

BIDS newsletter



Critical Conversations 2016

“BIDS Critical Conversations, 2016: The Bangladesh Journey” – the first conference of its kind held in Bangladesh aimed at encouraging a genuine, participatory, free and frank conversation across a wide and diverse range of stakeholders including proficient economists, development professionals, NGOs, civil society, donors and government. This highly successful, two-day event was distributed over nine sessions and culminated in a riveting concluding session chaired by Dr Mohammad



Inaugural Session of BIDS Critical Conversations 2016

Farashuddin. The panel included a number of prominent speakers like Dr Mirza Azizul Islam, Mr Salman F Rahman, Barrister Nihad Kabir, Dr Faisal Ahmed, among others. The Inaugural kicked off with the keynote paper by Dr K A S Murshid, followed by other sessions on Educating the Nation by Dr Anwara Begum; Bangladesh in the Region by Dr Mohammad Yunus; Democracy, Governance and Development by Dr Binayak Sen; Land Question by Dr Monzur Hossain; Revisiting the Role of Agriculture by Dr Rushidan Islam Rahman; Eradicating Extreme Poverty by Dr Zulfiqar Ali and Financing the Infrastructure Deficit by Dr Nazneen Ahmed.

Key Policy Areas Highlighted

- ④ Quality Education
- ④ Employment Generation
- ④ Management of Population and Health Services
- ④ Long Term Food Security
- ④ Investment in Infrastructure and Energy
- ④ Human Rights, Governance and Peoples' Rights
- ④ Regional Connectivity

From the Editor's Desk

The Year 2016 began auspiciously, ushering in a period of intense professional activity. A total of five studies were completed in the last six months while quite a few more came on stream. Amongst the concluded studies, we have a review of the role of rice prices in development, summarised in the highlights section below. Other sponsored studies completed include children and youth development, service delivery at the local level and evaluation of WASH and FFW, TR and VGD.

There are a dozen ongoing studies that we have reported here. These include both sponsored work and research, initiated by the researchers themselves. Increasingly, BIDS researchers are being encouraged to focus more on independent research based on their own interests. Examples of ongoing research include “The existence of a “J-Curve” in Bangladesh which is important for trade policy, the relationship between migration, education, and nutrition, and the question of the linkage between agricultural production and cropping patterns with consumption and nutritional status of households. One of the major studies in progress is the ADB funded, Labour Market and Skills Gap Analyses, which promises to be of great policy value as it will be used to develop training programmes to address the skill shortage problem. A total of ten sectors along with a macro study are currently in progress.

A seminar by Professor Emeritus Geoff Wood on “The Security of Agency: Towards a Sociology of Poverty” was held in March 2016. The talk dwelt upon the dependency of the poor upon the powerful in society as a strategy to secure their well-being. The seminar provided a rare opportunity to the audience to listen to a non-economist's perspective on poverty and security. BIDS continued to invite eminent speakers through its Sunday Talk series. BIDS, in collaboration with the Washington-based IFPRI, has also won a 5-year contract through open bidding and is poised to embark on fresh research on key food policy issues related to storage and food management.

Given the huge demands being placed on BIDS researchers, there has been a felt need to go for a recruitment drive not just at entry level but at all levels. To this end, initiatives have been taken to employ new researchers at senior research positions while continuing the drive to recruit talented young researchers at entry level. I should also note that BIDS now has a brand new website which we hope will meet with the approval of our stakeholders.

Study Highlights

Rice Prices, Growth and Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh

Historically, the rice sector used to dominate Bangladesh agriculture and the economy as a whole, determining GDP growth rates, inflation, wages, employment, food security and poverty. This made rice price a very sensitive economic and political economy variable. The situation has changed dramatically with a much more diversified agricultural economy, declining share of agriculture and rice in GDP and rapid industrialisation and growth of services. The rice sector (production) has benefited immensely from the Green Revolution, tripling production in three decades and continuing to play a significant role in employment creation and food security. It also benefited from the trade liberalisation and structural adjustment reforms of the 1980s and 1990s that served to open up agriculture to world market forces while also reducing subsidies and withdrawing from a number of direct interventions. The startling thing is that the performance of the sector was accompanied by a long-term decline in real rice prices. It is unlikely that this kind of performance is sustainable in the absence of any further technological, cost-reducing breakthroughs. Therefore, policymakers need to focus on how to deliver price and non-price incentives to this important sector. This study examines the complex relationship between rice prices and economic growth, poverty reduction, and food security in Bangladesh including the impact on producers and consumers. The impact on macro variables is also examined. The researchers investigate whether or not a relationship between economic growth/poverty reduction in Bangladesh and rice prices likely exists, and also discuss the mechanisms through which the two are potentially related.

A question that is often asked is whether the rice market is competitive or if there are important ways in which the market is segmented or even controlled by local oligopolistic structures. A good way to examine this question is through testing for integration of spatially distributed markets, usually through co-integration analysis. Co-integration of the rice market implies that open-market interventions by the government to stabilise rice prices would be effective in stabilising market prices in both the specific market where interventions are being carried out throughout the rice market system. International rice prices have been prone to large swings and volatility. Bangladesh is also not an exception. Rice prices exhibited a distinct tendency to stabilise in more recent periods, especially after 2011. The growing stability of international rice prices contrasts with the sharp increase in the variability of trade volumes. Quite apart from the fallout from food market crises, there is the additional question related to the extent of integration of domestic rice markets with the world market. Before the mid-1990s, external influences were transmitted through the volume, and, perhaps more importantly, the timing of food aid arrivals and cash imports, which were again related to shortfalls in domestic production. Since the mid-1990s, we have seen that the domestic market became much better integrated. Thus, transmission

of price influences across borders would depend on volume of imports and its price, in addition to a pure speculative component – the latter being determined by such factors as expected harvest performance, food grain reserves with the public sector, signals emitting from large rice millers and traders. The year 2015 has seen the unusual situation of low rice prices because of good harvests but even lower international prices – ushering in a situation of low-cost imports that depressed prices even further. The relationship between domestic and world prices is not straightforward.

Rice prices have far-reaching implications for consumers, wage-labour as well as producers, processors and traders. Since more than 90 per cent of the population consumes rice, the impact on consumers is the most ubiquitous. The average consumer spends around 39 per cent of the household budget on cereals, mainly rice, and for the poor, this share will be much higher. The main challenge for consumers tends to be high prices at the pre-harvest periods, namely in March-April and September-October. The seasonal price highs therefore are the points in time when market interventions to stabilise prices become important, especially when there are expectations of a less-than normal harvest. Recent price trends suggest that Bangladeshi producer prices are higher than world prices, resulting in a tendency to import rice even when domestic production is satisfactory – leading to a further tendency to dampen local prices. Again, the cornerstone of Bangladesh's agricultural policy has been "food self-sufficiency," basically meaning rice self-sufficiency, which was considered to be essential for food security. The impact on growth, poverty reduction and food security has occurred mainly through rice production and yields, in the face of a declining terms of trade of agriculture and declining trend in the relative price of rice. GDP growth was positively affected due to the large share of food production in the national economy and the indirect contribution through downstream trade, milling and processing. In fact, the rice-based Green Revolution was a major breakthrough for the rural economy, creating jobs, employment and demand. Economy-wide effects of cheap food also helped in industrialisation through low wages, low inflation and a stable macro-economy.

In general, our country's food policies focused on production increases and stable prices, and this has sufficed. The structural reforms and trade liberalisation policy of the government worked very well in lowering import prices of agricultural machinery while, at the same time, enabling the private sector to bring in cheap rice imports from India, in the event of a domestic shortfall. This ushered in a period of rapid agricultural growth based on rice production, spilling over to other agricultural areas. This in turn led to massive investment in value chains, especially in milling and storage. Thus, agricultural growth was rapid and generated employment opportunities not only for male workers but also for female workers. Remittance earnings of rural agricultural households from migrant workers as well as those employed in the RMG sector combined with micro-credit and grass-root institutions to broaden access to financial services. The State policy focuses on health, education, infrastructure and electricity also contributed towards the development of an enabling climate.

We know that high food or rice prices have an unambiguous effect on urban consumers, especially the poor, while for rural consumers the net effect is slightly more complex. This depends on whether the rural household produces rice for own consumption and sale and the extent of market participation as consumers and producers. It is notable that the proportion of households with zero net position in rice markets is small. More than 98 per cent of rural households have some interaction with rice markets, either as buyers or as sellers. Further, poor households are twice as likely as rich ones to not participate in the market at all. More than 7 out of 10 households and 4 out of 7 regions are net buyers of rice, implying that a majority would lose from higher rice prices in the short run. The solace is that two of the regions that would gain the most, Rajshahi and Rangpur, are poorer, while the regions that would lose the most, Chittagong and Dhaka, are richer.

A 10 per cent increase in rice price would result in an income rise by 0.2 per cent on average in the long run and the poverty rate would fall slightly from 31.5 per cent to 31.23 per cent. Even though only one-quarter of households are net sellers of rice, higher rice prices have little effect on the incidence of poverty. However, these conclusions may not be tenable if the percentage changes in producer and consumer prices differ widely.

The growth of price of rice will hardly affect the poor, especially in the rural areas. This is also evident from agricultural wage rate and rice price dynamics over time. The daily nominal wage rate (without food) of male agricultural labourers increased from Tk. 38 in 1993 to Tk. 291 in 2014, implying an

annual growth of 9.58 per cent. In contrast, the price of coarse rice per kg increased from Tk. 8.42 to Tk. 30.77 during the same period, implying an annual growth of 5.69 per cent. Given that the average rate of non-food inflation during the period stood around 6 per cent, the real price of rice hovered around Tk. 20 at constant 2005-06 prices throughout the period without any upward or downward trend. In contrast, the rice equivalent of daily wage rate increased from 4.38 kg of rice in 1993 to 9.47 kg. While mild upward trend continued until 2008, the rice equivalent wage rate showed a sharp rise since then.

Policy Implications

The struggle that Bangladesh had to face in the context of food policy was how to attain self-sufficiency and provide production incentives to farmers while ensuring that food prices were low and stable. This has meant that the principal strategy to incentivise production was through the input and credit side rather than output price side. At the same time, the government displayed extreme sensitivity to “high” prices fearing a political backlash from the vast majority of poor consumers. The time has now come to assess whether a higher rice price regime may not now be the best option, given reduced poverty rates, higher rural incomes, and the pass-through of higher rice prices across the economy, including the poor. A cautious move in this direction is recommended. A higher rice price regime will also induce consumers to switch to other non-rice foods like vegetables, fruits and dairy products. This again would be highly desirable given the poor nutritional status of the population.

(Authors: K A S Murshid & Mohammad Yunus)

Completed Studies

Children and Youth in Bangladesh: Human Capital and Employment

Creation of young entrepreneurs can be an important route to youth employment generation. Emergence of young entrepreneurs can also act as a stimulus for economic growth and this strategy is receiving attention worldwide. Accelerated growth of employment opportunity is essential for reduction of current unemployment and underemployment rate. This requires growth of labour intensive sub-sectors within industry and skill-based service sectors. This in turn requires investment on raising employability of the youth labour force, which can be achieved through quality education and skill training targeted to demand. Thus the demographic advantage in the form of growing youth population can contribute to economic growth if this is accompanied by investment in development of human capital as well as investment for accelerated growth of employment.

The shares of 5-14 and 15-24 year age groups are 24.88 and 17.04 per cent among male and 23.47 and 19.29 per cent among female; the share of youth has increased during 1991 to 2001 and remained static during 2001 to 2011. Major findings from the study are (a) School enrolment rates have risen among 6-14 age groups. Among 11-14 and 15-20 year old groups it is much lower; (b) School enrolment rate among women of 15-20 age group is much smaller than young men in this age group; (c) Rates of labour force participation in 15-24 years age group is lower than higher aged groups; (d) Unemployment rate among the youth labour is much higher than aged labour force; (e) Underemployment rate is also high among youth labour force; (f) LFPR among young women is much lower than young men; and (g) Children’s employment continues, although the employment rate in this group has been on the decline, as expected.

Citizen Survey on Service Delivery and Institutional Efficiency of Union and Upazila Parishads

The Local Government Division (LGD) has been implementing two flagship projects on local governance reforms, namely the Upazila Governance Project (UZGP) and the Union Parishad Governance Project (UPGP) since late 2012, with funding and technical supports from the UNDP and other donor agencies. The baseline surveys for both these projects were conducted before implementing the projects and citizen’s perception surveys were also conducted in 2014. This survey assesses the changes in understanding of citizen’s perceptions regarding the public service delivery of LGIs as well as the efficiency of these two local government institutions (LGIs).

Impact Analysis of Food for Work, Test Relief and Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) Program in Bangladesh

This study examines the process of targeting, selection, and benefit distribution associated with the FFW, TR and VGF programme and assesses the impact of the programme intervention on the beneficiaries. Three independent indicators were used to see the impact on beneficiary households –how far the programme has been successful in: (a) increasing household incomes, (b) enhancing food security, and (c) food consumption score, based on consumption of selected items. The data pertain to 2,940 beneficiary and 1,470 non-beneficiary (control) households.

The study reveals that in terms of monthly income, year round food security and consumption of selected food items, the beneficiary households are better off compared to their non-beneficiary counterparts. Due to participation in

the programme their vulnerability has been reduced to a large extent and their poverty situation and food security has improved compared to their non-beneficiary counterparts. The study suggests issues like monitoring need to be addressed urgently for smooth functioning of the three studied projects.

South Asia WASH Results Program: End Line Child Survey

The End Line Survey was conducted during September-December 2015, followed by the Baseline Child Survey conducted during October-December 2014 and the Midline Child Survey conducted during April-June 2015. The

baseline survey assessed the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of children about water supply, sanitation and handwashing behaviour.

The main purpose of the End Line Survey was to interview 581 children aged 9-10 years, the same children who were interviewed during baseline and midline (292 from intervention and 289 from control schools) survey.

It may be mentioned that according to the agreement with Ipsos MORI, BIDS task was limited to conducting the field survey (for midline and end line) and data entry only (no report writing). Report preparation was done by Ipsos MORI, UK.

Ongoing Studies

Labour Market Study and Skills Gap Analyses

The Bangladesh government needs a proper assessment of the demand and supply situation of skills in the labour market in order to plan for skill development for the medium to longer term requirements of the economy. This is needed both at the aggregate or macro level and at the sectorial level (RMG & Textile, Construction, Agro-food, Healthcare, Tourism, Leather, Ship-building, IT, Light Engineering) suitably projected for the next 10-20 years. To review and assess at the macro and micro levels current status and emerging needs of the Bangladesh economy in terms of skilled workforce, especially in priority sectors identified in the national economic development plan to be supported by SEIP and to project future skills needs—in terms of quantity and quality in order for the country to move up the value chain as Bangladesh is increasingly pulled into global and regional value chains by examining the current labour force are the main objectives of the study.

An Evaluation of Rural Social Service Programme of the Government of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is now a model of development to many other countries. Growth has picked up by about 1 percentage point in every decade since the 1980s. The annual rate of poverty alleviation has also accelerated over time. The holistic approach to foster development, in fact, preceded the current proliferation of microcredit programmes in Bangladesh. The rural social service programme, which has been implementing since 1974, is based on the principle of holistic approach to development. For inclusive growth and faster alleviation of poverty, programmes like rural social service are very important. The current study proposes to undertake a thorough evaluation of the rural social service programme which has already involved a sizeable number of rural households. The study intends to pursue two broad objectives; (i) evaluate the modus operandi of the programme by assessing the different players involved in the implementation at different stages, and (ii) assess whether the programme has been contributing to the amelioration of the economic and social lives of the rural people, and if yes, to what extent?

Impact Analysis of the Project "Construction of Small Bridges/Culverts on the Rural Roads (Third Phase)"

The main purpose of the impact study is to review and evaluate the achievements, effectiveness, relevance and efficiency of the project "Construction of Small Bridges/Culverts on the Rural Roads" being implemented by the Department of Disaster Management, under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR). In particular, the evaluation will assess

the extent to which the stated objectives of the project were achieved, the efficiency in the implementation of the project, the outcome and impact of the project, the sustainability of the outcome and impact of the project and the evaluation report is expected to draw lessons from the experience and will result in the formulation of recommendations to guide future GoB interventions in the sector with regard to construction of bridges/culverts in Bangladesh.

Aquaculture and the Poor: Improving Fish Production, Consumption and Nutrition Linkages

The objective of this research is to produce two peer reviewed journal articles. Article 1 will use HIES data to provide an assessment of the changes in nutrient intakes in Bangladesh associated with changes in fish consumption over time. This will help to evaluate increase in fish consumption brought about by the growth of the aquaculture sector from a nutrition perspective. Article 2 will examine the temporal changes in the consumption of fish, using historical data derived from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES). The analysis will be carried for the survey years before 2000 to understand the changes in fish consumption in a historical perspective. Alternatively, Article 2 may make an attempt to estimate demand functions for fish for several HIES survey years and compare price and income elasticities of demand for various fish species.

Baseline Study on Renewable Energy Technology Systems in Bangladesh

The energy sector in Bangladesh has been plagued by acute shortage of electricity supply. Natural gas is the primary fuel for more than 70 per cent of power generation and it is in short supply too. Renewable energy currently constitutes less than 1 per cent of total power generation in the country and the government intends to increase its share up to 10 per cent by 2020. IDCOL has been planning to implement several types of renewable energy technologies (RETs) such as solar mini grid, improved cooking system, bio-gas plants and solar irrigation systems in the off-grid areas under the RERED II project of the World Bank. The objective of the RERED project goes beyond fulfilling the immediate energy needs of the consumer by making a difference in their development outcomes, policy makers and project implementers can learn about the true impact of the project. BIDS will carry out a baseline survey to assess socio-economic benefits of RETs such as mini grid, solar irrigation pump, ICS and biogas plants, as well as the delivery mechanisms of the RETs.

Skill and Employment Baseline Assessment of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Bangladesh

The indigenous and tribal people (ITPs) constitute a minority of marginalised population in Bangladesh. Their livelihoods are characterised by subsistence farming, insecurity of land tenure, high incidence of informality irrespective of whether employed in rural or urban areas, seasonal work and precarious working conditions and vulnerability to violations of fundamental principles and rights at work. The ILO is aiming to enhance the skills and employment situation of indigenous and tribal peoples in Bangladesh. The study will undertake a skill and employment baseline assessment. The objectives of the baseline assessment are: collection of socio-economic information on ITP households related to the life and livelihood of communities including educational/vocational/skills status; income and wages related discrimination; assessment of current levels of enrolment and completion of TVET by ITP women and men; demand in growing sectors in ITP areas; review of relevant national laws and policies to assess coverage and/or exclusions of ITPs in law or practice; and adherence to relevant international ILO instruments.

Baseline Data Collection for the Impact Evaluation of Second Rural Transport Improvement Project-II

The proposed baseline survey will attempt to assess the benchmark levels of major indicators of economic and social development in the impact zones of the intervention and control areas. The effects of infrastructure development activities would be measured in terms of increased income and employment through higher involvement in farm and off-farm activities and increased value chain of farm products, human development through better access to education and health services, and social development through better safety and security of lives and property. Moreover, the study will assess conflict resolutions, enhanced women empowerment through greater roles in intra-household decision making, mobility in public places and labour force participation, etc.

Study on Agri-Business for Trade Competitiveness in Bangladesh

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

Gender and Energy Sector Reform in Bangladesh

This study is designed to provide a country research plan on energy sector reform with gender concern. The study will be designed with a detailed review of the existing research literature as well as policy documents and important project reports focusing on gender and energy sector reforms in Bangladesh. This includes evaluations of programmes that are aimed at

empowering women through improved technology, awareness building and skills. The aim of this exercise is to review the key issues relating to energy use, preferably through a gender lens. The most relevant issues will be discussed in terms of several dimensions, including production and distribution process of (different kinds of) energy, consumption of energy, and the impact of choice or use of energy on girls' and women's health, time use, productivity, education or security mediated by cooking and lighting needs and solutions.

The study will be conducted in two phases:

Phase 1 : Country Scoping Paper

Phase 2 : Kerosene usage by Rural Households in Bangladesh

Impact of Migration on Nutritional Condition of the Rural Households in Bangladesh

Around half a million Bangladeshis migrate each year with overall more than 10 million Bangladeshis currently living abroad. Remittances sent by these migrants have become an important source of economic growth: Bangladesh earned US\$ 15, 316 million worth of remittances in FY2014-15, which accounted for 7.8 percent of the GDP and 49.8 per cent of total exports. Although severe malnutrition has declined in recent years, there still exists high prevalence of chronic undernutrition among children, adolescent girls and women of child-bearing age. About six million children are stunted and 29 per cent adolescent girls are short for their age and 12 per cent of all adult women face difficulties during deliveries or give birth to babies with low birth weight. Hence, the aim of this study is to determine the impact of migration on nutritional status of children and women on migrant households of rural Bangladesh based on Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey (BIHS) data for the year 2011-2012. The relationship between migration and nutrition is likely to be complex involving complex inter-relationships between migration, labour, credit and asset markets as well as remittances received and spent. This study hopes to throw light on these complex relationships.

How Does Diversity in Production and Consumption Improve Nutritional Status?

Bangladesh has achieved a lot in improving nutritional status of children, but still there exist a huge proportion of nutrition-deficient children compared to world standard. So nutrition deficiencies should get a special priority in government policies and every one of us should give a look at. Crop diversification would be a good solution to reduce these nutrition deficiencies. The main objective of this study is to know how crop diversification can improve nutritional status of adults and children in Bangladesh.

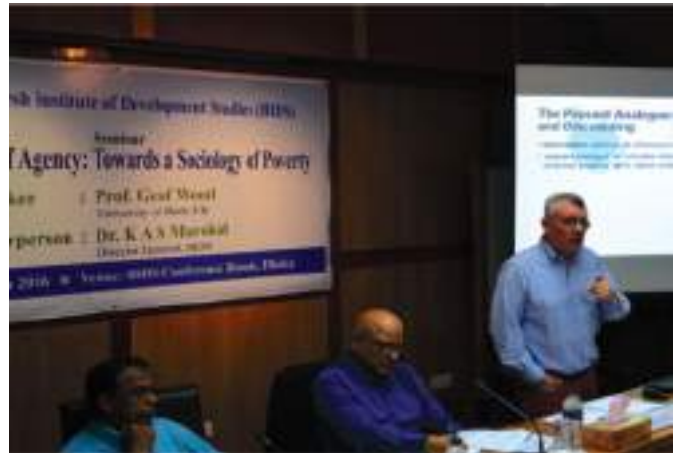
The Existence of the J Curve in Bangladesh: An ARDL Bound Testing Approach

This study will examine the relationship between trade balance and real exchange rate movements to precisely test for the J-Curve phenomenon for Bangladesh with aggregate (1973-2014) and disaggregate data by using two different methods. Cointegration and Error-Correction modeling (ECM) have been widely used to test the J-Curve phenomena to show the short-run deterioration combined with long-run improvement of the trade balance due to currency depreciation. The ARDL approach of Pesaran et.al (2001) assumes that adjustments of the variables follow a linear path, though it could very well in effect be Non-linear. This study also proposes to capture whether any changes in the exchange rate have symmetric or asymmetric effects on the trade balance of Bangladesh with its trading partners.

BIDS Seminar

The Security of Agency: Towards a Sociology of Poverty

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies organised a seminar on “The Security of Agency: Towards a Sociology of Poverty” presented by Professor Emeritus Geoff Wood from the University of Bath, held on Wednesday, 9 March 2016 at the BIDS Conference Room. The eminent Social Anthropologist argued that poverty in Bangladesh remains largely underestimated, as the vulnerable groups who might slip into poverty any time are not counted officially. Since poverty has several different dimensions, just an official figure to measure poverty (e.g., poverty line) might not be enough to justify the existing social phenomena of the poor. He also added that poor people are widely dependent upon other power-holders of the society. Through placing themselves into a dependent relationship with the power-holders, the poor feel secure. The session was chaired by the Director General of BIDS, Dr K A S Murshid and was followed by an interactive Q&A session with scholars and researchers present.



Professor Wood Presenting his Findings at the BIDS Seminar

The Sunday Talk Series

Professor Mustafizur Rahman Visits BIDS

Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue, visited BIDS on 2 March and made a presentation on trade and WTO issues facing Bangladesh. He provided a well-rounded review of the state of play with regard to WTO negotiations. It was noted that the developed countries and BRICS display a tendency to ignore LDCs, and also that within LDCs there are significant differences in positions that make progress difficult.



Professor Mustafizur Rahman with BIDS Researchers

Dr Momtaz Uddin Ahmed on “SME Development in Bangladesh”

Dr Momtaz Uddin Ahmed, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka gave a lecture on SME Development in Bangladesh on 17 April 2016 at BIDS. He said the two most important steps in developing the SME sector are: first, finding out the booster sectors like plastics, electrical goods, etc. and prioritise their needs and the second is to focus on the training of the entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurial experience is the most important thing for SME’s success.



Dr Momtaz Uddin Ahmed Poses with Some of the Researchers Following his Lecture

Mr Rume Ali Visits BIDS

Mr Rume Ali, CEO, Bangladesh International Arbitration Council (BIAC), gave a presentation on 3 May 2016 on ‘Why Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is a Priority for Bangladesh?’ Mr. Rume Ali served as former Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank and Managing Director, Enterprises & Investments at BRAC. During this period he was Chairman of BRAC Bank Ltd. and Founder Chairman of bKash Limited. He also served as a member of the Board of BRAC and BRAC International.



Mr. Rume Ali and the Director General with the BIDS Researchers

Household Panel Presentation by MRB

Mr Sanjay Pal, Managing Director, MRB Bangladesh, gave a presentation on 22 May 2016 on the Nationwide Household Panel that they have been operating for more than 15 years covering 7 Districts on a panel size of 4,800 Households. The evidence generated through the process provides valuable insights into consumer demand and preferences by product categories, and can also be used as an indicator of economic mobility of different socioeconomic segments.



The MRB Team Pose with the BIDS Researchers

Professor Mahfuzul I. Khondaker Visits BIDS

Dr Mahfuzul I. Khondaker, Professor of Criminology at Kutztown University, visited BIDS on 29 May 2016 and gave a brief lecture on the crime and criminal justice systems in Bangladesh through an analysis of social, political, and economic structures. Research shows that inequality has a significant relationship with criminal behaviour and violence rates.



Dr Khondakar and BIDS Researchers After his Lecture

BIDS Events

BIDS-WB Book Launch of *Stitches to Riches?*

Bangladesh can create millions of jobs in its garment sector by raising productivity of people and improving social and environmental compliance, World Bank observed at a book launching ceremony, hosted jointly with Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) on 2 May 2016. The study says, China is the largest apparel supplier having a 41 per cent global market share and Bangladesh is the second largest with a 6.4 per cent share. Bangladesh is likely to benefit from the shift of work orders from China, as the economic giant is losing its market share due to higher costs of production. The study was conducted by World Bank with data from 2012. The session was chaired by the honourable Director General of BIDS.



A View of the High Powered Panel on the Podium at the BIDS-WB Book Launch

Pradeep Mitra and Kathryn Steinberger from World Bank Visit BIDS

Dr Pradeep Mitra, Senior Consultant, IEG Human Development and Economic Management Department, World Bank and Ms Kathryn Steingraber, Evaluation Analyst, World Bank visited BIDS to discuss what impacts World Bank interventions in agriculture and rural development were

generated, particularly in stimulating rural employment and reducing poverty. BIDS researchers felt that World Bank programmes have indeed had a positive impact, especially in energy and infrastructure projects, but also pointed out that there are considerable methodological challenges in attributing impact, given numerous interventions in many areas carried out over the last decade.



Visit of the World Bank Officials at BIDS

BIDS Book Stall at the “Bangla Academy Amar Ekushey Grontho Mela-2016”

As in the past, BIDS set up a bookstall in the Bangla Academy premises as part of the annual “Boimela” held in commemoration of the martyrs of the language movement of 1952. This is an occasion for BIDS to build stronger links with the broader community by making BIDS publications accessible to all. Dr K A S Murshid, Director General, BIDS inaugurated the stall officially on 4 February 2016 in the presence of researchers and staff of the Institute.



Group Photo of BIDS Officials after the Inaugural Ceremony

Professional Staff of BIDS Studying and Training Abroad

Dr Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, Research Fellow

Left BIDS to serve as “Senior Research Associate” under the University Portsmouth, UK, for a period of 2 years 6 months (15 January 2016 to 14 July 2018).

Professional Staff Re-joins BIDS

Siban Shahana, Research Associate

Rejoined BIDS in June 2016 after completing her MA in Policy Economics Program at Williams College, USA.

BIDS Researchers at International Meetings

Dr K A S Murshid, *Director General*

- Attended the 4th Asia Think Tank Summit held in Seoul, South Korea during 8-10 June 2016, sponsored by Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA), Korea Development Institute (KDI) and Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP).
- Participated in “The Launching Ceremony of the Global Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth Portal” held in China on 7-8 May 2016, sponsored by Asian Development Bank (ADB) and International Poverty Reduction Center in China (IPRCC).
- Participated in the workshop on “Innovative Financing for Agriculture and Food Value Chains” held in Manila, Philippines on 1 February 2016, sponsored by Asian Development Bank (ADB), Headquarters, Philippines.

Dr Binayak Sen, *Research Director*

- Attended the International conference on “Development and Growth: Experience and Theories” held in India during 26- 30 March 2016, sponsored by Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI).
- Attended a conference on “Incorporating Pro-poor Growth in the SDG’s: Moving Beyond the MDGs” held in Manila, Philippines during 26-27 April 2016, sponsored by Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Chronic Poverty Advisory Network (CPAN).
- Presented a Special Lecture on “Bangladesh Economy: Achievements and Challenges” at the South Asian University, New Delhi, India on 20 May 2016.

Dr Anwara Begum, *Senior Research Fellow*

- Attended the International Workshop on “Deltas, Vulnerability and Climate Change: Migration and Adaptation,” held in Southampton, from 10 to 16 January 2016, at The University of Southampton, United Kingdom.

Dr Monzur Hossain, *Senior Research Fellow*

- Attended the “A Workshop to Plan a SORT IT Course for Tobacco Taxation and Economics (TTE)” held in Turkey from 22 to 24 March 2016, sponsored by Cancer Research, UK.

Ms Mitali Parvin, *Research Associate*

- Attended at BLISS School on the theme “Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns” held in New Delhi, India during 18-22 April 2016, sponsored by Teri University and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), India.

Call for Journal Articles

Articles are invited for the “Bangladesh Development Studies” (a peer-reviewed quarterly journal published in English) and the “Bangladesh Unnayan Samiksha” (annual journal published in Bangla) from researchers and academics who are interested in development issues of Bangladesh. The topics could cover a wide range of socio-economic development, 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).

Memorial Meeting in Honour of Late Dr Mahabub Hossain



Commemorating the Life and Works of Dr Mahabub Hossain

A Memorial Meeting was held in honour of Late Dr Mahabub Hossain, former Director General, BIDS, in the BIDS Conference Room on 25 February 2016. The Director General of BIDS, Dr K A S Murshid warmly welcomed the guests and invited Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud to chair the session. Later, a brief presentation on the life and works of Dr Hossain was made by Tahreen Tahrima Chowdhury, Research Associate, BIDS. This was followed by a round of discussion by friends, associates and family members of the late lamented economist. Amongst those who spoke on the occasion were Professor Rehman Sobhan, Professor A R Khan, Mrs Nurjahan Bose, Dr Quazi Shahabuddin, Dr M Asaduzzaman, Dr Atiq Rahman, Dr Binayak Sen, Dr Sajjad Zohir and Dr Mahmudul Alam. Speakers paid rich tributes to Dr Hossain and urged that his contributions be recognised in a befitting manner, including through publication of his collected works and bringing out a special publication of the Bangladesh Development Studies.

BIDS Publications



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