also unravels key correlates of exposure in terms of individual, household, and area characteristics.

The following research questions guide this study: (i) What are the types and prevalence of violence that respondents are exposed to? (ii) What are the types of attitudes that respondents have regarding violence? (iii) Does exposure to violence have an effect on respondents' attitude about violence? In other words, we test whether the type of violence plays a role in the resultant attitude. (iv) What are the correlated of exposure to violence? We expect, based on social learning theory, that exposure to violence allows for observational conditioning and experiential conditioning, when violence is experienced directly, which then inform individuals' attitudes toward violence.

#### Methods

A household level socio-economic survey was conducted between May and December 2017. Five types of sites were purposively chosen in order to ensure sample variation: urban, green revolution area, remote/backward area, and low poverty rural area. The fifth area is best described as 'mixed' with elements of all the others.

From each rural district five sub-districts (Upazilas), five 'Unions' (lowest level administrative tier), and five villages were randomly chosen, and a village census in each was conducted to identify households with target respondents (boys/girls between 12 and 19 years of age). This list of target respondents served as the sample frame. A total of 10 boys and 10 girls were sampled from the target list for each village yielding a total of 100 respondents per rural location (district).

Sixty households were randomly chosen from slum areas in Dhaka (50 per cent girls). A similar number were selected from adjoining non-slum areas (50 per cent girls). The locations included Karail, Bansbari, Kalyanpur, Bhashan Tek, and Bauniabad Basti. Thus, the sample consists of a total of 400 rural households and 120 urban households.

A modified Martinez and Richter Scale was used to measure exposure to violence and a modified Funk et al. Scale (Funk et al., 1999) was used to measure attitude towards violence. We controlled for demographic and socio-economic variables. Focus group discussions were held to gauge perspectives on violence, sexual harassment, insecurity and fears, and coping-adjustment mechanism of respondents after exposure to violence.

#### Table: Sample Location and Distribution

Area/Type	Location (District)	Sample (50% girls)
Urban	Dhaka (Capital): slum/non-slum areas	120
Green Revolution area	Bogra (265 km NW of Dhaka)	100
Remote/Backward/Poor	Gaibandha (265 km N of Dhaka)	100
Migrant area	Comilla (100 km E of Dhaka)	100
Low poverty rural area	Faridpur (127 km SW of Dhaka)	100

#### Results

##### *Nature and Extent of Exposure to Violence*

The Richter-Martinez Scale (1993) was deployed with some contextualization to measure exposure to violence.

The scale consists of 43 indicators, measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1=never; 5=usually true). These items were singly examined and also processed through 'Exploratory Factor Analysis' (EFA) to determine if there is an underlying structure that allows the items to be collapsed into fewer, more reasonable categories as latent (unobservable) variables related to violence and vulnerability. Of the 43 items, 18 appear to be more prominent in terms of exposure incidence ('ever happened'). These indicate high levels of exposure to violence both in terms of witnessing and direct experience, within and outside the home. The pattern of responses seems reasonable in the sense that more violent items tend to be reported at a lower rate.

Another 16 items yielded low prevalence rates for violence exposure (below 10% prevalence). These generally are more extreme forms of violence, which are expected to occur with lower frequency. These also provide an insight into what are not very important aspects of violence, which could nevertheless emerge as a bigger problem later on. Another factor might be that due to the sensitive nature of some items, the lower scores could reflect significant under-reporting. In general, the pattern of responses suggests that the scale used performed well with low intensity violence being much more frequently reported compared to high intensity ones in terms of witnessing or experiencing violence.

### Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA): Exposure to Violence

#### Factor 1: Witnessing garden-variety violence

A total of 12 items loaded into the factor (with correlation coefficients of greater than .4). These items describe witnessing or hearing generally low level, garden-variety violence (e.g. elderly in the family quarrelling, seeing someone getting beaten, seeing mastans in the locality) – in other words, relating to low intensity, common-place violence. This explains over 13 per cent of the variation.

#### Factor 2: Witnessing severe violence

A total of 10 items loaded into factor 2. These include items relating to witnessing stabbing, shooting, or hearing about kidnap, or being threatened with severe violence. In other words, this factor is best described as hearing or witnessing high-intensity violence. This explains over 11 per cent of the overall variation.

#### Factor 3: Sexual harassment

Five items loaded into factor 3 relating to experiencing sexual harassment or "eve teasing" and insecurity. This factor explains around 7 per cent of the variation.

#### Factor 4: Direct experience of violence

Four items loaded into the factor with the correlation coefficients tending to be on the lower side (below 0.6). The items relate to more direct, close experience of violence at home or outside, physical or sexual, explaining 4.1 per cent of the variation.

### Nature and Extent of Attitudes toward violence

#### Factor 1: Very Fearful

- Item 14: It is dangerous to hang out with my peers
- Item 15: I am afraid I could be hurt from violent actions
- Item 16: I am afraid I could even die from violence
- Item 17: I have a feeling people are trying to hurt me

#### Factor 2: Positively disposed to violence

- Item 3: Being violent is permissible to attain one's goals
- Item 5: Those who are violent get respect
- Item 7: If someone hurts you, you should hurt him back

Item 8 : If someone speaks ill of me/my family, it is OK to hit him

Item 12: Parents should teach their children to be violent if necessary

### Factor 3: Positively disposed to use of weapons

Item 6 : Feel secure if I carry gun or knife

Item 9 : It is acceptable to keep a gun/knife if you live in an unruly neighborhood

Item 10 : It is good to keep a gun with you

Item 12 : Parents should teach their children to be violent if necessary.

### Does Exposure Affect Attitude?

The predominant attitudes toward violence revealed by the factor analysis were fear, disposition to violence/retaliation, and willingness to use a weapon in the process.

We set out to examine whether the exposure factors (witnessing garden variety violence, witnessing severe violence, sexual harassment, and direct experience of violence) have a bearing on the attitudes toward violence. Simple linear OLS regressions were estimated with the three attitude factors as alternative dependent variables and the four exposure factors as independent variables, along with some control variables.

Findings suggest that exposure to violence does indeed shape fear. It is also found there is a strong regional or locational dimension to fear, as exemplified by the strong influence of 'urban' and 'migrant area' dummies. Gender was highly significant with the expected sign. The asset variable was also significant, also with the expected sign, while 'land' had the correct sign but was not significant. The three area dummies were highly significant with Dhaka (urban), clearly showing that urbanisation is strongly associated with low exposure violence. However, perhaps the most interesting variable to emerge from this exercise is the clear importance (and significance) of toilet location or distance in affecting exposure. The sign is positive and the coefficient is strongly significant, suggesting that this is an area that requires much greater probing and perhaps some experimental interventions to examine if there is policy potential here to reduce exposure.

School status (actually lack of school status) was also found to be positively associated and significant (as was expected). Migration of large numbers of men from an area may affect high intensity exposure adversely while more rural, agricultural growth is likely to reduce it.

The study findings have to be seen in light of several limitations. First, the study is cross-sectional in nature, which disallows causal inference. Second, there is possibility of social desirability bias which may have resulted in either over-reporting or under-reporting of violence. We had, however, made all efforts to minimize such bias by gender matching interviewers with respondents. Future studies would do well to broaden both the spatial and the temporal dimensions of studies such as these.

In conclusion, it can be said that the study has successfully unearthed the nature and structure of violence experienced by adolescent boys and girls in Bangladesh. This is also the first study to systematically examine the association between exposure and attitude to violence along with an examination of key individual, household and locational correlates of violence within a vulnerable sub-group of the population in a developing country setting. Overall, findings suggest high prevalence of violence in the social environment, which, we posit, is at the root of creating a culture of fear, while invoking violent responses from those exposed to violence.

## Completed Studies

### Assessing the Current Situation of Solar Home System (SHS) Programme of IDCOL and Recommending Action Plan

This study assesses the current solar home system (SHS) market situation and recommends an action plan for IDCOL so that they can make a strategy for soft exit from the programme.

The study reveals that current dwindling state of IDCOL's SHS market is the culmination of several factors: (1) lack of policy coordination among the stakeholders, such as Rural Electrification Board (REB), Power Division, Ministry of Social Welfare, etc. (2) IDCOL's financial approach lacking full-proof financial governance; (3) motive of some partner organisations' (Pos) evading repayment of loans in the context of weak financial governance; (4) absence of a national oversight policy body for renewable energy programmes; and (5) IDCOL's failure to commercialise the programme.

The study suggests, given the current dwindling market situation, readjusting the interest rate on IDCOL loans, from the current 3 per cent to a rate of 0.5 per cent, which will allow IDCOL to revise its interest rate on its refinanced amount to the POs at 1-1.5 per cent. In that case, the overall default amount is expected to be reduced substantially to a level affordable to the POs. This strategy, to some extent, may help to alleviate the burden of debt of the POs. In addition, the study observes government may consider writing off the proposed amount of Tk. 800 crore, which is 20 per cent of government's total due to IDCOL. Such an action will facilitate smooth functioning of other programme of IDCOL.

The study strongly recommends involvement of Grameen Shakti (GS) in the distribution of SHS under KABITA/TR programme, so that IDCOL can recover a certain portion of its dues from the GS. Moreover, the study suggests that it is also important for both IDCOL and POs to lay down a time-bound mutually agreed joint framework of repayment.

### Evaluation of the Rural Social Service (RSS) Programme of the Government of Bangladesh

Increased access to financial and social services is an important determinant of economic resilience. Development also requires accomplishment of a number of non-income factors which are not included in a typical microcredit programme. The rural social service programme (RSS), which has been implemented since 1974, is based on the principle of a holistic approach to development. This study evaluates the modus operandi of the programme by looking at the different players involved in the implementation process at different stages, as well as evaluating whether it has been contributing to the socio-economic development and rural welfare. This study uses both primary and secondary data.

Using propensity score matching techniques, this study compared the average income of individuals that received microcredit from RSS programme to that of non-programme participant groups. The control group lagged behind the treatment group. This phenomenon suggests that the RSS loan is distributed properly. Findings show a high positive impact of microcredit programmes on some of the parameters and weaker evidence for the rest. Overall, the RSS microcredit programme can be viewed as successful since it has pulled many people out of poverty.

### An Evaluation of the Activities of Grihayan Tahobil (Housing Fund)

In FY1997-98, the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (GoB) formed Grihayan Tahobil (Housing Fund) with the initial seed money of Tk. 500 million through budget allocation for the purpose of providing low-cost housing to the poor, distressed and homeless people of the society. The central objective of the study was two-fold: (i) evaluation of social programme of Grihayan Tahobil (Housing Fund), and (ii) evaluation of the economic and social status of the beneficiaries of Grihayan Tahobil (Housing Fund).

To capture the impact of the programme, 1,700 households were selected from those households who received housing fund loan between 2014 and 2017 for structured questionnaire survey. To understand the real impact of the programme, 300 non-programme households were also selected from the same districts.

Around 87 per cent of the borrowers of HF loan agreed that current amount of loan (Tk. 70,000) is insufficient to construct a standard house. Encouragingly, 93 per cent of the programme beneficiary households have experienced an upward change in social status during the last 5 years as against 49 per cent of the non-beneficiary households. On average, 97 per cent of the programme beneficiary households saw improvement in their housing environment, children's education, peace of mind, and social status because of the new house, financed by housing fund loans. The threats that can make sustainability of HF loan programme questionable include: a small loan size, lack of monitoring, problem in the design of the house, slow loan processing, etc. Finally, the economic and social benefits accruing from the Housing Fund greatly outweigh its negative effects.

### Onion Market of Bangladesh: Role of Different Players and Assessing Competitiveness

In recent years Bangladesh economy has experienced repeated volatility in prices of, among other essential things, onion. This is an essential product consumed in every household in Bangladesh throughout the year. Bangladesh is a large producer of onion, but meeting the total demand requires imports every year. Till date, few studies have tried to understand the onion market. There has been no study on the whole value chain of onion to understand possible anti-competitive behaviour of the market.

This study provides an analysis of the respective value chain of onion, role of various actors associated with production, marketing and import of onion and power of the actors in different segments of the value chain. The study enquires into possible sources of market distortions and tries to understand whether there is any monopoly or oligopoly in the market. This study also discusses the potential roles of institutions like the Competition Commission to bring competitiveness in the market. The study is based on both primary and secondary information.

It appears that there are significant number of buyers and sellers in the market and entry into the market is not prohibitively costly at most of the stages in the supply chain. Traders mostly sell local and imported onion, and thus the commodity is largely homogenous across traders and markets. The marketing margin is consistent with the opportunity cost of capital investment in risk free asset, except for growers whose margin measure is noisy due to data limitation.

The occasional price volatility is mainly caused by natural forces of demand and supply in the market. As, apparently, there is no sign of oligopoly or cartel in the onion market, the role for an organisation like the Competition Commission is not going to be that much effective in the short run to stabilise the market. Rather government intervention in terms of imports well ahead the slack season of onion and ahead of festivals could prove to be much better strategy to stabilise onion price.

### Electrification in Rural Bangladesh: An Assessment of Socio-economic Impacts of Subsidized Tariff on Life-line Consumers

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) is responsible for ensuring universal access to electricity and protecting and preserving the interest of consumers, especially rural life-line consumers. Moreover, it is primarily responsible for the setting up of gas and electricity prices in Bangladesh, which is most likely to affect the living standard of the electricity consumers.

BERC has been setting lower tariff rate for the life-line consumers since March 2014. Because of this lower rate, the number of electricity consumers are increasing day by day, i.e. more people are coming under the umbrella of rural electrification and enjoying numerous benefits of electrification.

This study assesses the extent to which the lower tariff rate set by BERC affects the life-line consumers of electricity, as well as assesses the socio-economic impact of expansion of rural electrification on life-line consumers. The study used both primary and secondary sources. A total of 830 households (512 life-line consumers and 318 non-electrified households) were surveyed. Moreover, a total of 16 FGDs were conducted.

Findings reveal that there is no significant difference between basic characteristics of households of electrified and non-electrified groups, that is, both electrified and non-electrified groups are similar in nature. Compared to the households of life-line consumers (electrified households), use of electric operated household appliances is limited in non-electrified HHs. It is observed that the level of education is higher among households with electricity. Households with no formal education and lower levels of education dominate non-electrified HHs.

The study finds that electrification improves household welfare in several ways. The immediate impact of rural electrification is the substitution of kerosene lamps used for lighting. The monthly use of kerosene has declined by 2.11 liters when a household moves away from kerosene lamps to energy bulb/electric bulb after getting on electricity connection. The impact on women empowerment is found to be mixed.

The study recommends the following : supplying subscribers with quality digital meters; socially discouraging wastage of electricity; organising more general hearings of general people on their aspirations about electricity services and the problems they face; conducting research on possibilities to reduce system loss and reducing cost of production; and developing a more structured method for determining electricity tariffs.

### **Total Factor Productivity (TFP) in Bangladesh: An Analysis Using Data from 1981 to 2014**

Considering the stagnant Investment-GDP ratio, 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 Bangladesh's growth and expanding the contribution of TFP as well.

Being endogenous in nature, TFP can be influenced by government policies. Apart from estimating the contribution of labour, capital and TFP to economic growth, exploration on determinants of TFP also becomes an obvious exercise. This study estimates TFP in Bangladesh and explores the determinants of TFP with its underlying causes, and explains the relevance of these determinants in the Bangladeshi context.

The study exploits both the macroeconomic variables and institutional quality indicator variables with a view to analysing the determinants of TFP for Bangladesh. Taking into account only 32 data points (1982-2014), this study selects a total of 10 relevant TFP determining variables in the context of Bangladesh covering 2 broad categories (7 macro-level variables and 4 institutional quality indicator variables).

The results show that the significance of the variables along with the same sign remains roughly same across the models. Government expenditure on schooling becomes insignificant only with the dependent variable of TFP estimated by the VEC model. On the contrary, remittance is found to be significant only in the model in which TFP is estimated by the OLS method.

The same set of independent variables is regressed over the TFP

series obtained from aggregate production function with CRS assumption by the four methods. It is noted that the significance of all of the variables across the models remain the same with no sign of the variables toggling across the models. The same line of interpretation is reflected in "Intensive form production function" estimates.

### **New Avenues for Export Diversification: A Product Level Analysis of Some Selected Exporting Industries**

Export Diversification is crucial for Bangladesh. The need for diversification is acute as the GDP of the country depends heavily on the country's export sector, which in turn depends on the RMG sector. Focusing on six prominent industries, namely leather and leather Goods, plastic, pharmaceuticals, shipbuilding, processed and dry food products from the agro processed industries and bicycle and other non-motorized cycles from the light engineering products, the study tries to throw light on the diversification situation/possibilities and suggest policy recommendations based on two types of analysis. The first analysis is about identifying the industry products with comparative advantage and major export share of the six industries at four digit level, using Balassa index. The second analysis is about prioritizing the export destinations of these particular industries by identifying the "Important," "Lost" and "Emerging" markets for each of them.

Two major recommendations are made: (a) the comparative advantage analyses of each industry should be conducted at the most disaggregated level, to capture the intra industry heterogeneity within the particular sector, and b) the intensity of exports of a particular industry should be analysed by exploring the pattern of demand of importing countries over time.

The analyses of the findings also suggest that government incentives i.e. cash incentives, duty drawback facilities, etc. should be based on the performance of the particular industry at the most plausible disaggregated level.

### **State of the Handloom Industry of Bangladesh**

This study looks into the existing status of the handloom industry of Bangladesh in reference to the past and formulates a hypothesis about the future status. In order to understand the industry, such aspects as trends in size of the industry, technology of handloom weaving, and organisational structure have been examined.

The study is based on both secondary and primary information. Along with field visits in the important handloom concentration areas, and also some selective areas producing artistically designed delicate fabrics, focus group discussions (FGDs) with such stakeholders as weavers, traders and local elites were held to examine their perceptions and views, of the past, present and the future prospects of the handloom industry.

The study found a declining trend in the case of handloom units and employment. Expecting the number of surviving handloom establishments in 2017 to be in the order of around 45,000, the handloom industry has taken its own course of transition to powerlooms.

The decline of the handloom industry has serious implications for labour displacement and unemployment. During field visits it was found that the labour already displaced were mostly absorbed in other sectors like the readymade garment industry and rural transportation (non-motorized such as rickshaw-van, and motorized transports like carrier motor cycles and scooters). Moreover, many displaced workers from handlooms found overseas employment as well.

The study suggests that the immediate need is to carry out a census enumerating both handlooms and powerlooms to update the data base. The proposed census should include powerlooms of the small-scale powerloom industry as well as those within handloom establishments.

## Ongoing Studies

### National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN) funded by Helen Keller International

The primary objective of the National Information Platform for Nutrition (NIPN), approved by the Government, is to support governmental and civil society planners to strengthen capacity to monitor progress towards improvement of nutritional status of the people in general and more particularly for the children and mothers and mothers-to-be as well as to direct funding to more cost-effective and evidence-based policies.

The NIPN expects to set-up of a functional and effective information and analysis platform through two major components: formulating policy questions and preparing briefs accordingly and undertaking the data analysis to feed the policy-making process.

The Helen Keller International (HKI) has received funding from the European Union to set up NIPN in Bangladesh. HKI has contracted BIDS the part related to policy questions and preparation of policy briefs. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) will conduct analysis of data upon requests from HKI and BIDS on prioritized policy topics by relevant sectoral ministries and also non-governmental policy and programme planners on issues related to nutrition.

Three committees are expected to be set up. One is the Project Steering Committee (PSC) which will finalise all policy aspects based on the policy briefs while the policy questions proposed by sectoral ministries will be steered first through a multi-sectoral Project Management Committee (PMC) and subsequently through a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) which will make final recommendations to the PSC for approval. BIDS-NIPN will function as the secretariat to the PAC while the GED will be the secretariat to PSC.

BIDS will provide the technical support for the policy briefs and the subsequent communication strategy. Identifying gaps and analysing current situation of policy making and outcomes of and barriers to implementation of nutrition interventions for improving nutritional situation. The approved policy briefs will be shared widely within the government and also other stakeholders in the field of nutrition. In the process, BIDS will interact with other stakeholders such as the Planning Commission, Ministry of Health, Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC) and Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU) through a formalised process of various committees and various existing nutrition intervention processes such as Scalig UP Nutrition (SUN), Meeting the Undernutrition Challenge (MUCH) and the Suchana: Ending the Cycle of Undernutrition in Bangladesh.

### Impact of Natural Disaster on Education Outcomes: Evidence from Bangladesh

The impact of natural disaster on income, assets and livelihoods is well documented. The literature largely focuses on loss of physical capital (e.g., house, livestock, crop, etc.), its consequences on the income-earning opportunities of households and their coping strategies including migration. What is less understood is the effect on human capital and its long-term consequences.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between natural disasters and human capital formation at school. Specifically, the objective is to learn about how flood affects regular school activities as well as academic outcomes such as passing rate, drop-out, repetition rate, public examination results as well as school level examination attendance and results, etc.

In addition to exhausting available secondary data on education and flood, the study will conduct primary survey to collect household level data to understand the channels that work through household level inputs. The study is expected to provide useful insight on mitigation and adaptation strategies to minimise the impact of flood on education outcome.

### Second Round Tracer Studies under HEQEP

Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) is a flagship project of Ministry of Education with the financial and technical support from the World Bank. The major objective of this project is to improve the quality of teaching-learning and research capabilities of the tertiary education institutions of the country through encouraging innovation and accountability. HEQEP is now at the ninth year of its decade-long life. Therefore, it is the best time to look back and see how far the project has come across in terms of improving the employability and relevant skills of the beneficiary students and see if their skills are up to the expectation of the employers.

This study will attempt to trace and capture different cohorts of university students and graduates at different points in time in their study and professional career to gain knowledge about the transition to the labour market and relevance of university education in Bangladesh.

This study will use both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Structured questionnaire will be used to interview students and graduates from targeted universities and departments. Additionally, data will be collected from the employers of the graduates about the skills and knowledge of the hired graduates and the relevance of university training. The knowledge gained through this study will inform future discussions of policy makers and stakeholders on improvement of quality and relevance of university education.

### Gender Differentiated Impacts of Kerosene Subsidy Reform in Bangladesh

This paper is one of a series developed to examine the gender-differentiated impacts of fossil-fuel subsidies and their reform in Bangladesh, India and Nigeria. It begins with the hypothesis that because women are largely under-represented in decision-making processes relating to energy, and that women typically experience high levels of intra-household inequality and most exposure to indoor air pollution, that subsidies for household cooking fuels, and changes to these subsidies, will have the biggest impacts on women. The research focuses on low-income households in low-and middle-income countries, where the impact of subsidies and their reform on development in general, and on women's development in particular, is likely to be greatest.

## Seminars and Workshops

### Financing for SMEs

A seminar titled "Financing for SMEs" was held on 28 October 2018 at the BIDS Conference Room. Professor Naoyuki Yoshino, Dean and CEO of the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) presented the paper. The seminar was attended by BIDS researchers and academics. Dr. K. A. S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS chaired the seminar.



### Adolescent Exposure to and Attitude towards Violence: Empirical Evidence from Bangladesh



Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised a seminar titled “Adolescent Exposure to and Attitude towards Violence: Empirical Evidence from Bangladesh” on 29 August 2018 at the BIDS Seminar Room. The paper was presented by Dr. K. A. S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS.

The study findings revealed structure (factors) of exposure and attitude towards violence, while providing information that relate to attitude formation and its prevalence, correlates, and associations in a rapidly transforming, low-middle income country in the global South.

The seminar was attended by BIDS researchers and academics. Dr. Kazi Ali Toufique, Research Director, BIDS chaired the seminar.

### Non-Financial Incentives, Selectivity and Performance of Volunteers: Evidence from a Large Scale Natural Field Experiment



A seminar titled “Non-Financial Incentives, Selectivity and Performance of Volunteers: Evidence from a Large Scale Natural Field Experiment” was held on 13 August 2018, Monday at the BIDS Conference Room. Dr. Asadul Islam, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Monash University, Australia presented the paper. The study embeds a large-scale randomized controlled experiment within an existing volunteer tutor programme of the non-government organisation BRAC in Bangladesh to examine the effects of non-financial incentives on volunteers' retention rates and performance. The study also suggests that the attrition rates among volunteers are high when they are offered a performance-contingent public-recognition certificate instead of a participation-based certificate.

### Is there Nexus between Remittances and Private Adaptation Strategy to Cope against Natural Disaster Events? Evidence from the Cyclone Sidr Hit Regions in Southern Bangladesh



Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised a seminar titled “Is there Nexus between Remittances and Private Adaptation Strategy to Cope against Natural Disaster Events? Evidence from the Cyclone Sidr Hit Regions in Southern Bangladesh” on 31 July 2018 at the BIDS Conference Room. Dr. Sakib Mahmud, University of Wisconsin- Superior, USA made the presentation. Dr. Mahmud pointed out several policy implications to support climate adaptation in the vulnerable coastal-based communities.

The seminar was attended by BIDS researchers and academics. Dr. K. A. S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS chaired the seminar.

### Demand Estimation with Strategic Complementarities: Sanitation in Bangladesh



A seminar titled “Demand Estimation with Strategic Complementarities: Sanitation in Bangladesh” was held on 11 July 2018 at the BIDS Conference Room. Dr. Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak, Professor, Department of Economics, Yale University, USA made the presentation. Dr. Mobarak pointed out that in sanitation, subsidies should be targeted to the poor and in high density areas. He also indicated that widely dispersing subsidies produce larger spillover effects on the unsubsidised, without costing the government anymore.

The seminar was attended by BIDS researchers, academics and media. Dr. K. A. S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS chaired the seminar.

### Workshop on Experiments in Development Economics 2018



Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised a workshop on “Experiments in Development Economics” on 18 December 2018 at the BIDS Conference Room.

The first paper was presented by Dr. Minhaj Mahmud (BIDS) on “Individualized Self-learning Program to Improve Primary Education: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment in Bangladesh.” Dr. Abu Shonchoy from Florida International University made his presentation on “Poverty and Migration in the Digital Age: Experimental Evidence on Mobile Banking in Bangladesh” and Mr. Mehrab Bakhtiar from University of Maryland, USA presented a paper on “Training Mentors to Improve Mentee Business Outcomes – Experimental Evidence from Female Owned Microenterprises in Ethiopia.”

The workshop was attended by BIDS researchers and academics. Dr. Atonu Rabbani, University of Dhaka attended the workshop as a discussant. Dr. K. A. S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS chaired the event.

### Workshop on the study Gender Differentiated Impacts of Kerosene Pricing Reform on Rural Households of Bangladesh

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) and International Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD) jointly organised

a workshop on the study Gender Differentiated Impacts of Kerosene Pricing Reform on Rural Households of Bangladesh” on 28 August 2018 at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel.

The study revealed that, depending on the scale of price increases, the income effect is likely to be particularly pronounced for kerosene used by the poor for lighting and for those households, as surveyed in Bangladesh, without access to electricity and therefore with limited opportunities to switch.

Ms Tahreen Tahrima Chowdhury, Research Associate, BIDS presented the study and Laura Merrill, GSI Manager and Senior Policy Advisor, IISD made the keynote remarks. Dr. K. A. S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS, chaired the event.

### Abdul Ghafur Memorial Lecture 2018



Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised Abdul Ghafur Memorial Lecture on 4 November 2018, Sunday at the BIDS Conference Room. This year, the lecture was given by Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) on “Recent Economic Growth Performance of Bangladesh: How Equitably the Benefits were Distributed?”

The event was attended by BIDS researchers and academics. The event was presided over by Dr. K. A. S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS.

### BIDS Mourns

BIDS announces with great sadness the sudden death of Mr. A.H.M. Moazzem Hossain, Editor, *The Financial Express* on 1 August 2018. Mr. Hossain was one of the Senior Fellows of BIDS from 2010 to 2017. He was an internationally renowned journalist and also worked for *The New Nation*, United News of Bangladesh (UNB), *The Dhaka Courier*, and *The Daily Star*.

### BIDS Researchers at International Meetings

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

- Attended the workshop on “Supporting the Least Developed Countries (LDC) in Asia-Pacific in Meeting the Challenge of Resource Mobilization for Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 6-7 December, 2018, sponsored by UN ESCAP. He made two presentations on “Graduation of Asia-Pacific LDCs: The Challenge of Domestic Resource Mobilization” and “Graduation of Asia-Pacific LDCs: The Challenge of External Finance.”
- Participated in the “ADB-Asian Think Tank Development Forum-2018” held in Canberra, Australia during 22-23 August 2018, sponsored by Asian Development Bank (ADB). Dr. Murshid moderated the session on Country Paper Presentations.

#### Dr. Monzur Hossain, Senior Research Fellow

- Attended the conference on “Land Management in Asia: Achieving the SDGs” held in Tokyo, Japan from 9 to 12 December 2018, sponsored by Asian Development Bank Institute, Tokyo. Dr. Hossain presented a paper titled “Land Trust Plus Approaches for Sustainable Land Management in Bangladesh” in the seminar.
- Participated in the regional workshop on “Fiscal Policy in South Asia” held in Nepal on 17-18 September 2018, sponsored by World Bank.
- Attended the “ADB-Asian Think Tank Development Forum-2018” held in Canberra, Australia on 22-23 August, 2018, sponsored by Asian Development Bank (ADB). Dr. Hossain presented a paper titled “Labour Market and Skills Gap in the ICT Sector in Bangladesh: An Exploratory Study.”

#### Dr. Nazneen Ahmed, Senior Research Fellow

- Attended the meeting on “Creating an Enabling and Inclusive Policy and Political Economy Discourse for Trade, Transport and Transit Facilitation in and among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal.”

#### Dr. Minhaj Mahmud, Senior Research Fellow

- Attended the international forum on “China’s Reform and Opening-Up and Poverty Reduction” held in Beijing, China on 1-2 November 2018. Mahmud was a panelist in the session titled “Poverty Reduction in the New Era.” The visit was sponsored by China Development Bank.
- Participated in the seminar on “Asian Development Policy Lecture Series” held in Manila, Philippines during 01-06 October 2018, sponsored by Asian Development Bank (ADB).

#### Dr. Mohammad Mainul Hoque, Research Fellow

- Attended the training on “Advancing South-South Learning in Asia and Evaluation Capacity Development Training” held in South Korea during 3-4 July 2018, sponsored by Independent Evaluation Department of Asian Development Bank.
- Participated in the workshop on “36th Biannual Research and Training Workshop and Advanced course on Program Evaluation” held in Nepal on 10-15 December 2018, sponsored by SANDEE.

#### Dr. Md. Zabid Iqbal, Research Associate

- Participated in the meeting on “AAEA Annual Meeting-2018” held in Washington, D.C., USA from 05 August to 11 August 2018, sponsored by Economic Association (AAEA), Washington, D.C., USA.

#### Ms. Sibana Shahana, Research Associate

- Attended the training on “Advancing South-South Learning in Asia and Evaluation Capacity Development Training” held in South Korea on 3-4 July 2018, sponsored by Independent Evaluation Department of Asian Development Bank.

#### Mr. Shahidul Islam, Research Associate

- Attended the workshop on “5th International ILEM Summer School” held in Turkey during 09-14 July 2018, sponsored by Scientific Studies Association (ILEM) Turkey.

### Call for Journal Articles

Articles are invited for the ‘Bangladesh Development Studies’ (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 and other developing countries. 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 macro-economic issues. For details on submission procedure and authors’ guidelines, please visit the BIDS website ([www.bids.org.bd/publications](http://www.bids.org.bd/publications)).

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Kazi Iqbal

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