



BIDS NEWSLETTER

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BIDS Gets New Director General



Dr. Binayak Sen took over as the new Director General of the Institute from 01 April 2021. Joining the BIDS in 1986, Dr. Sen has a long and celebrated career as a researcher. He is a prominent development economist who has worked on a wide range of issues, including poverty, income inequality, labour market, governance, political economy, and

human development. He worked as a Senior Economist at the World Bank from 2004 to 2009 and Senior Research Fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute from 2016 to 2018. He has over 70 articles and chapters published in peer-reviewed journals and monographs.

Bangabandhuke Kache Theke Dekha: Remembrance by His Contemporaries



Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised an online commemorative event on Bangabandhu titled "Bangabandhuke Kache Theke Dekha: Remembrance by His Contemporaries" on 18 August 2021. M. A. Mannan, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was the Chief Guest of the commemorative event. The distinguished speakers who spoke on the occasion included Professor Rehman Sobhan, Economist and Member, Planning Commission, 1972-74; Dr. Kamal Hossain, Constitutional Expert and Former Minister, Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1972-75; Tofail Ahmed, Political Secretary to Bangabandhu, Former Minister and Parliamentarian; M Syeduzzaman, Secretary, Ministry of Planning, Secretary, Planning Commission, and Chief, External Resources Division, Planning Commission, 1973-75; Dr. M Farashuddin, Private Secretary to Bangabandhu and Former Governor, Bangladesh Bank; Mujahidul Islam Selim, Political leader and Former Student Leader (VP, DUCSU, 1972-73). Dr. Binayak Sen, Director General, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), chaired the event.

From the Editor's Desk

The new surge of COVID-19 in the first half of the current year impacted both the professional and personal lives of the institution. A non-research staff of the BIDS family died of COVID-19, and several members were infected. However, BIDS took several steps to continue its research programmes, thanks largely to the virtual mediums. The first and second half of 2021 saw 13 completed studies and 23 ongoing ones, covering a wide range of issues.

This issue of the newsletter highlights two recently completed studies. The first one is titled *Agriculture Is Not the Main Source of Income of the Rural Economy Anymore: Understanding Structural Changes of Rural Nonfarm Sector from a Developing Country*. It documents broader changes in the RNF sector for a long period, 2000-2016. The education of the household head has been identified as a major force of rural transformation. The second study is titled *Extreme Poverty: The Challenges of Inclusion*, which explores how extreme poverty is different because of the diversity of the underlying factors. It suggests setting up a high-powered interagency platform within the government, which may play its role as the focal point for knowledge, practice, experimentation, and evaluation on poverty.

As a part of commemorating the birth centenary of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, BIDS launched a book in two volumes titled *Readings in Bangladesh Development* (Editors: K. A. S. Murshid, Minhaj Mahmud, and Kazi Iqbal) on 10 March 2021; this two-volume book compiles the journal articles written by the BIDS researchers, past and present, on the country's development story for the last fifty years. In addition, during the period, BIDS organised a total of seven seminars and conferences. Among them, two focus on COVID-19 issues: "Normalising Masks: Health and Economic Implications" and "Linking Economic and Health Concerns."

Although the pandemic affected the researchers' work, they were very active in joining seminars/conferences and presenting their papers through webinars on various occasions at home and abroad. Throughout the year, BIDS witnessed 55 publications by its researchers, of which 21 were published in peer-reviewed national and international journals, including *Economic Modelling*, *International Journal of Health Planning and Management*, *Frontier in Public Health*, *Journal of Affective Disorders*, *Bangladesh Development Studies*, etc. Moreover, BIDS published one research report, three monographs, five issues of *Bangladesh Development Studies* along with an issue of *Bangladesh Unnayan Samikkhya*.

Publications in Peer-reviewed Journals by BIDS Researchers

- Ahmed, M.** (with Nigar Nargis, G. M. Faruque, Iftekharul Huq, Rehana Parveen, S. N. Wadood, A. K. M Ghulam Hussain, and Jeff Drope). 2021. “A Comprehensive Economic Assessment of the Health Effects of Tobacco Use and Implications for Tobacco Control in Bangladesh.” *BMJ*.
- Ahmed, N.** (with Ayesha Banu). “Dreams of Adolescents for Future.” In Selim Jahan (Eds), *Advancing Human Development in Bangladesh: Looking Ahead, National Human Development Report 2021*, forthcoming.
- Ahmed, B. N.** 2021. Does Income Bring Happiness? An Empirical Analysis Using Pseudo-Panel Data from Bangladesh. BIDS Research Report No. 191, forthcoming.
- Begum, A.** 2021 “Gender, Migration and Environmental Change in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna Delta in Bangladesh.” In A. Hans (Eds), *En-gendering Climate Change: Learnings from South Asia*. Publisher: Sage.
- Hossain, M.** (with N. Yoshino and F. Taghizadeh Hesary). 2021. “Optimal Branching Strategy, Local Financial Development, and SMEs Performance.” *Economic Modelling*, 96.
- Hossain, M.** (with N. Yoshino and F. Taghizadeh-Hesary). 2021. “Default Risk, Moral Hazard and Market-based Solution: Evidence from Renewable Energy Market in Bangladesh.” *Economic Modelling*, 95.
- Hossain, M.** 2021. “State-owned Enterprises and Cluster-Based Industrialisation: Evidence from Bangladesh.” In T. Hesary et al. (Eds.), *Reforming State-Owned Enterprises in Asia*. Springer: Singapore.
- Hossain, M.** “বাংলাদেশের অর্থনীতি ও এসএমই খাতের উন্নয়ন: একটি পর্যালোচনা।” *International Journal of SME Development* (Special Issue on Mujib Borsho), forthcoming.
- Hossain, M.** “Exchange Rate Management in Bangladesh: Implications for Macroeconomic Stability and Trade Competitiveness.” In Prof. M. Rahman (Eds.) *Bangladesh Economy in an Evolving Regional and Global Context*, forthcoming.
- Iqbal, K.** (with K. A. Toufique and W. F. Ibon) “Institutions and Rate of Returns of Cattle: Evidence from Bangladesh.” *Asian Development Review*, forthcoming.
- Iqbal, K.** (with W. Abdallah and S. Chowdhury) “Access and Fees in Public Health Care Services for the Poor: Bangladesh as a Case Study.” *Oxford Development Studies*, forthcoming.
- Iqbal, K.** (with I. Jahan, A. Rabbani, and A. S. Shonchoy) “One and a Half Years into the Pandemic in Bangladesh: What Have We Learnt So Far?” *Journal of Bangladesh Studies*, 23(1).
- Karim, A.** (with A. DeWit, S. Sugiyama, and R. Shaw) 2021. COVID-19 and Fiscal Stimulus in South Asia: Implications for Resilience and Sustainable Development. In Indrajit Pal and Rajib Shaw (Eds). *Pandemics Risk, Response and Resilience*. Elsevier, forthcoming.
- Karim, A.** (with A. DeWit and R. Shaw) 2021. “Fiscal Policies and Post COVID-19 Development Challenges: An Overview.” In Shaw R. and Gurtoo A. (Eds), *Global Pandemic and Human Security: Technology and Development Perspective*. Springer Nature, forthcoming.
- Mahmood, T.** (with Sayema Bidisha and Md. Biplob). 2021. “Assessing Food Poverty, Vulnerability and Food Consumption Inequality in the Context of COVID-19: A Case of Bangladesh.” *Social Indicators Research*, 1-24. 10.1007/s11205-020- 02596-1.
- Mahmood, T.** (with Sayema Bidisha and Mahir Rahman). 2021. “Earnings Inequality and the Changing Nature of Work: Evidence from Labour Force Survey Data of Bangladesh.” 10.35188/UNU-WIDER/2021/941-9.
- Mahmood, T.** (with S. H. Bidisha and M. B. Hossain) 2021. “Occupation Based Poverty & Vulnerability In Bangladesh: Insights From COVID-19.” *Journal of Poverty*, 1-21.
- Mahmood, T.** (with M. M. Islam, S. H. Bidisha, I. Jahan, and M. B. Hossain) 2021. “Effects of Remittances on Health Expenditure and Treatment Cost of International Migrant Households in Bangladesh.” *Journal of Governance, Security & Development*. 2(1).
- Mozumder, MGN.** 2021. “Social Conditions of the Innovative Use of Smartphone: A Qualitative Investigation among Young Users in Dhaka,” *Bangladesh Development Studies*, 42(4), 136-156.
- Mozumder, MGN.** (with Emmanuel Frimpong Boamah, and Nadine Shaanta Murshid) 2021. “A Network Understanding of FinTech (in) Capabilities in the Global South.” *Applied Geography*, 135.
- Pabon, N. F.** (with Nazneen Ahmed and Rizwana Islam). 2021. “বাংলাদেশের ওষুধ শিল্প: সমস্যা, সম্ভাবনা ও চ্যালেঞ্জ।” *বাংলাদেশ উন্নয়ন সমীক্ষা: খণ্ড ৩৮*।
- Pabon, N. F.** (with Rabeya Khatoun et al.) 2021. “Aggregation, Asymmetry and Common Factors for Bangladesh’s Exchange Rate-Trade Balance Relation.” *Empirical Economics*, September.
- Rahman, M. A.** (with S. Haque, Bidisha and T. Mahmood). 2021. “Earnings Inequality and the Changing Nature of Work: Evidence from Labour Force Survey Data of Bangladesh.” *WIDER Working Paper 2021/7*. Helsinki: UNU-WIDER.
- Rahman, M. A.** (with T. A. Dhira, A. R. Sarker, and J. Mehareen) 2021. “Validity and reliability of the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) among university students of Bangladesh.” *PLOS ONE* 16(12): e0261590.
- Sarker, A. R.** (with N. Ali.) 2021. “Status of Handwashing with Microbial Agents and COVID-19 Pandemic in Bangladesh” (Bangla article). *Bangladesh Unnayan Samikkhya*, Issue: 38.

Sarker, A. R. (with M. Sultana, K. Alam, and A. Morton). 2021. "Households' Out-of-pocket Expenditure for Healthcare in Bangladesh: A Financing Incidence Analysis." *International Journal of Health Planning and Management*, 1-12. DOI: 10.1002/hpm.3275

Sarker, A. R. (with E. T. Tagoe, N. Sheikh, A. Morton, J. Nonvignon, L. Williams, and I. Megiddo). 2021. "COVID-19 Vaccination in Lower-Middle Income Countries: National Stakeholder Views on Challenges, Barriers, and Potential Solutions." *Frontiers in Public Health*, 1145. DOI: 10.3389/fpubh.2021.709127

Sarker, A. R. (with J. Mehareen, D. Anan, and M. Rahman). 2021. "Prevalence and Socio-demographic Correlates of Depression, Anxiety, and Co-morbidity during COVID-19: A Cross-sectional Study among Public and Private University Students of Bangladesh." *Journal of Affective Disorders Reports*, 5:100179.

Sarker, A. R. (with KAS Murshid, T. Mahmood, and N. Azad). 2021. "COVID-19 in Bangladesh: Prevalence, KAP and Heterogeneous Shocks under 'General Holiday' - An Exploratory Study Based on an Online Survey." *The Bangladesh Development Studies*, forthcoming.

Sarker, A. R. (with M. Khanam and E. Hasan). 2021. "Prevalence and Factors of Hypertension among Bangladeshi Adults." *High Blood Pressure & Cardiovascular Prevention*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40292-021-00461-x>

Sarker, A. R. 2021. "Health-related Quality of Life among Older Citizens in Bangladesh." *SSM-Mental Health*. Elsevier 1, 100031. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmmh.2021.100031>

Sarker, A. R. (with M. Khanam) 2021. "Socio-economic Inequalities in Diabetes and Prediabetes among Bangladeshi Adults." *Diabetology International*. 10.1007/s13340-021-00556-9

Sarker, A. R. (with S. Ahmed, F. Dorin, S. Moinuddin, et al.) 2021. "The Economic Burden of Rotavirus Hospitalization among Children < 5 Years of Age in Selected Hospitals in Bangladesh." *Vaccine*. 10.1016/j.vaccine.2021.10.003

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Sen, B. 2021. "Sahitto, Otimari o Somaj" (Literature, Pandemic and Society). *Bangladesh Unnayan Samikkhya*, Issue: 38.

Sen, B. (with P. Dorosh, and M. Ahmed.) 2021. "Moving out of Agriculture in Bangladesh: The Role of Farm, Non-Farm and Mixed Households." *World Development*, 144, 105479.

Sen, B. (with Ruth Hill and Maria Genoni) 2021. "Poverty in Bangladesh in the 2010s-Progress, Drivers, and Vulnerabilities: An Introduction." *Bangladesh Development Studies*, 42(2-3).

Shahana, S. 2021. "শ্রমবাজারে দক্ষতার চাহিদা ও স্নাতকোত্তরদের প্রস্তুতি: বাংলাদেশের প্রেক্ষিতে পর্যালোচনা," *বাংলাদেশ উন্নয়ন সমীক্ষা*: খন্ড ৩৮।

Study Highlights

Agriculture Is Not the Main Source of Income of the Rural Economy Anymore: Understanding Structural Changes of Rural Nonfarm Sector from a Developing Country

Study Team: Kazi Iqbal, Nahid Ferdous Pabon, and Wahid Ferdous Ibon

The perception that rural non-farm (RNF) is a low productive transient sector that will eventually decay and vanish with economic development has long been proved wrong. It is argued that the high productivity of RNF employment has led to structural changes in the rural economy and thus in overall economic growth. The growth of RNF not only shifts labour from the farm sector, but it also generates additional employment for the rural workforce and thus helps reduce poverty. Studies show that the involvement of an additional household member in RNF reduces the likelihood of being poor; farmworkers are more likely to be poor compared with non-farm workers. As a result, RNF development has become an integral part of developing countries' rural poverty reduction strategy.

Structural transformation in rural economies in developing countries is inevitable as the economy grows. The sectoral shares of output and employment in the rural economy undergo a substantial transformation, generally following

the patterns of the overall economy: the share of agriculture declines and the share of nonfarm comprising manufacturing and services increases. However, the dynamics of the RNF sector is very complex and nonlinear, with a wide range of determinants and consequences, depending on the local contexts and policies. Hence, it is imperative to take stock of the changes in the rural nonfarm economy that have significant policy implications.

This study contributes to this discussion by documenting some broad patterns change in rural nonfarm occupations and income and identifying some household-level characteristics that contributed to such changes in rural Bangladesh for the period 2000-2016, using several rounds of multiple sources of household data. To highlight the changes in RNF activities, the present study, in particular, focuses on the evolution and determinants of the i) distribution of farm and non-farm income and employment and ii) diversification vs specialisation with respect to RNF. To understand the household level factors behind the broader changes, we specifically study the role of farmland ownership, education of the household head, and remittances, both domestic and international. This study is an important contribution to the development discourse of the structural changes in the rural economy of developing countries.

In addition to the farm versus nonfarm dichotomy, this study discusses how the distribution of wage and self-employment of RNF income and employment changes over time. This question is important as it has strong implications for rural income distribution. Studies noted that while the impact of RNF activities on poverty reduction is well established, the distributional impact was still not unambiguous. If the share of nonfarm wage income is higher for the high-income groups, the endogenous transformation of the rural economy from farm to nonfarm may result in adverse distributional consequences. And this justifies the intervention of the government to ensure inclusive rural transformation.

The analysis is done based on four rounds of Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), five rounds of Labour Force Survey (LFS), and two rounds of Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey (BIHS). The rationale for using several sources is that some sources have some advantages over others in some specific aspects. For example, HIES is the appropriate dataset for income and expenditure while the focus of LFS is employment; the BIHS offers a rare household-level panel in rural Bangladesh.

The study finds that the types of RNF occupations have not changed much over the years – low productive service sector jobs still dominate the occupation profiles. The share of labour income from both farm and non-farm in the total income of rural households has increased. It implies that rural households now rely less on remittances and transfers.

Though the share of farm income has remained fairly constant over the years, the share of non-farm income has increased significantly in recent years. The increase in nonfarm income is largely driven by the nonfarm wage income of the richer households, indicating adverse distributional consequences. By studying the determinants of the higher share of RNF income and employment, it is found that landlessness is still an important determinant of RNF activities; this may suggest that employment out of necessity still persists extensively. More educated households tend to move away from farming. Both international and domestic remittances are not found to be associated with a higher share of nonfarm income; instead, they tend to increase the share of farm employment and income.

The transition from diversification to specialisation is evident from the household data. Households with multiple working members are now more likely to be engaged in either farm or nonfarm jobs than before. There are strong indications that income from ‘mixed’ sources of farm, and nonfarm has declined and ‘only nonfarm’ source has increased over time. The education of the household head is found to be a robust determinant of specialisation in nonfarm occupations.

This study contributes to the literature on the RNF sector in several major ways. First, we systematically document broader changes in the RNF sector for a long period: 2000–2016. This long span of time allows us to discern the changes with precision. Second, we use multiple data sources to triangulate our main results, which make our results very robust. Third, our exposition of specialisation vs diversification sheds new light on how the rural

economy has evolved. We found strong indications of specialisation in RNF activities, which suggests that the diversification out of risk-sharing in the rural economy has been reduced. Fourth, the education of the household head has been identified as a major catalyst of rural structural changes. It is an important policy variable that can be leveraged to bring about directed changes in the rural economy.

Our study also adds to the growing literature on the RNF sector in Bangladesh. While RNF has been an issue of particular interest, for long, in Bangladesh, detailed documentation of the broader structural changes in RNF is missing in the literature. The role of growth in agriculture, connectivity and rural towns on RNF activities has been the mainstay of the recent RNF literature in Bangladesh.

Education has been found to be a critical force of rural transformation, which promotes higher RNF employment and specialisation in RNF. Based on the results, it can be hypothesised that there will be an education induced transformation from farm to nonfarm at the initial stage of development. As the level of education increases for all, due to policy, for example, the arbitrage opportunities in RNF will decrease, and more educated persons will be engaged in agriculture, giving rise to higher productivity and commercialisation of agriculture in the long run. It remains to be explored further.

Extreme Poverty: The Challenges of Inclusion

Study Team: *Zulfiqar Ali, Badrun Nessa Ahmed, Mathilde Maitrot, Joe Devine, and Geof Wood*

In contrast to conventional poverty analysis, the study explores how extreme poverty is different because of the diversity of the underlying factors. The study also looks at the multi-dimensional nature of the extremely poor's well-being and explores how they experience their marginalisation in different forms. The study adopted a mixed-method approach and analysed data obtained from various secondary sources, including HIES, MICS and EEP/Shiree. It also carried out interviews with national and local level poverty experts.

The study finds extreme poverty is different from moderate poverty not only with regard to the poverty gap and sensitivity to economic growth, but also in terms of overlap with marginalised groups and women, and agency; further contrasts between moderate and extreme poverty can be expressed as experiencing exclusion as well as or instead of adverse incorporation, having less favourable dependency ratios contributing to the greater fragility of livelihoods in the event of ill-health, accidents, morbidity and lack of jobs; having a higher proportion of female-headed households with attendant social discriminations and exclusions, and having more idiosyncratic rather uniform explanatory conditions. The study also finds that although economic inequality is hardly correlated with the incidence of extreme poverty, borne out by other drivers above, horizontal and geographical inequalities appear more strongly with recently divergent regional trends in overall poverty and emerging poverty pockets within regions; the distribution of poverty is modified when multi- dimensional

poverty is considered as indicated by HIES 2016. In some instances (e.g., Sylhet and Northwest Districts), the relationship is inverse, though the indicators are skewed towards women and their freedoms. Extreme poor people have volatile livelihoods, sensitive over time to many challenging internal and external conditions and events, which weakens the efficacy of graduation measures and increases the need for resilience analysis; poor people (extreme and moderate) experience churning (around snapshot thresholds used for measurement), complicating both targeting approaches and the choice between household or community-wide intervention strategies in generally poor locations. Political manipulation arising from the unequal conditions of the political economy compounds the problem of access to resources, opportunities and social protection, inducing dependency and weak voice among the extremely poor; the extreme

poor are especially vulnerable compared to other socio-economic groups in dealing with hazards (predictable but challenging events like floods) and shocks (large scale sudden events like cyclones and tidal surges, perhaps increasing due to climate change).

The study suggests policy needs to be re-imagined away from 'business as usual' programmes and projects which: reinforce casualisation, do not engage with rights, entitlements, and the inter-generational reproduction of poverty, do not engage with multi-dimensional, do not engage with climate change shocks and environmental hazards, and fail to tackle both gender discrimination and the barrier to access problems especially faced by marginalised communities. The study also points to the need for setting up a high-powered inter-agency platform within the government which may work as the focal point for knowledge, practice, experimentation, and evaluation related to the eradication of extreme poverty.

Completed Studies

Tracer Study on Graduates of Tertiary-Level Colleges

Study Team: *Minhaj Mahmud, Tahreen Tahrima Chowdhury, Ahmed Adib, Ziauddin M. Nasrullah, Md. Taimoor Ibn Bashar, and Raisul Akram*

Efficient and productive human resources are the crucial prerequisites for economic growth and social development in Bangladesh, particularly in the context of global technological advancement. The National University (NU) affiliated college sub-sector comprises the largest segment (about two-thirds) of tertiary-level students in Bangladesh and, thus, has a critical role to play in fostering a skilled workforce and promoting growth agenda in the country.

The Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) was contracted by the College Education Development Project (CEDP) to conduct a Tracer Study of Graduates of the NU affiliated tertiary colleges with a view to tracing the graduates from a sample of NU affiliated tertiary colleges and assess the labour market outcome and relevance of tertiary college-level education. Keeping in view the challenges unfolded by Covid-19, the study also documents the impact of the pandemic on economic activities, job opportunities, and changes in career development strategies among graduates.

The study uses a quantitative approach, using structured and semi-structured questionnaires on a purposive sample of tertiary colleges. A total of four separate surveys were carried out, one each for graduates, current students, institution heads (teachers), and employers. Surveys except the employers' survey were conducted over phone or email.

Results show that only 5 per cent of graduates do not belong to the labour force. The proportions of females and males among salaried graduates are 11.64 per cent and 30.74 per cent. Females are finding it more difficult than males to land a job and more females are involved in further study to increase their job opportunities. An undergraduate degree is inadequate to get an expected job.

There is a significantly higher chance of employability for males compared to females. Graduates with high household

income and medium household income have higher chances of being employed than graduates with low household income (below BDT 20,000). COVID-19 has an impact on graduates and current students. Around 88 per cent of the current students' household income fell during the pandemic.

The teachers' survey reveals that the lab facilities and equipment are inadequate to support research activities and students' learning. Half of the respondents stated that their colleges do provide job placement facilities for the students. Around 80 per cent of teachers stated that the teachers provided individual support to their students in getting a job, and around 47 per cent reported that there is a provision of career counselling. Online classes are "somewhat interactive" but of "somewhat lower quality than regular classes" as perceived by the teachers. Teachers taking online classes faced difficulties similar to students.

Employers' survey findings show that the large majority of employers reported never doing partnerships with college or training institutes or job fairs for recruitment. Most of them reported a moderate possibility of hiring NU college graduates in the next three years. ICT, Communication, Problem-solving, English, and Teamwork were cited as the most important areas that universities should train students in.

The policy on facilitating digital education and learning will be important in the post-pandemic period. In fact, focus is needed on capacity building of faculty, arranging financial and logistic support for the effective use of technology for teaching and learning, and incentivising faculty members for conducting research.

A Comparative Study on Clusters and non-Clusters Based SME Development in Bangladesh

Study Team: *Kazi Iqbal, Kazi Ali Toufique, Zabid Iqbal, and Nahid Ferdous Pabon*

There are nearly 7.9 million small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Bangladesh, including micro-enterprises contributing to gross domestic product (GDP) at an estimated 25 per cent. SMEs account for 11 per cent of the

country's industrial establishments, 30 per cent of industrial employment and 40 per cent of the manufacturing output. While SMEs have been considered one of the few sectors that will drive the economy to a higher growth trajectory without compromising the perverse distributional impact, these sectors are still not competitive domestically and globally in Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has put forward several strategies for the development of the SME sector. Along with the GoB, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) is also working for cluster development in Bangladesh. The cluster/network development programme is one of the SME programmes managed within the Private Sector Development Branch of UNIDO. Following the spirit of the 7FYP of the government and UNIDO's effort to develop an efficient and productive SME sector, the SME Foundation, the apex body for the development of the SME sector in Bangladesh, conducted a study on the comparative performance of the cluster-based SMEs vis-a-vis non-clustered SMEs.

This study provides important insight into how clustered SMEs are different from non-clustered ones and the rationale for differential treatments highlighted in 7FYP.

Institutions and Rate of Return of Cattle in Bangladesh

Study Team: *Kazi Iqbal, Kazi Ali Toufique, and Wahid Ferdous Ibon*

This study extends the recent debate on the rate of return of cattle rearing in India, triggered by Anagol et al. (2017), Gehrke and Grimm (2018), and others to the Bangladesh context and finds that the apparent paradox of widespread cattle rearing, despite negative return, in India is absent. Using a nationally representative two-year panel data of rural Bangladesh, the study finds that the average and marginal returns of cow and bullock are positive and high for both years. Results also show that appreciation of the value of cattle is the major contributing factor for positive returns. The existence of a cattle market where they can be freely traded for slaughtering or production of milk or for any other purpose, which is constrained to various degrees in India, is the key to high positive returns in Bangladesh.

A Macroeconomic Modelling Framework for Bangladesh

Study Team: *A K Enamul Haque, Mohammad Yunus, Nazneen Ahmed, Rizwana Islam, and Md. Salimullah*

Macroeconomic models provide analytical answers to explain both exogenous and endogenous shocks. It has been used to describe and illustrate operations of an economy or of a region. These models use macroeconomic relationships (equations and identities) to understand how economic agents adjust their activities for any given change or changes. Economists and policymakers often appreciate the results of macroeconomic models as it gives a clear depiction of the impacts of policy changes. As there is no integrated economic model housed within BIDS that can be readily used for this purpose, this research has attempted to develop capacity within BIDS to house a complete macroeconomic model.

This research has developed a mechanism to upgrade the Input-output Table by using current macro-economic data to

produce a social accounting matrix. While updating the input-output table, the research team has tried to coordinate and develop uniform codes with the BBS data to automate updating the input-output table using data from various BBS surveys. Furthermore, in the exercise of updating the SAM, this research has been successful in developing STATA codes to integrate EXCEL based input-output tables, export and import data, macro-economic data from the Bangladesh Economic Reviews, HIES results, and also LFS results to understand the impact of changes on the economy. In an attempt to examine if the model can predict various short-term policy implications, the research has tested the macro-economic outlook based on Covid-19 impacts and examined its impacts on economic activities of different sectors within Bangladesh, and household income. More specifically, the analysis focuses on supply-side implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on three major sectors of Bangladesh's economy, i.e., agriculture, industry, and service. The findings indicated that a drop in trade, consumption and service sector activities led to a drop in production or build-up of inventories or drop in imports, and the supply in the market for commodities had a much higher impact in the first three months of COVID-19.

Cattle Population in India: Do Institutions Matter?

Study Team: *Kazi Iqbal, Kazi Ali Toufique, and Wahid Ferdous Ibon*

This study uses Indian livestock census data to show that states, where slaughter laws are more stringent, perform better in terms of growth of cattle population as compared to states where slaughter acts are more enabling. The study also shows that the growth in cattle population is caused by an increase in female crossbred cattle and more so in the states where slaughter rules are very restrictive. Despite the complete ban on cow slaughter in some states, they do not show any balance between male and female cows. These results are non-intuitive and have strong political and policy implications but require further investigation.

Impact of Migration on Nutrition Condition of Children Under Five Years of Age in the Rural Households of Bangladesh

Study Team: *Kashfi Rayan and Maruf Ahmed*

The study examines the role of migration (both internal and international migration) on the nutritional status of children under five years of age in rural households of Bangladesh. The study contributes to establishing the direct and positive relationship between children living in international migrant households and their Weight-for-age (WAZ) and Height-for-age (HAZ) z-score compared to children living in non-migrant households. Using both OLS and IV regression methods on BIHS Dataset (2015), this study provides to-date empirical evidence on the relationship between migration and nutrition in rural areas of Bangladesh. Five methods were employed to check for the robustness of the findings and examine the variations in the magnitude of nutritional indicators across these different models. Also, two different instruments (District wise sex ratio in 2011 and percentage of international migrant households in districts in 2011) were used to deal with endogeneity problems with migration and international migration.

The study findings show that living in a migrant household increases the children's Weight-for-age z score by 0.9 to 2.5 standard deviations and Height-for-age z score by 1.4 to 2.2 standard deviations, compared to children living in non-migrant households. However, the magnitude of the findings changes and increases when the focus is riveted on 'international migration' exclusively. Living in an international migrant household increases the child z score by 1.7 to 4.5 standard deviations for Weight-for-age and 2.8 to 3.8 standard deviations for Height-for-age z-scores, compared to children living in non-migrant households.

COVID-19 and Fiscal Stimulus in South Asia: Implications for Resilience and Sustainable Development

Study Team: *Azreen Karim, Andrew DeWit, Satoka Sugiyama, and Rajib Shaw*

The world continues to be gripped by COVID-19, though the pandemic's impact varies across countries and regions. The South Asian case is illustrative. The region is marked by inherent socioeconomic and other vulnerabilities, including high population density, relatively poor health care, and limited water sanitation facilities. South Asian countries also evince varying levels of damage from the pandemic.

This paper examines the region's circumstances as of November 2020 using macroeconomic data, to explore varied pandemic impacts and fiscal policy responses. We also discuss the COVID-19 fund formed at the South Asian regional level with contributions from all eight South Asian countries. Our analysis includes each country's external and internal share of fiscal stimulus and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). In an argument for integrating resilience and development frameworks, the paper analyses Japan's example of national resilience planning and related sustainable development frameworks. Findings indicate that a sustainable recovery is advantaged by the fiscal stimulus that can be linked to extant developmental frameworks.

The Determinants of Household Disaster Preparedness Behaviour in Bangladesh

Study Director: *Azreen Karim*

This study examines the possible determinants of household disaster preparedness behaviour, focusing on knowledge and perception and prior damage and employment channels of disaster experience. Using ICCHL Survey of 143,980 households and 12 natural disasters covering 64 disaster-affected districts in Bangladesh, the study finds that disaster and climate knowledge and perception are strong predictors of preparedness adoption, explaining around 1.46-1.51 per cent of formal education and nearly 7.39-7.68 per cent of female education compared to the mean. This finding strongly rejects the possibility of endogeneity of income and wages as well. Evidence strongly suggests that disaster preparedness is almost 76 per cent effective in mitigating per capita net income loss via the unemployment channel. This provides a strong signal towards loss mitigation through the employment effect. However, demand-side interventions provide mixed signalling through per capita income and wealth via production channels emphasising the government's various support package interventions. Policy effectiveness in terms of the uptake of preparedness measures might also depend on the households' behavioural responses. The efficacy of household responses could deliberately depend on the complementarities of demand-

side policy responsiveness and supply-side government actions and other public interventions. The study suggests that integration of development and disaster risk reduction policies could further reduce the number of climate losses, implying integrated impacts across various SDG targets.

Social Conditions of the Innovative of Smartphones; A Qualitative Investigation among Young Users in Dhaka

Study Director: *MGN Mozumder*

Concerns about the adverse impacts of using smartphones are common in the literature. However, there is insufficient research on whether users make innovative use of the device. If they do, what is the nature of the creative use of smartphones? What are the social conditions that facilitate the innovative use of the smart device? This study seeks to answer these questions by investigating the use of smartphones among teenagers in Dhaka. The respondents of this research are purposively selected from the secondary schools located in five different areas of Dhaka city. Snowballing technique was used to identify the 44 avid users. The findings of the study show that respondents employ innovative strategies of escaping supervision: installing software, e.g., AppsLock, Gallery Lock, and CM on social media—"totally black-listed." They also read using Gutenberg Apps and go online to learn how to wear hijab "smartly." Advance users heavily use smartphones to learn software programming, prepare science projects, and do photography for art exhibitions. Most importantly, the study identified three facilitating conditions of the creative use of smartphones: friends, events, and parents. These social conditions constitute an ecosystem that facilitates the innovative dispositions of the young users of smartphones.

Development of the National Adolescent Strategy (NAS) in Bangladesh

Study Team: *Nazneen Ahmed and S M Zahedul Islam Chowdhury*

Over one fifth or 22 per cent (over 32 million) of the total population of Bangladesh, a densely populated country in South Asia, currently falls under the 10 to 19 years age group (UNICEF (2017), an age group defined as adolescence by the WHO (2014). One-third of these children continue to live below the international poverty line. Due to various reasons, children and adolescents often have limited opportunities to express themselves. Expression of independent opinions and participation in decision-making is often impeded due to traditional views about children and because parents control them to work or study hard.

The main purpose of the task is to develop a comprehensive National Adolescence Strategy (NAS) for Bangladesh. The strategy needed to articulate priorities and plans in the context of adolescent-sensitive responses for emergencies disability, ethnicity, gender, reproductive health, nutrition HIV/AIDS and enhance tools for generating evidence to support the country's progress in achieving its international and national commitment with regard to the 7th Five Year Plan (2016-2020) and SDG (2105-2030), etc. A mixed-method approach consisting of both quantitative and qualitative methods and tools was used. This involves key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with adolescents, community leaders, private sector employers, and government and non-government stakeholders at the national and sub-national levels and survey with parents/caregivers, etc.

Healthcare for Persons with Disability in the Time of Corona

Study Director: *Anwara Begum*

About 1.5 crore people live with disabilities in Bangladesh. The country has suffered tremendously while trying to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. The healthcare system faced unprecedented challenges in adjusting to the increased demand for medical care of COVID-19 patients. For persons with disabilities, accessing and availing healthcare became exceedingly difficult during the pandemic, placing them at a higher risk than the general populace.

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic came as a difficult hurdle to these individuals who are often heavily reliant on caregivers, sighted guides, interpreters, and additional resources for their survival and manoeuvring. They are faced with limitations when availing healthcare from health centres. Most hospitals lack accessible structural designs like large enabling toilets and washbasins for wheelchair occupants. These hospitals are not equipped with trained doctors and healthcare providers who are efficient and sympathetic in treating persons with disabilities.

The primary objective of this study is to understand the severity of constraints, inequality in access to healthcare of persons with disability who coped with Covid-19 during this pandemic. The predicament of persons with disability is two-fold: the labour market is almost inaccessible for them and sharp barriers to accessing basic essential services. This qualitative research delineated a case, one out of the total persons with disabilities responded positively to receiving the announced disability allowance. It underscores the financial hardship that many persons with disability experience. With the outbreak novel corona virus, their burden has increased and it is almost a double blow for them.

Epidemiological and Economic Burden of Dengue in Dhaka in 2019, Bangladesh

Study Team: *Abdur Razzaque Sarker, S M Zahedul Islam Chowdhury, and Maruf Ahmed*

Dengue, a mosquito-borne viral disease, poses a tremendous threat to public health and imposes a substantial economic burden in Bangladesh. A growing literature shows that dengue imposes an enormous socioeconomic burden on households, healthcare systems, and health expenditures by the governments in endemic countries, particularly during the outbreak. In this context, this study aims to estimate the epidemiological and economic burden of dengue in Dhaka, in 2019, from a societal perspective. A cross-sectional study design was adopted for this study. A combination of three different surveys was conducted to address the study objectives: (i) a community-based household survey for the epidemiological burden of dengue in Dhaka city, (ii) a hospital-based dengue patients' survey for estimating the economic burden of dengue at the household level, and (iii) a hospital survey for capturing the provider cost of dengue patients. A total of 1,176 households were surveyed from both Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

The study finds the prevalence of dengue patients is about 1.87 per cent. The prevalence is higher (2.27 per cent) in DSCC than in DNCC (1.37 per cent). The highest dengue prevalence (2.01 per cent) is observed among the adults aged

between 19 and 50 years (2.01 per cent), females (2.19 per cent), and small households (4.07 per cent). The risk for dengue infection is higher for people who did not use mosquito nets (3.85 per cent) and the lowest for mosquito repellents (2.39 per cent). Dengue prevalence is the highest (3.38 per cent) among those who visit/walk the parks regularly evening and morning.

A total of 302 hospitalised confirmed dengue patients were enrolled for the economic burden of the dengue study. The average economic cost on treating the dengue patient is BDT 33,817 (US\$ 406.06) from a household perspective, whereas BDT 22,379 (US\$ 268.72) and BDT 47,230 (US\$ 567.12) are required for treating dengue cases from public hospitals and private hospitals, respectively. Further, BDT 6,076 (US\$ 73) is spent by the public hospital per patient per episode of dengue.

The societal (household + provider) cost of treatment per dengue episode was BDT 39,893 (US\$ 479), however, the average societal cost of treatment was BDT 28,455 (US\$ 341.67) and BDT 47,230 (US\$ 567.12), if the patient was treated in public and private facilities, respectively, in Bangladesh. The poorest households spend 139 per cent of their total household income for treating dengue cases, which indicate they often relied on savings, borrowing from friends and families, and even selling assets.

The findings of this study acknowledged the substantial health and economic burden of dengue infection among Dhaka city dwellers, which underscores the urgent need for an effective national dengue prevention strategy to bring down the dengue prevalence and reduce the economic burden of households. Various community-based awareness programmes should be initiated and monitored to wipe out the Aedes mosquito completely. Various social protection schemes, including 'Shasthyo Surokhsha Karmasuchi (SSK), may also be introduced in urban Dhaka for poor and vulnerable households to tackle the catastrophic health burden against dengue infections.

The Lived Dystopia of the Rohingya: Liminalisation, Demonisation, and Expulsion

Study Director: *MGN Mozumder*

The prospect and willingness of the Rohingyas to repatriate are largely conditioned by their experience of living in Myanmar. Discussions on repatriating the Rohingyas are likely to fail not because they are unwilling to return, but mainly because of the lack of reasonable initiatives to address the deep-rooted animosity against the minority group prevalent in the country from which they had to flee. This paper analyses the findings of the 50 in-depth interviews of the refugees encamped in Cox's Bazar. It presents ten instances of injustice, nine examples of forced payments, and systemic discrimination against the Rohingyas in Myanmar. Twenty-eight per cent of the respondents reported that at least one of the family members or relatives was killed during the atrocities in 2017. The study finds that not all Buddhists participated in the attack against the Rohingyas; some reportedly helped the victims find safe shelter. The Rohingyas in Bangladesh suffer from an insufficient supply of relief during the last days of a relief distribution cycle. To survive, they take loans and seek illegal means of finding employment outside the camp. While awaiting the perpetrators to be brought to justice, some Rohingyas remain optimistic about a peaceful

return to where they belong: Myanmar. And others are scared of even thinking of going back to the place, where they witnessed both their homes and hopes burnt into ashes. Besides proposing two short-term measures—“burden sharing” and “internal flight alternative”—this paper underscores the need for a novel approach in finding a durable solution to the problem.

Impact Analysis of Vulnerable Group Feeding Programme (VGF) in Bangladesh

Study Director: *Mitali Parvin*

In Bangladesh, safety nets are formal and informal ways of protecting people from poverty where formal safety nets include various transfer programmes designed to play both a redistributive and risk reduction role, and the traditional role of safety nets is to redistribute income and resources to the needy in society so that the impact of poverty is reduced.

This study examines the process of targeting, selection, and benefit distribution, including the extent of leakage associated with selected safety net programmes. The study employed a range of research methods (questionnaire survey, FGD, Key Informant Interview, and case studies) to collect data. The findings suggest that lobbying with chairman/member or local influential persons is crucial for getting the VGF card for safety net programs. The beneficiaries were asked whether they had to make any payment to be selected under the specific programme (i.e. for getting a card). No incidence of bribe/graft was reported in the situation of VGF. Many problems associated with targeting and leakage can be minimised if greater emphasis is placed on monitoring and evaluation. Programme monitoring should be supplemented by developing the capacity of line ministries to monitor programmes on a day-to-day basis.

Ongoing Studies

Labour Market and Skill Gap Analyses in the IT Sector of Bangladesh

Study Team: *Monzur Hossain, Tahreen Tahrira Chowdhury, and Nahian Azad*

In realising the digital Bangladesh vision, the importance of developing the ICT industry is enormous. Given the prospect of demographic dividend and favourable policy diffusions, the ICT sector in Bangladesh has the potential to capture a certain share of the global offshore industry and contribute to the country's digital transformation and subsequently to economic growth and development. Labour market outcomes and skills patterns would play an instrumental role in the further development of the ICT industry in Bangladesh. The study will attempt to analyse the skills gap in a succinct manner to understand the dynamics of the labour market and future demand for skills in this sector that would be key for the growth and development of the ICT sector. A survey of 146 firms and about 250 employees has already been conducted. The survey sample included 146 IT/ITES, ISP and call centre and BPO firms for assessing their employees' skills gap. The majority of the samples will be taken from Dhaka and some from Chattogram, Jashore, and Sylhet.

Food Insecurity, Extreme Poverty, and Underemployment in Marginal/Backward Areas

Study Team: *Mohammad Yunus, Binayak Sen, Mohammad Mainul Hoque, Md. Zabid Iqbal, Mitali Parvin, Mohammad Riaz Uddin, and Kashfi Rayan*

The Haor region is situated in north-eastern Bangladesh forms part of the Meghna basin. There are about 373 haors located in the seven districts of Sunamganj, Habiganj, Netrokona, Kishoreganj, Sylhet, Maulvibazar and Brahmanbaria, covering 1.99 million ha with a population of 19.37 million. The haor areas account for 27 per cent of the country's total boro production, 15 per cent of the country's total rice production and around 6.6 per cent of national GDP. Due to adverse agroecological environments and lack of public infrastructure investments and other development programmes, the haor areas are particularly vulnerable to seasonal shocks and remain as 'ecologically vulnerable poverty pockets'.

Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) is generally used to estimate poverty and other socio-economic welfare indicators which are generated every five years. However, for 'ecologically vulnerable' and 'economically marginalised' areas like the Haor region, estimates of

short-term reflect those seasonal changes of the socio-economic conditions of haor-population would have been conducive in designing effective policies for eradicating poverty and creating employment.

This study will measure seasonal poverty, food insecurity, health, and nutritional status, and other indicators such as employment rate, school enrolment rate, women empowerment, livelihood options, migration and occupational status, etc.; examine how changes in seasonal food insecurity, poverty, and nutritional status are linked with the households, local, and national socioeconomic factors (e.g., assets, land owned, income, educational level, etc.); and examine linkages between the labour market indicators and food insecurity, the reach and effectiveness of existing social safety net programs, etc. Finally, the study will suggest specific policies to improve the situation of the backward haor region.

Covid-19 and SMEs: Early Evidence on Impact and Coping Strategies

Study Team: *Kazi Iqbal, Nahid Ferdous Pabon, and Tanveer Mahmood*

In this initial stage of the COVID-19 induced pandemic, most governments in the world, particularly in developing countries, face the challenges of informed policymaking because the evidence is short in supply. Early evidence on the pandemic helps inform policymakers to set priorities and respond quickly and efficiently. To this end, the study will generate early micro-evidence of the impact of COVID-19 on SMEs and their workers, given the importance of the SME sector in Bangladesh.

Labour Market and Skills Gap Analyses Healthcare: Nursing and Care

Study Team: *Anwara Begum and Raisul Awal Mahmood*

Despite Bangladesh's progress in the healthcare sector over the past decades, its fulfilment of constitutional obligations and global commitments is severely constrained by shortages of professional and technical skills in the healthcare sector. The lacunae are in an adequate supply of qualified, experienced, and specialised nursing professionals. Measured in terms of “skills gap”, “imbalance” between demand for and supply of required skills, “inappropriate skill mix”, or “inequitable distribution” across rural and urban areas, Bangladesh is experiencing a severe shortage of nursing professionals.

This study will analyse the projected demand for and supply of nursing professionals in Bangladesh in the next 10-year period, 2020 to 2030, to help the country better plan the capacity and quality of nursing training systems. Its major focus will be two major areas of the nursing profession in Bangladesh: demand for and supply of nurses in the country, and policy conclusions towards harnessing supply-demand imbalances.

This study will use both secondary and primary data that comprise structured quantitative surveys of hospitals, employees and expert opinion through qualitative analysis.

Labour Market Study for Skills for Employment Investment Project: Agro-food Processing Sector

Study Team: *M Asaduzzaman, M Harunur Rashid Bhuyan, Ms. Kashfi Rayan, and Md. Bellal Hossain*

The agro-processing industry is an important part of the manufacturing sector of Bangladesh. It has a significant global impact on economic development and poverty reduction, in both urban and rural communities. The export performance of the agro-processing industry in Bangladesh has been improving gradually in the last couple of years; in 2020-21, it hit 1.0 billion US dollars in export earnings despite the ongoing pandemic situation.

To assist the government and the private industry to better plan the capacity and quality of skills and training need for the future, this study will evaluate the skills gap of the agro-processing sector, through an occupational composition of employment (including gender composition of employment) and assess occupation-wise training requirement by both the employers and employees. In addition to this, it will estimate the skilled labour demanded by the agro-processing enterprises over the next 10-year period (2020-2030).

The study will use the mixed method strategy (both quantitative and qualitative primary data).

Labour Market Study and Skills Gap Analysis-Shipbuilding Sector

Study Team: *S M Zahedul Islam Chowdhury and Maruf Ahmed*

Bangladesh, a coastal country abundant with rivers, has more than 100 shipbuilders and shipbuilding yards. Out of these shipyards, approximately 80 per cent are located in and around Dhaka. These yards are mainly engaged in building and repairing inland and coastal vessels, up to 3,500 DWT (Dead Weight Tonnage). However, in general, government policy in Bangladesh is to encourage and attract foreign investments. More than 100,000 skilled workers and 150,000 semi-skilled workers are employed in the shipbuilding industry. The potentials and advantages of the Bangladeshi shipbuilding industry lie in the growing domestic market, competitiveness for the international small vessel segment, and availability of skilled engineers and workers. So, it is important to analyse the skills gap situation in the shipbuilding industries for further improvement in this sector. Against this backdrop, BIDS has conducted a study of the labour market in the shipbuilding sector for the Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP).

The main objective of the study is to analyse labour supply and demand over the next 10-year period (2020-2030) in order to assist the government and the private industry to better plan the capacity and quality of skills training systems according to the evolving skills/trade/market demands from rapidly growing industry sectors. The second objective of the assignment is to determine sector priorities, assess skills gap by sector, analyse the sector-wise occupational composition of employment (including gender composition of employment), and assess occupation-wise training requirement by sector and trade.

Skill Gap Analysis in Light Engineering and Electronics Sectors in Bangladesh

Study Team: *Kazi Iqbal, Nahid Ferdous Pabon, and Tanveer Mahmood*

Light engineering and electronics sectors are considered the two most important thrust sectors of the economy. Both sectors are believed to help industrialise the economy beyond the apparel sector. The key to the expansion of these two sectors lies in their capabilities to go beyond the domestic market and achieve international standards. Hence technological up-gradation and up-skilling of the labour force can steer the country on the desired path of industrialisation.

The focus of this study will be on the level of skill of the workers in the light engineering sector, different types of skill mismatch, the extent of training received by the workers, automation and job displacement, the soft skill of the workers and the projection of workers demand by occupations. In fact, the study will explore the skill mismatch of this sector by surveying both the enterprises and workers.

Impact of Natural Disaster on Education Outcomes: Evidence from Bangladesh

Study Team: *Mohammad Mainul Hoque, Kazi Iqbal, and Paritosh K. Roy*

The impact of natural disasters on income, assets and livelihoods is well-documented. The literature vastly focuses on the 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. While the impact on health outcomes has received some attention in the recent, robust analysis of the impact of natural disasters on education outcomes is negligible.

This study will investigate the relationship between natural disasters and human capital formation at school. Since flood is a frequent event in Bangladesh, it is important to learn whether there exists a causal relationship in the short run from flood to schooling outcomes, and the extent to which the education production process is affected during a flood. Specifically, the objective is to learn how flood affects regular school activities and academic outcomes such as passing rate, drop-out, repetition rate, etc. Another specific focus of this study is to explore if students from the different socio-economic groups and students from extremely poor, for example, are unequally affected by floods. This study will also track the paths through which flood can impact education outcomes such as public examination results and school-level examination attendance and results.

In addition to exhausting available secondary data on education and flood, the study will conduct a primary survey to collect household-level data to understand the channels that work through household-level inputs. Once implemented, it will provide insight on mitigation and adaptation strategies to minimise the impact of the flood on education outcomes.

Assessment of Social Action Projects of P4D Programme of the British Council in Bangladesh: Further Assessment Incorporating the Impact of Covid-19

Study Team: *Zulfiqar Ali and Badrun Nessa Ahmed*

The British Council in Bangladesh is implementing a three-year programme titled “Platforms for Dialogue (P4D): Strengthening Inclusion and Participation in Decision Making and Accountability Mechanism in Bangladesh” in partnership with the Cabinet Division of the Government of Bangladesh funded by the European Union (EU). The objective of P4D is to strengthen democratic ownership and improve accountability mechanisms in Bangladesh. The specific objective is to promote a more enabling environment for the effective engagement and participation of the citizen and civil society in decision making and oversight.

One of the important components of P4D is its Social Action Programme (SAP). It is being implemented in 21 districts. Some of the issues around which social action projects are currently being implemented include child marriage, poor quality education (at both primary and secondary), poor services of community clinics, drug addiction, and lack of citizens’ participation in local government (Union Parishad) planning process. To scale up its impact during year 3 of programme implementation, the current study intends to look into the issues being implemented under the social action projects of P4D more closely in order to draw lessons and prepare issue briefs.

The study will adopt a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Under the quantitative approach, data will mainly be collected from various secondary sources. Under the qualitative approach, the study will employ the following methods: meetings with project-related officials at local as well as central levels; undertaking focus group discussions (FGDs); undertaking key-informant interviews (KIIs); and carrying out some selected case studies to document extreme cases.

Impact Analysis on Development Programme for Improving the Living Standard of Hijra Community

Study Team: *Mohammad Harunur Rashid Bhuyan, Maruf Ahmed, Naryan Das, and Shahidul Islam*

Hijra community is a very small portion of the total population of Bangladesh, who are generally neglected, trampled and mistreated in society. According to a preliminary survey conducted by the Department of Social Services (DSS), the number of Hijras in Bangladesh is around 12,000. They are mostly discriminated in grounds of healthcare, safe-home, and education. Most of the initiatives of the country attempt towards ensuring their education, rehabilitation, and social security. The Department of Social Services (DSS) under the Ministry of

Social Welfare has taken an inevitable initiative to materialise “Programme for improving the living standard of the Hijra community”. The programme was initially launched in seven districts of the country as a pilot programme in the year 2012-13. The number of beneficiaries was 485 in the starting year (2012-13).

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the programme towards improving the standard of living of the Hijra community, explore the changing role of their socio-economic condition, and assess the success as well as the failure of this programme to create employment opportunities.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to capture the impact of the program. FGDs and case studies will be conducted to capture the qualitative aspects of the programme.

Labour Market study on Skill Gap in Readymade Garment (2019-2021)

Study Team: *Nazneen Ahmed, Abdur Razzaque Sarker, and Rizwana Islam*

Readymade Garment (RMG) sector in Bangladesh is the largest export-oriented sector. The growth of this sector is closely related to the country’s increasing economic growth. In recent years, there has been some logical uproar about the skill development of the sector. As skill development will ensure better and quality products as well as the increase in the industry’s productivity, concerned policymakers have become enthused to see to the skill development of the personnel involved with this particular sector. Skill development involves looking into the existing skill sets, the skill gap there and ways to minimise or address the gap while nourishing and increasing the multifaceted skill components.

The study will assess the supply-demand situation in the 2020-2030 time period, determine the existing occupational and gender composition in the RMG sector and skill gap in the major occupational categories of the industry, to address the need for training for skill development and evaluate the capacity of the industry for sectoral skill development across the major occupations.

The study will use both quantitative and qualitative analytical approaches. The quantitative approach involves field surveys using structured questionnaires for the enterprises and employees. And the qualitative approach includes in-depth interviews with the key stakeholders i.e. industry people, policymakers and industry specialists of the RMG sector. The analysis will help to provide policy recommendations to improve training facilities at various employment levels as well as expand industry productivity.

Labour Market Study for Skills for Employment Investment Project: Leather and Footwear Sector

Study Team: *Mohammad Harunur Rashid Bhuyan and Maruf Ahmed*

In terms of export earning, leather and leather goods consist of the second-largest exporting sector of Bangladesh. The Bangladesh government declares the leather products and footwear sector as one of the highest priority sectors.

The low level of skills and productivity of the Bangladeshi labour is endemic, as indicated by labour force survey data that more than 60% of the labour force has either no education (40%) or only up to primary level (23%). In 2014 the government of Bangladesh has initiated the Skills for Employment Investment Programme (SEIP), a multi-tranche financing facility supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), anchored in the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP), 2011. BIDS will conduct a study of the labour market in the Leather and Footwear sector for the Skill for Employment Investment Project (SEIP).

The main objective of the assignment is to analyse labour supply and demand over the next 10-years period (2020-2030) in order to assist the government and the private industry to better plan the capacity and quality of skills training systems according to the evolving skills/trade/market demands from rapidly growing industry sectors. The second objective of the assignment is to determine sector priorities, assess skills gap by sector, analyse the sector-wise occupational composition of employment (including gender composition of employment), and assess occupation-wise training requirement by sector and trade.

To fulfil the objectives of the study, both quantitative and qualitative primary data will be collected.

Covid-19 Vaccine Delivery Barriers in LMICs

Study Director: *Abdur Razzaque Sarker*

The development of COVID-19 vaccines does not imply the end of the global pandemic as now countries have to purchase enough COVID-19 vaccine doses and work towards their successful rollout. Most low-and middle-income countries (LMICs) have been relying on the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) facility to obtain vaccines. COVAX aims to provide these countries with enough doses to vaccinate 20 per cent of their populations. LMICs will likely encounter additional barriers and challenges rolling out vaccines compared HICs despite their significant experience from the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI).

This study will investigate the barriers and challenges of delivering a Covid-19 vaccine through a literature review and qualitative interviews with stakeholders in two case-study countries: Ghana and Bangladesh. The literature review will explore the current barriers for vaccine delivery in LMICs to gain insight and learn for delivering a Covid-19 vaccine. The study will also explore additional challenges due to the nature of the current situation through the interviews with stakeholders in Ghana (a lower- middle-income country on the DAC list) and Bangladesh (a least developed country on the DAC list). The study outputs will form a foundation for research into developing a strategy for Covid-19 vaccine delivery in LMICs.

Feasibility Study for New Projects of DYD

Study Team: *Azreen Karim, Binayak Sen, Rizwana Islam, Tanveer Mahmood, and Mahir. A. Rahman*

Youths (those in the age group of 18-35 years as defined by the National Youth Policy, 2017) constitute about one-third of the total population, i.e., 4,80,24,704, according to the Population and

Housing Census, 2011. The Government of Bangladesh created the Ministry of Youth Development in 1978, which was subsequently renamed the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) and Department of Youth Development (DYD) in 1981. Since its inception, the DYD has been working to transform the promising, productive and job-seeking youth force into a disciplined, organised and skilled workforce so that the active labour force can fully participate in the nation's transformation process towards digitalisation (2021), achieving SDG goals (2030), and developed country status (2041).

There is an absolute need to design and implement age group-based labour market intervention programs to identify, build, facilitate, and enhance the productivity of the youths in the economic development process and formulate short-to-medium-term strategies to generate employment through youth empowerment in the post-Covid-19 era. In this line of argument, the Department of Youth Development (DYD) had proposed six (6) new projects to achieve the goals and objectives of the government's election manifesto, 8th Five Year Plan, Perspective Plan, National Youth Policy, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The primary objective of the feasibility study is to understand the investment rationale of the proposed new projects, to assess their financial, technical, economic, and implementation feasibilities, to identify training demands for new trades towards overseas employment and to conduct SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threat) analyses for the proposed projects. The study will also assess market demand for training opportunities for new trade, explore employment and self-employment opportunities for local and returnee migrants, identify new sectors for training, to determine the pathways towards the transformation of trained youths into successful entrepreneurs.

An Assessment of Needs and Impacts of Women Entrepreneurs' Access to E-commerce Platforms through Smartphones

Study Team: *Mohammad Yunus, Md. Abdur Rahman Forhad, and Rizwana Islam*

E-commerce allows customers and producers or firms to buy and sell wide varieties of products through an internet platform, which, in turn, significantly contributes to the advancement of businesses across the globe. It reduces transaction costs and facilitates linkages among the supply chains of different business enterprises. The cottage, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (CMSMEs) are usually considered the powerhouse of an economy that exerts significant impact in generating employment and reducing poverty. Smartphone use, internet connectivity, and digital financial services have simplified and expedited the prospects of e-commerce in Bangladesh, especially for women entrepreneurs.

With a view to nurturing targeted women entrepreneurs in the SMEs, the UNDP Bangladesh set up an online e-commerce platform, popularly known as 'Anondomela', to support the women entrepreneurs in the SMEs as an initial response to the ravaging Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. The platform targets women entrepreneurs in SMEs to help them conduct their business during the pandemic. This experimentation unravelled two critical issues. First, many of these entrepreneurs do not have smartphones; second, even if several of the entrepreneurs that participated in the

Anondomela platform have smartphones, they are besieged with several constraints ranging from digital literacy to financial to social to legal barriers to run the enterprises.

To address the twin hurdles they planned to provide smartphones to a randomly chosen group of them so that they can participate in e-commerce activities and to facilitate training programs on relevant skills to address entrepreneurs' e-commerce-related knowledge constraints.

The study will analyse and explore the challenges, needs, and priorities of women entrepreneurs in the CMSMEs who are members of the Anondomela and other targeted women entrepreneurs during their online business operations, and assess the impact of the transfer of smartphones and associated training on business practices and empowerment among women entrepreneurs.

End Line Evaluation of Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO) 3rd Cycle

Study Team: *Abdur Razzaque Sarker, Binayak Sen, and Tanveer Mahmood*

Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO) is a social transfer-based poverty graduation project aimed towards rural ultra-poor women who are divorced, widowed, abandoned or left with disabled husbands. The main objectives of this project are to give financial support to disadvantaged women through savings building, livelihood training and employment. Over the years, the SWAPNO project has successfully piloted public-private partnerships that improve the women's skills and help place them formal sector jobs; it also ran successful micro plots that used mobile money for promoting financial inclusion and improving efficiency in the government-to-person platform. Therefore, it is essential to measure the effectiveness of such a project so that it can scale up and also set some lessons for future models.

The study aims to assess the impact of the SWAPNO project on beneficiaries' well-being, including income, expenditure and asset accumulation through rigorous methods of project evaluation. The study will also assess other likely effects of the project on employment, health status, nutrition, food security, education, and empowerment are also indicated by comparing the treatment and control groups. In fact, the study will evaluate the overall success of SWAPNO as a graduation model and identify the lessons that SWAPNO could draw to design such programme in the future.

The study will employ mixed methodologies using both quantitative and qualitative data. Data will be generated using In-person Survey, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Key Informant Interviews (KII). Several success stories will also be documented to observe the insight of the SWAPNO project.

Impact of COVID-19 on SMEs and their Workers: Understanding the Dynamics of Impact and Coping Strategies

Study Team: *Kazi Iqbal, Nahid Ferdous Pabon, and Tanveer Mahmood*

It has been almost four months since the first COVID-19 patient was identified in Bangladesh on March 3, 2020. As of 30 June, the officially reported number of cases and

deaths rose, respectively, to 145,483 and 1,847 (WHO, 2020). The numbers of new cases and deaths are still rising, and there is no sign of slowing down the spread of the diseases. The government shut down all economic activities and travelling from 26 March 2020 to 30 May 2020. This measure to contain the spread of the virus has taken a huge toll on the economy of Bangladesh. The latest forecast of the IMF says that Bangladesh's real GDP growth rate will drop to 3.8 per cent this year, which is 4.4 percentage points lower than the previous year's rate. The World Bank's forecast suggested even a worse situation- only 1.6 per cent growth in real GDP in 2020.

Against this backdrop, it is essential to understand the extent of the immediate, short-run and long-run impact of COVID-19 on the businesses, with a view to effectively design the bailout packages and the policy supports they need.

The objectives of the study are the following:

1. To generate early evidence on the impacts of COVID-19 on the enterprises and their workers and how these impacts vary.
2. To study the short to medium term impact on the enterprises and the workers as it is feared that many SMEs will go out of business and hundreds of workers will be laid off. So, we will study the extent of such impact.
3. To examine how the SMEs and their workers have been coping with the pandemic.
4. To examine the extent to which the government's incentive package benefitted the SMEs in terms of targeting and use.

Economic Burden of COVID-19 in Bangladesh

Study Director: *Abdur Razzaque Sarker*

For the past few months, the global community has been facing significant challenges for the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern and finally declared it as a global pandemic. COVID-19 has a negative impact on people's health and life and economies around the world. From an economic perspective, the spread of COVID-19, the ever-increasing number of patients, and the complications of the disease have imposed significant direct medical and indirect costs on patients, the health system and the government.

Income and productivity loss and the mandatory stay at home, infection or even the death of the workforce due to COVID-19 eventually reduced the gross domestic product (GDP). Given the pandemic of COVID-19, the economic burden of COVID-19 is essential to add value to the policy-making process. However, there is a paucity of studies aimed at quantifying the economic burden of the COVID-19 from a societal point of view (including household and providers perspectives).

The main objective of this study is to estimate the economic burden of COVID-19 in Bangladesh. The specific objectives of the study are to find out the direct and indirect cost of treating COVID-19, estimate the economic burden of COVID-19 from a societal perspective (i.e., both household and hospital) in Bangladesh during the pandemic period, and find out the other factors (e.g., temperature, sanitation measures, knowledge of information, population density) liable for spreading COVID-19 in Bangladesh.

Catastrophic Healthcare Expenditure and its Determinants in Bangladesh

Study Director: *Abdur Razzaque Sarker*

Despite improvements in many health indicators throughout the last few decades globally, providing access to affordable healthcare remains a substantial challenge in many low and middle-income countries, including Bangladesh. Out-of-pocket (OoP) expenditure is one of the most noteworthy payment strategies for healthcare in Bangladesh; the share of OoP expenditure has been increasing alarmingly, from 55.9 per cent in 1997 to 74 per cent in 2018, according to the WHO Global Health Expenditure dataset. Reliance on OoP payment results in two divergences. First, it leads to the catastrophic economic burden on households; second, the inability to pay for adequate healthcare at the point of service by low-income people results in an unmet need for health care. As a consequence, many households fall into poverty every year in Bangladesh. Further, this effect often leads low-income people to seek healthcare from untrained healthcare providers, which in many cases results in an adverse effect on health or inadequacy of required healthcare considering the need.

This study will measure the extent of catastrophic health expenditure in Bangladesh, identify the determinants of catastrophic health expenditure in Bangladesh, explore the way out from catastrophic health expenditure and develop a policy matrix.

Impact of Covid-19 on Tourism Industry in Bangladesh: Analysis of Current Situation and Suggested Strategies for the Future

Study Team: *Mohammad Yunus, Mohammad Mainul Hoque, and Tahreen Tahrima Chowdhury*

The hospitality and tourism sector (HTS) is one of the 15 major sectors used to estimate the GDP of the country. Strictly, the HTS includes accommodation services; traditional restaurants: exotic cuisine and fast-food stalls; tour operators and travel agents; transportation services (land, water and air); historical and archaeological sites and stores around them mainly catering to tourists; various wholesale and retail trading stores facilitating accommodation, food services, etc. The sector and its sub-sectors contribute around one-quarter of GDP. The sector was one of the worst-hit sectors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the magnitude of the loss to the HTS has not been rigorously assessed and quantified to help the policymakers decide about the nature and extent of incentives/stimuli that need to be provided to survive, let alone revamp the sector. Consequently, informed policy-making is hampered due to a lack of credible estimates of loss in terms of turnovers, curtailment work hours or downright retrenchment of workers.

The study will describe the current status of the hospitality and tourism sector in Bangladesh in terms of assets, turnover, and employment; assess the loss and damage of the comparing the current performance of the enterprises with 'normal period; and suggest policy options to revamp the hospitality and tourism sector paralysed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study will use both primary and secondary data. Both quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to collect data.

Impact Evaluation of Paddy e-Procurement Programme in Bangladesh

Study Team: *Taznoore Samina Khanam and Kazi Iqbal*

Paddy/rice procurement programme as a form of price support for rice producers is a widely practised mechanism in Bangladesh. However, studies showed that the service performance of the procurement system was unsatisfactory due to some shortcomings that impair the programme's effectiveness. It has been recognised in the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2020) that the operation of public stock procurement and management would be designed to minimise the potential distortionary effects on the grain market. Thus, the government has launched the mobile phone-based/e-procurement system as a part of the paddy procurement programme in the 2019/20 Aman season. The main objective of this e-procurement programme is to prevent irregularities in the paddy procurement operations for the benefit of the farmers so that the smaller farmers will get a 'fair price' for their products. An effective paddy e-procurement programme is expected to contribute significantly to improving the direct participation of targeted farmers, getting benefits from the procurement, and consequently, a positive impact on their income. In this context, there is a need for rigorously evaluating the programme pitted against its objectives.

This study's major research questions are: Does the paddy e-procurement system improve the targeting efficiency of the public procurement programme? Are farmers benefitted from the programme? What explains the non-participation in the programme? Is this programme cost-effective for the government?

Uncovering the Willingness to Pay for Treating and Avoiding Mental Illness Compared to Physical Illness through Exploring the Perceived Disease Burden

Study Team: *Mahir A. Rahman, Tahia Anan Dhira, and Jeenat Mehareen*

While many studies have investigated the prevalence of depression and anxiety among the adult population in Bangladesh, there is no study where Willingness to Pay (WTP) for treating and avoiding such disorders were estimated while simultaneously comparing them with physical illnesses. Also, the perceived disease burden of both physical and mental illnesses among the adult population is unknown. This study specifically aims to focus on WTP for treating and avoiding both mental and physical illnesses and explore how perceived burden and socio-economic status might influence the outcome (WTP). The research will help relevant stakeholders to design effective mental health interventions based on the stated WTP and perceived disease burden.

Evaluation of the Reaching Out of School Children Project Phase-II (ROSC-II)

Study Team: *Zulfiqar Ali, Binayak Sen, Badrun Nessa Ahmed, and Abdul Hye Mondal (Consultant for PVT component)*

Despite significant progress made by Bangladesh in achieving educational attainment at all levels, especially at the primary level, the primary school dropout rate is still high, and a good proportion of children are still out of school. Against this backdrop, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), with support from the World Bank, launched the "Reaching out of School Children (ROSC)

Project" in 2004. The project had progressed to its second phase in 2013, following the successful implementation of Phase-I. The project's main purpose was to provide children who had dropped out of school or had never attended a primary school an opportunity to be educated. The project combines formal and non-formal delivery methods to provide young learners with the opportunity to complete grade five and move to secondary school.

Since January 2013, the Reaching out of School Children (ROSC) Phase-II project has offered out-of-school children in targeted rural upazilas and selected urban slums of Bangladesh a second chance of primary education by establishing and running the Learning Centers (LC). In addition, the project also helped the primary school graduates (who completed primary education under the project) to get enrolled at regular secondary schools. The project also helped those who couldn't enrol at the secondary level or dropped out from LCs for various reasons (over-age, distance, poverty, etc.) with Pre-Vocational Training (PVT) so that they can get involved in productive employment (paid or self-employed). The study will assess the performance and impacts of the ROSC-II project.

BIDS Board Meeting Held

The BIDS Board convened its 108th meeting via an online platform on 22 February 2021. The Chairman of the BIDS Board and Honourable Minister for Planning Mr. M. A. Mannan, MP presided over the meeting. The 109th meeting was held via an online platform on 28 June 2021. The Chairman of the BIDS Board and Honourable Minister for Planning Mr. M. A. Mannan, MP presided over the meeting.

Seminars/Conferences/Webinars/Programmes

Annual BIDS Conference on Development (ABCD) on the occasion of 50 Years of Bangladesh.



Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies celebrated the 50 years of independence by launching the Annual BIDS Conference on Development (ABCD) which was held on December 1-3, 2021 at the Lakeshore Hotel in Dhaka. This was the first annual flagship event of the institute- a platform to disseminate national and international research on different socio-economic issues and engage the wider community in discussion and debate for the next phase of Bangladesh's development journey.

M. A. Mannan, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh honoured BIDS with his presence as the chief guest at the inaugural session of the conference titled 'Bangladesh at 50.' Dr. Mashiur Rahman, Economic Adviser to the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, was present as the special guest of the inaugural session. Dr. Binayak Sen, Director General of BIDS, inaugurated the conference by reading out a letter signed by the Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina. After that, he presented his opening remarks titled 'Bangladesh in a Comparative Perspective'.

A total of 27 papers and 13 keynote speeches spreading over 10 sessions from Bangladesh and abroad were presented at this conference. The sessions covered topics on the macroeconomic policy, the effect of Covid-19 on the industry, enterprises, workers and policies, the political economy of climate change adaptation, spatial dimensions of development, surviving and thriving of women through major shocks, human capital and public policy, nutrition and well-being, and income and employment diagnostics and drivers. In addition, the keynote presentations had insights from prominent international researchers and scholars like Nurul Islam, Rehman Sobhan, Mohiuddin Alamgir, Wahiduddin Mahmud, SR Osmani, Naila Kabeer, Nazrul Islam, Sajeda Amin, Martin Ravallion, David Hulme, Geof Wood, and Yusuyuki Sawada for their work on the development of Bangladesh.

The panel discussion titled 'Contemporary Agrarian Transition', was chaired by Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman where Professor Mahbub Ullah, Professor Shapan Adnan, Professor Abhijit Sen, Arif Naveed, Professor Ratan Khasnabis and Emeritus Professor Dr. M. A. Sattar Mandal were the discussants.

The closing session titled 'Turning Points in the 2020s: Analytical and Policy Challenges (Roundtable)' was virtually chaired by Professor Sultan Hafeez Rahman, Professorial Fellow at BIGD. Dr. Shamsul Alam, Honorable State Minister, Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh attended this session as the Chief Guest and Dr. Mashiur Rahman, Economic Adviser to the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh attended as the special guest of this session. The distinguished panellists of this roundtable session included M Syeduzzaman, Former Finance Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dr. Ahmad Kaikaus, Principal Secretary to the Honorable Prime Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Fazle Kabir, Governor, Bangladesh Bank, Abdur Rouf Talukder, Senior Secretary, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Pradip Ranjan Chakraborty, Secretary, Planning Division, Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Md. Jashim Uddin, President, The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Dhaka, Dr. Zaidi Sattar, Chairman, Policy Research Institute (PRI), Syed Akhtar Mahmood, Former Lead Economist, World Bank, Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Barrister Nihad Kabir, President, Metropolitan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Dhaka, and Asif Saleh, Executive Director, BRAC.

Book Launch Programme Commemorating the Bangabandhu Birth Centenary



BIDS commemorated the Bangabandhu Birth Centenary by publishing two volumes of a book titled “Readings in Bangladesh Development” (Editors: K.A.S. Murshid, Minhaj Mahmud, and Kazi Iqbal). The Book Launching Programme was held on 10 March 2021, Wednesday at 11.00 am by using both the online zoom platform and the presence of BIDS staff at the BIDS conference room. It is BIDS’ tribute to the memory of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Father of the Nation, whose birth centenary is being nationally celebrated.

The volumes are a compilation of research carried out by BIDS researchers over the period 1972-2020 on many critical aspects of development and thus outlines a development journey that will inform, inspire, and hopefully encourage further explorations in our contemporary economic history.

Dr. K.A.S. Murshid, Director General, BIDS chaired the event. He started the programme by reflecting on the contributions of Bangabandhu as our national hero, who inspired the struggle for an independent Bangladesh through his sacrifice, vision, and courage. The occasion was graced by Dr. Mashiur Rahman, Economic Affairs Adviser to the Honourable Prime Minister, and Professor Dr. Gowher Rizvi, International Relation Affairs Adviser to the Honourable Prime Minister, Professor Rehman Sobhan, Chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), among others.

BIDS Critical Conversations 2021 Covid-19: Linking Economic and Health Concerns

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised a webinar on “COVID-19: Linking Economic and Health Concerns,” on May 23, 2021, with a view to bring policymakers, economists, and health experts together in a common platform and identify the best way forward in sustaining the livelihoods of the affected people with giving utmost importance to saving lives in the face of the recent spike in the infection rate and deaths caused by COVID-19 in Bangladesh and neighbouring India.

In his opening remarks, Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud emphasised that the problems in implementing health safety measures to sustain the economy are complicated by the uncertainties created by the constantly changing nature of the virus originating across different countries. Professor Mahmud advised that instead of imposing an unplanned lockdown, policymakers should focus on implementing planned partial lockdowns imitating the stratified storm

warning signals, partial opening of economic activities, in successive stages, and partial opening of educational institutions and holding roster-based classes. He further suggested that the policymakers could prioritise protecting the economically vulnerable population and invest in training doctors and nurses and the overall infrastructure of the health sector.

The keynote speech has been followed by the discussion from the first panellist, Anir Chowdhury, the Policy Advisor of the a2i Programme. The second panellist, Professor Meerjady Sabrina Flora, Additional Director General (Planning and Development), Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), emphasised the challenges of increasing testing and vaccination, popularising community-level behavioural changes like social distancing and mask-wearing during the pandemic calling for focusing on prevention rather than cure.

Eminent economist Professor Rehman Sobhan, the Guest of Honor of the event, pointed out that Bangladesh has the lowest testing rate in South Asia and a 'huge black hole' regarding pandemic-related information management.



Professor Sobhan showed concerns regarding the efficacy of fiscal interventions and how they can destabilise the banking sector since a lot of these interventions are taking place through the banking channel. The eminent economist also warned about the redistributive consequences of fiscal concession measures like tax rebates in the name of stimulating the economy. He ended with a call for policies to be specifically tailored to the needs of the poor and the migrant workers who are the major source of remittances income of the country.

Dr. Mashiur Rahman, Economic Advisor to the Honorable Prime Minister, pointed out the difficulties of providing social safety to the poor, especially in remote areas, due to the lack of proper information. He said that this problem is difficult to solve centrally, and local government must be utilised. Finally, after a brief question-answer session, the Honourable Planning Minister, and Chief Guest of the programme, M A Mannan MP, observed that the government is trying to optimise the balance between saving lives and livelihoods, with its main goal being damage control. He asserted that simply allocating money is not sufficient, and it is the responsibility of the relevant ministry to utilise them properly. The webinar ended up with concluding remarks from the Director-General for continued concerted collaboration among the governments, policymakers, economists, and health experts to tackle the challenges successfully posed by this persistent pandemic.

BIDS Critical Conversations 2021 "Normalizing Masks: Health and Economic Implications"



Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised a webinar as part of its series of Critical Conversations on June 9, 2021, focusing on the effectiveness of mask-wearing to combat the spread of COVID-19 and its wider implications. Dr. Binayak Sen, the Director-General of BIDS, set the premise of the webinar by pointing out that the spread of COVID-19 is now higher in border districts than in Dhaka. He suggested that movements of people from the border districts towards Dhaka be restricted to curb the spread. Despite growing scientific evidence advocating for face masks as an effective tool to curb the spread of COVID-19 and save lives, mask usage remains low across many parts of the world, and strategies to increase mask usage remain untested and unclear. In this context, Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak, Professor of Economics at Yale University, USA, delivered the keynote presentation on the theme "Normalizing Mask-Wearing in South Asia: Scaling Up an Effective Approach."

The keynote focused on the findings of a study based on a cluster-randomised trial of community-level mask promotion in rural Bangladesh involving 341,830 adults in 600 villages. The findings suggest that free distribution of masks along with role modeling by community leaders produced only small increases in mask usage. However, adding periodic monitoring by mask promoters to remind people to put on the masks increased proper mask-wearing by 29.0 percentage points. This tripling of mask usage was sustained overall ten weeks of surveillance, which is a period after intervention activities ended. Physical distancing also increased by 5.2 percentage points. These results point to changes in social norms as a key driver of behaviour change. Village police accompanying the mask promoters had no additional effect on mask-wearing, suggesting that the operative mechanism is not any threat of formal legal sanctions but shame and people's aversion to a light informal social sanction. The upshot is that improved mask-wearing norms can be achieved without incentives, which requires costly monitoring, aesthetic design choices, and colours influencing mask-wearing, and that surgical masks with a substantially higher filtration efficiency can be a cost-effective alternative to cloth masks (1/3 the cost) and are equally or more likely to be worn. Furthermore, the study suggests the use of masks results in one-quarter of the benefit of a country-wide lockdown but with one-tenth of its cost.

Thus, given the rate of vaccine roll-out, vaccine hesitancy, and spread of new variants of coronavirus, mask-wearing might be the most cost-efficient way to control the spread of the pandemic. Professor Mobarak also pointed out the need for resources to provide free masks to people and monitor and reinforce the mechanism.

After the keynote presentation, the first panellist of the discussion, Dr. Firdausi Qadri, Emeritus Scientist, Infectious Diseases Division, icddr,b, and participants in the discussion as panellist emphasised the necessity of convincing people for effective large-scale implementation of mask usage.

Special Guest, Mr. Abdur Rouf Talukder, Senior Secretary of the Finance Division, Ministry of Finance and Mr. Mohammad Jainul Bari, Secretary of the Planning Division, Ministry of Planning, attended as Special Guests.

Dr. Atiur Rahman, former Governor, Bangladesh Bank, suggested that encouraging children to promote mask-wearing among the parents could be an effective strategy. Dr. Mohiuddin Alamgir emphasised that COVID-19 has to be tackled from a human development perspective focusing on mask usage, social distancing and vaccination and using the grassroots-level connection of the civil society organisations (CSOs) of Bangladesh. Professor Rehman Sobhan suggested that the government must create collective machinery where the health ministry, local government institutions, and civil society work together to implement widespread mask use.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Mashiur Rahman, Economic Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, acting as the Chief Guest of the webinar, discussed the challenges and successes of the government to fight COVID-19 and pointed out that the novelty of this pandemic has constrained the health ministry in achieving more successful results. He also mentioned the challenges of identifying the 'new poor' during the pandemic as reported figures of income, land ownership, and other assets suffer from definitional challenges and multiple interpretations. He appreciated the research and initiatives taken and concluded the webinar with the hope that such community-level support will reach the most vulnerable people affected by the pandemic.

BIDS Fortnightly Seminar 2021 on Local Nonfarm Opportunities and Migration Decisions: Evidence from Bangladesh

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised a seminar as part of the organisation's series of BIDS Fortnightly Seminar 2021-2022 on October 6, 2021. Dr. Kazi Iqbal, Senior Research Fellow, BIDS, presented his research titled "Local Nonfarm Opportunities and Migration Decisions: Evidence from Bangladesh", and Dr. Binayak Sen, Director General of BIDS chaired the event. The seminar was conducted in a hybrid format. Shykh Seraj, Director and Head of News, Channel i, Dr. Quazi Shahabuddin, ex-DG of BIDS, Prof. M Mozammel Huq, Dr. Quazi Shahabuddin, Dr. Mahfuz Kabir, spoke in the seminar, among others.



This study provided the first strong evidence of the relationship between the household nonfarm income and migration decisions which was not observed before, combining two sets of secondary data- Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2016 and Economic Census 2013. Dr. Iqbal found that, in municipalities, if the nonfarm activity increases, then household income grows and this eventually reduces migration. However, the migration reducing the impact of nonfarm income is found only for the households in municipalities but not in the rural areas. This study suggests that developing municipalities and secondary towns will lead to a drop in the number of migration from rural areas to urban cities in Bangladesh. Linking to the current pandemic, the authors argued if the numbers of the migrant workers were not high, lockdown measures during this pandemic would have been much more effective.

BIDS Fortnightly Seminar on the Role of Homestead Fish Ponds for Household Nutrition Security in Bangladesh



Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised a seminar as part of the organisation's series of BIDS Fortnightly Seminars 2021-2022 on October 21, 2021. Dr. Badrun Nessa Ahmed, Research Fellow of BIDS presented her research titled "The Role of Homestead Fish Ponds for Household Nutrition Security in Bangladesh" which she completed with Prof. Dr. Harmann Waibel, Head and Executive Director, Institute of Development and Agricultural Economics Leibniz Universität Hannover, Germany. Dr. Binayak Sen, Director General of BIDS chaired the event. The seminar was conducted in a hybrid format.

Mr. Shykh Seraj, Director and Head of News, Channel I; Dr. Quazi Shahabuddin, ex-DG of BIDS; Prof. Dr. M A Sattar Mandal, Former Member of Planning Commission, Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; Dr. Harmann Waibel; Professor Abdul Bayes; Dr. Mohiuddin Alamgir, Former Research Director at BIDS; Dr. Kazi Iqbal, Dr. Anwara

Begum, Dr. Mohammad Yunus, Senior Research Fellows of BIDS spoke in the seminar, among other distinguished guests.

This study showed that in Bangladesh, fish is a major source of animal protein and there is a growing demand for fish in the country. Homestead pond aquaculture is one of the prominent aquaculture technologies practised in Bangladesh. The major proportion of homestead pond production goes for home consumption, and the surplus is supplied to the local market. However, the dikes are used for the cultivation of vegetables and timber trees. Therefore, homestead producers have available and easy access to vegetables and fish year round.

Moreover, the additional income from selling fish also contributes to increasing their household income. Keeping the role of homestead aquaculture in mind, this study examined whether aquaculture production improved the nutrition conditions and dietary diversity of households in Bangladesh. The result showed that income from aquaculture has positive and significant effects on household nutritional outcomes. Home production of fish increases household consumption, calories intake and improves households' dietary diversity. Therefore, the researchers of this study recommended that the Bangladesh Department of Fisheries (DoF) reconsider its view on the role of homestead pond production and give homestead ponds more recognition in its extension activities for better nutritional outcomes, especially for low-income fishing households.

BIDS Fortnightly Seminar on Healthcare for Persons with Disability in the Time of Corona

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), organised a seminar as part of the organisation's series of BIDS Fortnightly Seminar 2021-2022 on November 3, 2021 at 2:30 pm. Dr. Anwara Begum, Senior Research Fellow of BIDS presented her research titled, "Healthcare for Persons with Disability in the Time of Corona". Dr. Binayak Sen, Director General of BIDS chaired the event. The seminar was conducted in a hybrid format.



The study focuses on the understanding of the severity of constraints, inequality in access to healthcare of persons with disability who coped with Covid-19 during this pandemic. It underscores the financial hardship that many persons with disability experience. With the corona infection, their burden has increased and it is almost a double blow for them.

BIDS researchers, Consultants from BIGD Rifat S. Khan, Dr. Sharifa Begum, representatives from the media spoke in the seminar.

BIDS Public Lecture 2021 by Wahiduddin Mahmud



Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised the BIDS Public Lecture 2021 on November 7, 2021 at Lakeshore Hotel, Dhaka. Eminent economist Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud delivered the lecture based on the themes of his book “Market, Morals and Development: Rethinking Economics from a Developing Country Perspective.”

In this lecture, Prof. Mahmud put forth his objective behind writing this book, which is to add the perspective of a developing country in the context of rethinking economics and at the same time re-evaluate what can be deemed as ‘useful economics’ in the context of these countries. Prof. Mahmud explored through the ideas that he discussed in his book, such as analysing the markets and their institutional settings, the notion of the fairness of the global economic system, income inequality, wealth concentration and price mechanisms, institutions, governance and economic development as well as governance and norms of morality. He emphasised accountability at all tiers of governance, which he noted as the common factor behind all success stories of sustained economic development. He further added that even if the democratic institutions are weak, the existence of the scope for civic activism and free media may secure substantial accountability of a legitimacy-seeking regime.

Dr. Binayak Sen, Director General of BIDS chaired the inaugural and closing session. The public lecture was attended by Dr. Mashiur Rahman, Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh; Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Chairman Professor Rehman Sobhan; Centre for Urban Studies Chairman Professor Nazrul Islam; Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) Executive Chairman Hossain Zillur Rahman; CPD Distinguished Fellow Debapriya Bhattacharya, and Professor Mustafizur Rahman along with BIDS researchers, eminent scholars and academics, policymakers, development practitioners, civil society members, advocacy groups and journalists.

BIDS Fortnightly Seminar on Epidemiological and Economic Burden of Dengue in Dhaka

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised a seminar as part of the organisation’s series of BIDS Fortnightly Seminars 2021-2022 on November 17, 2021. Dr. Abdur Razzaque Sarker, Research Fellow of BIDS presented his research titled “Epidemiological and Economic Burden of Dengue in Dhaka, Bangladesh”. Dr. Binayak Sen, Director General of BIDS chaired the event. The seminar was conducted in a hybrid mode.

The study found the substantial health and economic burden of dengue infection among Dhaka city dwellers, which underscores the urgent need for an effective national dengue prevention strategy to decrease dengue prevalence and reduce the economic burden of households. Therefore, various community-based awareness programmes should be initiated and monitored to wipe out Aedes mosquito completely. Various social protection schemes, including ‘Shasthyo Surokhsha Karmasuchi (SSK)’ may be introduced in urban Dhaka for poor and vulnerable households to tackle the catastrophic health burden against dengue infections.



BIDS researchers along with Professor M Mozammel Haq, Mr. Md. Kamrul Bari, Deputy Executive Secretary, Research and Development Department, DCCI among other distinguished guests, spoke in the seminar.

BIDS Attended the Nationwide Pledge on the Golden Jubilee of Independence



The BIDS family took an oath to build a prosperous Bangladesh in unison with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the 50th anniversary of her victory. On the morning and evening of December 16, 2021, the BIDS premises were ablaze with red and green lights and the joy of victory. Under the leadership of Director General Dr. Binayak Sen, BIDS celebrated the golden jubilee of independence with stories, cake-cutting, and rendition of songs.

Muktijuddho O Bangabandhu Gobeshona Corner at BIDS Library

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) inaugurated “Muktijuddho O Bangabandhu Gobeshona Corner” in the BIDS Library and Documentation Centre on December 22, 2021. The Honourable State Minister of Planning Dr. Shamsul Alam attended the event as the chief guest, while Dr. Muntassir Mamoon, Bangabandhu Chair,



University of Chittagong and Dr. Atiur Rahman, Bangabandhu Chair, University of Dhaka and Former Governor, Bangladesh Bank attended the event as special guests. Dr. Binayak Sen, Director General of BIDS, chaired the post-inaugural discussion.

Abdul Ghafur Memorial Lecture 2021

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised the Abdul Ghafur Memorial Lecture on 23 December 2021 in the BIDS Conference Room. Professor Anu Muhammad, Department of Economics, Jahangirnagar University delivered his lecture on "Marx Studies in Bengal: Some Critical Reflections." The lecture was held in a hybrid mode.



In his respect, Professor Anu Muhammad mentioned Karl Marx's theories and studies from 1867 onwards. He also emphasised the need to utilise Marx's thoughts and visions to surpass all kinds of differentiation, including gender, race, colour, inequality, repression, non-democracy, and others in the society.

The event was attended by BIDS researchers, academics, and the wider community. It was presided over by Dr. Binayak Sen, Director General of BIDS.

BIDS Senior Fellow Meeting Held

An online meeting of BIDS Senior Fellows was held on 24 June 2021. This distinguished body represents a key window to civil society and is highly valued by BIDS. The meeting was attended by Mr. M Syeduzzaman, Professor Nazrul Islam, Dr. A. M. M. Shawkat Ali, Dr. Qazi Kholiquzzaman, Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, Dr. A. Mushtaque Reza Chowdhury, Dr. Ainun Nishat, Barrister Nihad Kabir, and Mr Shykh Seraj. Dr. Binayak Sen, Director General, BIDS made a presentation on ongoing and completed studies of BIDS and also updated the Fellows on issues related to staffing, finance, and so on. Senior BIDS researchers also attended the meeting. The Director General welcomed everyone to the meeting and especially acknowledged his gratitude to its new members.

A lively conversation then took place around research requirements and gaps, and strategies to breach the research-policy divide. The Senior Fellows emphasised improving capacity to anticipate and tackle major issues in a proactive manner to identify capacity gaps and take steps to fill those.

The Director General thanked all the senior fellows and BIDS researchers for their active participation and highlighted specific research areas of prioritisation. He further emphasised conducting the Senior Fellow meetings more frequently.

BIDS Book Stall at the Amar Ekushey Boi-Mela 2021



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 Mela draws a number of book lovers, poets, academics, novelists and writers, students and members of the general public. It is an occasion for BIDS to build stronger links with the broader community by making our publications accessible to all.

Apart from the regular publications like The Bangladesh Development Studies (BDS), Bangladesh Unnayan Samikkhaya, Research Reports, Monographs, REF Study Series, and so on, a special book titled "Readings in Bangladesh Development" in two volumes was made available in this book fair. These commemorative volumes were conceived as a dedication to the memory of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Father of the Nation, whose birth centenary is being nationally celebrated. The authors and contributors here are the best in the field of development studies that Bangladesh has produced.

BIDS Mourns

Md. Anwar Ullah died on May 05, 2021. He had worked as Steno Typist cum Computer Operator at BIDS since 1975.



Ms. Pinky Akhter, Publication Assistant, BIDS, breathed her last on July 24, 2021 at Dhaka DNCC COVID Dedicated Hospital after being infected with COVID-19. Ms. Pinky obtained Hon's from Dhaka City College and Master's degree from Eden Mohila College. She was involved with

the BIDS Publication Team. BIDS family is deeply saddened by her sudden demise only at 33.

Md. Anwarul Islam died on August 08, 2021. He had served as Administrative Officer at BIDS since 1981.

BIDS Researchers at International Conferences/Meetings

Dr. Binayak Sen, Director General

- Gave a lecture (for the 96 SSC batch) at a Webinar on "Bangladesh and SDGs: Policy Approach and Financing" at the BPATC, Savar, on 16 February 2021.
- Chair/Moderator, BIDS Critical Conversations 2021 on "COVID-19: Linking Economic and Health Concerns," 23 May 2021.
- Chair/Moderator, BIDS Critical Conversations 2021 on "Normalizing Masks: Health and Economic Implications," 9 June 2021.
- Chair/Moderator, an online commemorative event on Bangabandhu entitled "Bangabandhuke Kache Theke Dekha: Remembrance by His Contemporaries," 18 August 2021.
- Lead Discussant, Webinar on "Bangabandhu's Philosophy on Industrialisation" (বাংলাদেশ চেম্বার অব ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজের উদ্যোগে "বঙ্গবন্ধুর শিল্পায়ন দর্শন: আজকের বাংলাদেশ"-শীর্ষক ওয়েবিনারের মূল আলোচক), 30 August 2021.
- Lead Discussant, Webinar on "Women's Movement in Bangladesh" (মহিলা পরিষদের ওয়েবিনারে প্রধান বক্তা), 5 September 2021.
- Panel Discussant, Seminar on "Dream of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib: Transformation of an Agrarian Economy," organised by the Ministry of Planning, 22 September 2021.
- Panel Discussant, Webinar on "COVID-19 and Sustainable Development Goals: Way Forward," 7 October 2021.
- Gave a lecture on "Bangladesh's Current Growth Trajectory: Strategies, Opportunities and Challenges" for the participants of 133rd Advanced Course on Administration & Development (ACAD) at BPATC, 17 October 2021.
- Designated discussant, Webinar on "Poverty Eradication: Experiences from Bangladesh and China," organised by China-Bangladesh Friendship Society, 20 October 2021.
- Panel Discussant, Seminar on "Bangabandhu's Journey towards Hunger and Poverty-free Planned Economy," organised by the Ministry of Planning, 24 November 2021.

Dr. Monzur Hossain, Research Director

- Presented a paper titled "Covid-19, Agglomeration Economies and Firm Recovery: Evidence from Bangladesh" at ASSA/American Economic Association (AEA) 2022 conference, January 9.
- Presented paper titled "ICTs and Economic Growth in Bangladesh: Rethinking Digitalization Strategies for Faster Recovery." at the Annual BIDS Conference on Development (ABCD) held on 1 December 2021.
- Session organiser, Macroeconomic Policy session, Annual BIDS Conference on Development (ABCD), December 1-3, 2021.
- Panel discussant, Asian Think Tank Development Forum, 16-17 November, 2021, jointly organised by ADB and ADBI.
- Designated Discussant/Panellist: State of the Economy, Policy Research Institute (PRI), January 11, 2022.

Dr. Anwara Begum, Senior Research Fellow

- Presented a paper titled "Healthcare for the Persons with Disability in the Time of Corona", in Fortnightly Seminar of BIDS 2021-2022 on November 3, 2021.
- Presented paper titled "Inequality in Access to Healthcare for Persons with Disability during COVID-19: An Illustration from Bangladesh" on July 13 at the International Seminar organised by IIDS, New Delhi, India and RLS- Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, South Asia.
- Participated in The 9th meeting of the-Population Expert Group/Committee of the project titled, "Strengthening Capacity of the General Economics Division (GED) to "Integrate population and Development Issues into Plans and Policies," held on 1st December 2021, Wednesday at Planning Commission.
- Participated in many meetings of the Education Watch as Technical Committee Member and member of The Special Advisory Group of the Education Watch and "Shikkhya Songlap" in 2021, April to December.
- Participated as Vice President in two Board Meetings of a mid-level NGO named "Unnayan Shohojogy Team (UST)" in 2021.

Dr. Nazneen Ahmed, Senior Research Fellow

- Attended as a discussant at the Webinar titled "Impact of COVID- 19 on Indo Bangladesh Border Trade in West Bengal," organised by the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India, 25 March 2021.
- Participated as a panellist in the panel discussion session on "Development" in a seminar on "50 Years of Bangladesh: Pathways and Trajectories," organised by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) at Hotel Intercontinental Dhaka on 20 March 2021.
- Attended as a discussant at the Ambassadorial Conference titled "Culture of Peace and the Forcibly Displaced Rohingya People," organised by the International Peace Institute, Middle East and North Africa (IPI MENA), Kingdom of Bahrain (Webinar), 15 March 2021.
- Attended as a discussant at the webinar titled "Impact of Covid 19 Pandemic on Readymade Garment Workers in Bangladesh," organised by the Fair Labour Association, India, 3 March 2021.
- Presented a paper at a seminar organised by the SME Foundation on 14 March 2021.
- Presented a paper titled "Women's Economic Development and Digital Technology" at a Webinar, organised by Leadership for Gender Equality Programme, CCD Bangladesh, 10 March 2021.
- Presented a paper titled "Searching Ways Forward for Bangladesh in the Time of Pandemic: Covid-19 and the Bangladesh Economy- Nature of the Downturn and Prospects for Recovery" at the Webinar, organised by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS), held on 13 February 2021.
- Attended a webinar as the Keynote speaker and made a presentation on "Social and Economic Impacts of Padma Multipurpose Bridge," organised by the Department of Economics, Southeast University, 4 February 2021.

Dr. S M Zulfiqar Ali, Senior Research Fellow

- Made a presentation (jointly with Joe Devine from the University of Bath, UK) on “Extreme Poverty: The Challenges of Inclusion in Bangladesh” at a consultative meeting with local level CSOs (through webinar), organised by Unnayan Shamannay, Dhaka, 31 March 2021.
- Made a presentation on key findings in the report launching workshop of the report “Extreme Poverty: the Challenges if Inclusion in Bangladesh,” organised by GED, Planning Commission on 30 September 2021.
- Made a presentation on “Spatial and Social Dimensions of Poverty: A Multi-dimensional Approach” at the Annual BIDS Conference on Development (ABCD) held on 1-3 December 2021.

Dr. Minhaj Mahmud, Senior Research Fellow

- Organised a session and presented paper on “Political Economy of Climate Change” at the Annual BIDS Conference on Development (ABCD) held on 1-3 December 2021.
- Attended as an Invited Speaker at the Department of Economics, North South University, Dhaka, January 2021.
- Participated as a Moderator in a stakeholder consultation event (online) on “The Impact of COVID-19 on the Fish Value Chain in Bangladesh,” organised by the International Food Policy Research Institute, February 2021.
- Presented a paper titled “Local Nonfarm Opportunities and Migration Decision: Evidence from Bangladesh” at the 16th Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development, organised by Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi, December 20-22, 2021.
- Presented a paper titled “Have the Clustered SMEs Performed Better Than the Non-clustered SMEs during the Pandemic? Evidence from Three Rounds of Surveys at the Annual BIDS Conference on Development (ABCD) on 1st December 2021.

Dr. Kazi Iqbal, Senior Research Fellow

- Attended as an Invited Speaker at the Department of Economics, North South University, Dhaka, January 2021.
- Participated as a Moderator in a stakeholder consultation event (online) on “The Impact of COVID-19 on the Fish Value Chain in Bangladesh,” organised by the International Food Policy Research Institute, February 2021.
- Presented a paper titled “Local Nonfarm Opportunities and Migration Decision: Evidence from Bangladesh” at the 16th Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development, organised by Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi, December 20-22, 2021.
- Presented a paper titled “Have the Clustered SMEs Performed Better than the Non-clustered SMEs during the Pandemic? Evidence from Three Rounds of Surveys at the Annual BIDS Conference on Development (ABCD) on 1st December, 2021.

Dr. Azreen Karim, Research Fellow

- Participated (also presented as group leader) in the Training Workshop on “Capacity Building for Generating Gender Responsive Environmental Data in Focusing on SDGs,” organised by BBS in collaboration with UN Women Bangladesh on 27 September 2021.

- Presented a paper titled “Risk, Poverty or Politics? The Determinants of Subnational Ppublic Spending Allocation for Adaptive Disaster Risk Reduction in Bangladesh” at the Annual BIDS Conference on Development (ABCD) on 2nd December 2021.
- Presented a paper titled “COVID-19 and Fiscal Stimulus in South Asia: Implications for Resilience and Sustainable Development” at the 21st Biennial Conference of the Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) on 24 December 2021.

Dr. Abdur Razzaque Sarker, Research Fellow

- Presented a paper titled “Trend and Inequality Analysis of Childhood Malnutrition over 22 Years in Bangladesh” at the Annual BIDS Conference on Development (ABCD) on 2nd December 2021.
- Presented research finding on “Epidemiological and Economic Burden of Dengue in urban Dhaka” at the BIDS Fortnightly Seminar on 17th November 2021.

Taznoore Samina Khanam, Post-Doctoral Fellow

- Participated in the "IZA/FCDO Online Short Course on Research Skills for South Asia," on September 14-15, 2021.
- Participated in “Emerging Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and Agricultural Mechanisation in Bangladesh,” Webinar, organised by Bangladesh Agricultural Economists Association, 26 September 2021.

Humayra Ahmed, Research Associate

- Presented a discussion paper titled “Economic Impact—Macro and Micro—of COVID-19: A Model towards Decent Economy and Decent Society,” at the 13-Series Webinar on Decent Society, arranged by Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA), 9 June 2021.

Tahreem Tahrima Chowdhury, Research Associate

- Presented key findings of the study “Tracer Study on Graduates of Tertiary-Level Colleges” at project completion workshop, organised virtually by CEDP on June 23, 2021.

Kashfi Rayan, Research Associate

- Participated in “IZA/FCDO Online Short Course on Research Skills for South Asia,” on September 14-15, 2021.

Siban Shahana, Research Associate

- Presented a keynote titled “Bangladesh Covid-19 Stimulus: Have We done Alright?” at the Economic Circle on 5 February 2021.

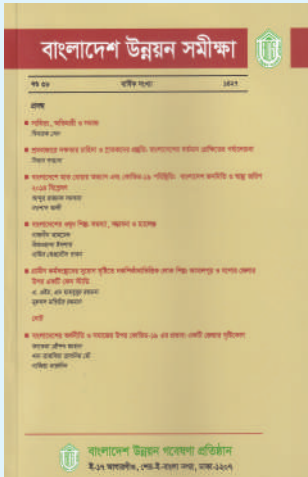
Tanveer Mahmood, Research Associate

- Presented at a Symposium on COVID-19 Related Research in Developed and Developing Countries, Florida International University, 2020.

Nahian Azad Shashi, Research Associate

- Participated in Capacity Building workshop, organised by Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1 WTO Cell held on 26-28 & 31 October 2021.
- Participated in the "IZA/FCDO Online Short Course on Research Skills for South Asia," held on September 14-15, 2021.

বাংলাদেশ উন্নয়ন সমীক্ষা, সংখ্যা: ৩৮



প্রবন্ধ: সাহিত্য, অতিমারী ও সমাজ: বিনায়ক সেন; শ্রমবাজারে দক্ষতার চাহিদা ও স্নাতকদের প্রস্তুতি: বাংলাদেশের বর্তমান শ্রেণিক্রমের পর্যালোচনা: সিবান শাহানা; বাংলাদেশে হাত ধোয়ার অভ্যাস এবং কোভিড-১৯ পরিস্থিতি: বাংলাদেশ জনমিতি ও স্বাস্থ্য জরিপ ২০১৪ বিশ্লেষণ: আব্দুর রাজ্জাক সরকার ও নওশাদ আলী; বাংলাদেশের ওষুধ শিল্প: সমস্যা, সম্ভাবনা ও চ্যালেঞ্জ: নাজনীন আহমেদ, রিজওয়ানা ইসলাম ও নাহিদ ফেরদৌস পাবন;

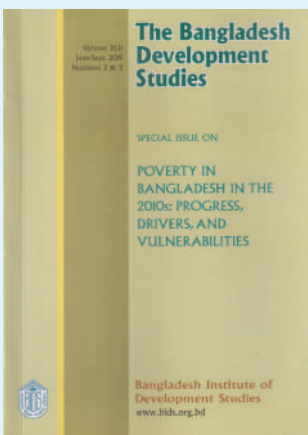
গ্রামীণ কর্মসংস্থানের সুযোগ সৃষ্টিতে নকশাকাঁথাভিত্তিক লোকশিল্প: জামালপুর ও যশোর জেলার উপর একটি কেস স্টাডি: এ. এইচ. এম. মাহবুবুর রহমান ও মুহম্মদ মতিউর রহমান।

নোট: বাংলাদেশের অর্থনীতি ও সমাজের উপর কোভিড-১৯ এর প্রভাব: একটি জেগার দৃষ্টিকোণ: ফাতেমা রওশন জাহান, খান তাহদিয়া তাসনিম মৌ ও নাজিয়া নাজনিন।

BDS Special Issue on Poverty in Bangladesh in the 2000s: Progress, Drivers, and Vulnerabilities

This special issue includes the following articles/notes:

Articles: ■Poverty in Bangladesh in the 2010s- Progress, Drivers, and Vulnerabilities: An Introduction by *Ruth Hill, Maria Genoni and Binayak Sen*; ■Poverty in Bangladesh during 2010- 2016: Trends, Profile and Drivers by *Ruth Hill and Maria Eugenia Genoni*; ■Understanding the Changing East-West Divide in Bangladesh: Insights from Poverty Decomposition Analysis by *Ruth Hill and Jose Joaquin Endara Cevallos*; ■Spatial and Structural Changes in Poverty



Reduction in Bangladesh from 2000 to 2016: An Assessment by *Ruth Hill and Jose Joaquin Endara Cevallos*; ■Convergence in Regional Poverty Rates in Bangladesh by *Mohammad Yunus*; ■Poverty in Urban Bangladesh: Trends, Profiles and Spatial Differences by *Hossain Zillur Rahman and Ruth Hill*; ■What Works for Working Women?

Unpacking the Constraints on Female Labour Force Participation in Bangladesh by *Aphichoke Kotikula, Ruth Hill and Wameq Azfar Raza*; ■Equity in Education Outcomes and Spending in Bangladesh: Evidence from Household Income and Expenditure Surveys by *Maria Eugenia Genoni, Saurav Dev Bhatta and Uttam Sharma*.

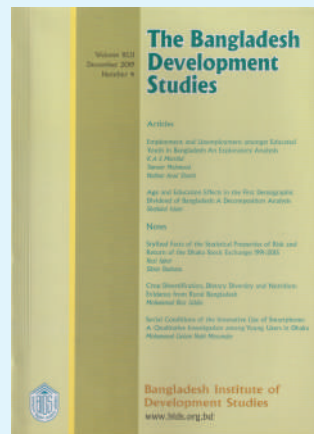
Notes: ■Rural Transformation, Occupational Choice and

Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh during 2010-2016 by *Binayak Sen*; ■Official Methodology Used for Poverty Estimation Based on the Bangladesh Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016/17: A Technical Note by *Faizuddin Ahmed, Maria Eugenia Genoni, Dipankar Roy, and Abdul Latif*.

BDS December 2019 Issue (Published in March 2021)

This issue includes the following articles/notes:

Articles: ■Employment and Unemployment amongst Educated Youth in Bangladesh: An Exploratory Analysis by *K A S Murshid, Tanveer Mahmood, Nahian Azad Shashi* ■Age and Education Effects in the First Demographic Dividend of Bangladesh: A Decomposition Analysis by *Shahidul Islam*.



Notes: ■Stylized Facts of the Statistical Properties of Risk and Return of the Dhaka Stock Exchange: 1991-2015 by *Kazi Iqbal and Sibana Shahana*; ■Crop Diversification, Dietary Diversity and Nutrition: Evidence from Rural Bangladesh by *Mohammad Riaz Uddin*; ■Social Conditions of the Innovative Use of Smartphone:

A Qualitative Investigation among Young Users in Dhaka by *Mohammad Golam Nabi Mozumder*

BDS March-June 2020 Issue (Published in August 2021)

This issue includes the following articles/notes:



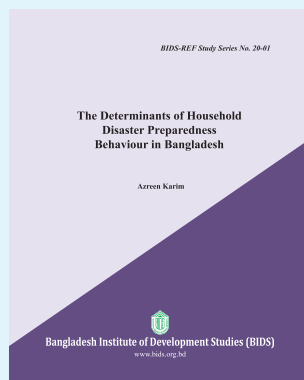
Articles: ■Foreign Direct Investment in the Readymade Garment Sector of Bangladesh: Macro and Distributional Implications by *Sharif M. Hossain and Nobuhiro Hosoe*; ■Is the Public Sector Wage Premium Real? Findings from Bangladesh by *Shahidul Islam and Md. Emran Hossain*.

Notes: ■Cattle Population in India: Do Institutions Matter? by *Kazi Iqbal, Kazi Ali Toufique and Wahid Ferdous Ibon*; ■Analysis of Achievement of Selected MDGs: A Comparative Study between India and Bangladesh by *Debanjana Roy and Soumyendra Kishore Datta*; ■SME Development, Inclusive Growth, and Poverty Alleviation in Bangladesh by *Mohammad Mohidul Islam*; ■Traditional Society in South-Eastern Nigeria: Implications for Women's Health by *Caroline Okumdi Muoghalu and Chiedu Akporaro Abrifor*.

BIDS-REF Study Series No. 20-01

The Determinants of Household Disaster Preparedness Behaviour in Bangladesh.

Author: *Azreen Karim*



This study explores disaster preparedness at the household level in terms of the role of human capital. The study argues that while most studies focus on the supply side, namely the role of government in managing disasters, there is a clear area on the demand side that requires to be addressed.

The study is interesting in that it uses a large database, examines the role of education and knowledge acquired through both formal and informal channels, and comes to the important conclusion that specific, short-duration training material on what households should do under alternative disaster scenarios hold out the greatest promise. The study directly addresses the core issues and has managed to indicate clear policy measures that should be of interest to the relevant agencies – both in government and outside government who are working on issues related to climate change impact. It is expected that this study will contribute to the growing literature on climate resilience and climate development.

Call for Journal Articles

Articles are invited for the ‘Bangladesh Development Studies’ (quarterly journal published in English) and the ‘Bangladesh Unnayan Samikkhya’ (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 macroeconomic issues. For details on submission procedure and authors’ guidelines, please visit the BIDS website (www.bids.org.bd/publications).

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