

BRAC Development Institute (BDI)

BRAC Development Institute (BDI), established in 2008, is a resource center that promotes research and develops knowledge on practical solutions to issues of poverty, inequity and social injustice. It takes an inclusive, multidisciplinary approach to challenge conventional knowledge and advance a southern voice in the global development discourse.



BDI Staff

TEACHING and LEARNING

At the core of BDI's work are several academic courses, which include both classroom teaching and fieldwork experience:

1. Masters in Development Studies (MDS)

Coordinators: Dr. Ferdous Jahan with Alamgir Kabir and Tarikul Alam Sharif

MDS is an innovative, cross-disciplinary program that provides an in-depth understanding of development concepts and issues in the context of globalization, economic transformation, and social, cultural and political changes. The MDS program currently has a total of 114 students.

2. Masters in Development Management and Practice (MDMP)

Coordinators: Dr. Ferdous Jahan with Alamgir Kabir and Arafat Hassan

MDMP program seeks to create a cadre of professionals who are trained in contemporary development theory and practice; the natural and social sciences; and management. Supported by the MacArthur Foundation, it is part of the Global Network of MDP programs based at Columbia University's Earth Institute and includes hands-on field experience and internship opportunities at various leading national and international development agencies. Currently 12 students are enrolled in the program.

3. Postgraduate Certificate Course on Management of Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLARR)

Coordinators: Dr. Ferdous Jahan with Alamgir Kabir, Sharif Abdul Wahab, Ripon Chakraborty, Anindita Hridita and Anika Binte Kasem

BDI offers A three-month postgraduate certificate course to government officials, private sector land developers, development practitioners to design, implement and develop resettlement and rehabilitation strategies based on global best practices. BDI also offers a two-day workshop, a five-day training course and a sixteen-week distance-learning course. Sixty one participants from Bangladesh and abroad have completed the post-graduate certificate course so far. Over 280 participants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Congo (DRC), Uganda and Zambia have participated in the short course.

4. Microfinance: An Introductory Course

Coordinators: Syed M. Hashemi with Sharah Taasnuva and Arafat Hassan

This two-week introductory course on financial services for the poor is targeted primarily to an international audience. Taught by a team of senior academics and professionals across various fields, the course includes extensive field visits. To date over 150 participants from Japan, Italy, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Nigeria, Malawi, Kenya, Mozambique, Zambia, Swaziland, Botswana, and Uganda have participated in the course.

5. Applied Social and Marketing Communication: A Short Course

Coordinators: Afsan Chowdhury with Alamgir Kabir and Arafat Hassan

This three-week course is designed primarily for the professionals of profit and non-profit sector. The course focuses on the use communication in development, providing specific tools and techniques to analyze consumer behaviour, manage a brand and create marketing strategies for social media. Forty three professionals have participated in the course since it started in 2012.

STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

University of Ottawa and BRAC University

The School of International Development and Global Studies (SIDGS) at the University of Ottawa and BDI established an undergraduate and graduate student exchange program in 2010.

RESEARCH

BDI hosts a number of national and international projects which are often multi-partner and multidisciplinary. They are organized into five themes:

- I. Economic Transformation and the Lives of the Poor**
- II. Women's Empowerment**
- III. Democracy and Governance**
- IV. Environment and Climate Change**
- V. History, Politics and Development**

Ongoing Research at BDI

I. Economic Transformation and the Lives of the Poor

1. Pro-poor Slum Integration Project (PPSIP)- *Project Coordinator: Dr. Fuad Hassan Mallick, funded by National Housing Authority.*

This project aims at implementing secure housing options for the urban poor in order to improve their quality of life and overall living conditions, where people of communities are in the centre of the process and where the process of housing would be considered as an effective tool for community development.

2. Impact Evaluation of the DFID Program to Accelerate Improved Nutrition for the Extreme Poor in Bangladesh, Phase II- *Project Coordinator: Dr. Ferdous Jahan, funded by Institute of Development Studies.*

The program will assess whether the combination of direct and indirect nutrition interventions accelerate reduction of under nutrition in children under two in the core beneficiary households of the three programs, compared with non-beneficiary households in program areas.

3. Building Capacities and Creating Communities: Towards a Multi-Sector Initiative in Urban Slums of Bangladesh- *Project Coordinator: Dr. Mirza M. Hassan, funded by The Rockefeller Foundation.*

The overall objective of this holistic action research is to design and implement interventions in five

treatment sites, carry out qualitative and quantitative assessments of the interventions and develop sustainable models to replicate and scale up.

4. Strengthening Social Protection for Informal Workers: Supporting Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Across Stable and Fragile Contexts- *Project Coordinator: Dr. Ferdous Jahan, funded by ODI-European Union.*

The overall objective of this project is to inform and strengthen social protection policy to contribute to reduced poverty and increased social inclusion among marginalized workers and the vulnerable in the informal economy.

5. Evaluation of Integrated Livelihood Support Program (ILSP) for the Ultra Poor in Pakistan, (TUP Pakistan)- *Project Coordinator: Dr. Ferdous Jahan, Program Funded by DFATD, BDI funded by BRAC International.*

The ILSP program is designed to address the multiple and intersecting constraints that trap households in extreme poverty. The asset transfer element addresses the inability of poor people to access the lump sums necessary to invest in productive assets. Training is intended not only to develop entrepreneurial skills but also to develop entrepreneurial mind sets. The emphasis on intensive 'mentoring' recognizes that for poor women, in particular, building self-confidence and agency is critical for entrepreneurial success. The program started in 2013. Prior to starting the program, BDI conducted an RCT-based baseline data collection for the project. A follow panel survey will take place in 2014.

II. Women's Empowerment

6. Empowerment and Participation: Linking Local Realities to Global Action (Unpaid Care Work)- *Project Coordinator: Dr. Sohela Nazneen, funded by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).*

IDS, SMERU (Indonesia) and the Center for Gender and Social Transformation (CGST), BDI are collaborating on developing policy 'asks' and generating knowledge on unpaid care and building partnerships to promote these policy demands. In 2013, BDI produced a review of existing research and policy on unpaid care in Bangladesh and held a national dissemination workshop. BDI is collaborating with ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB) using time diary tools to collect data on gender division of labor in extreme poor households.

7. South Asia Regional Secretariat for Women Parliamentarians- *Project Coordinator: Maheen Sultan and Dr. Sohela Nazneen, funded by PRODIP (USAID/UKAID).*

The South Asian Regional Secretariat of Women Parliamentarians (SARSWP) was established in July 2012 to serve as a regional coordination centre for the Network of South Asian Women parliamentarians. In 2013 SARSWAP hosted the first annual conference of the network in Colombo and hosted learning exchanges on caucus creation, women in conflict and legal reforms related to violence against women. It has also published four technical briefs on women's political participation and regional collaboration. To read more about the Secretariat:

<http://www.bracu.ac.bd/secretariat/>

8. Paving the Path to Improved Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health in Bangladesh- *Project Coordinator: Simeen Mahmud, funded by International Center for Research on Women (ICRW).*

This research aims to identify the supply and demand-side determinants of access, provision and utilization of health services of 15-19 year old adolescent girls in slum communities of urban Dhaka. Using secondary data sources, primary qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis it will explore the gendered social norms that influence fertility and family formation, and how these norms affect married and unmarried 15-19 year old adolescent girls' demand for sexual and reproductive health services.

9. Masculinity and Gender Equality Study South Asia: Masculinity, Economic Opportunity and Migration in Bangladesh- *Project Coordinator: Maheen Sultan, funded by the World Bank.*

The proposed study on “Masculinity, Gender and Development in South Asia” is part of a wider series of initiatives by the World Bank to expand research on male gender roles, in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of gender relations and how they impact constructions of both ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ in diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts. At present BDI is conducting life histories and interviews with selected target groups.

10. The Social Impact of Micro Finance on Gender Norms and Behavior- *Project Coordinator: Simeen Mahmud, funded by Institute of Microfinance, Bangladesh.*

This research attempts to study the spread, nature and wider impact of MFIs on gender norms and behavior. It is our assertion that in matters of change in gender norms and behaviors, these characteristics of the community and the interaction with programs are important both to grasp the true nature of impact and to understand the underlying characteristics that make them work.

11. Women’s Empowerment and Intimate Partner Violence in Bangladesh- *Principle Investigator: Sidney Ruth Schuler, funded by NIH through FHI 360, USA.*

The objective of this project study is to clarify the individual and community-level mechanisms by which a woman’s empowerment is associated with her risk of experiencing IPV in rural Bangladesh. The research is going to strengthen the understanding of the correlation between various aspects of women’s empowerment, the social dimensions and the risk of women’s experiencing IPV.

II. Democracy and Governance

12. Improving the Quality of Social Provisioning within Competitive Clientelist Context: A Comparison between Bangladesh and Ghana- *Project Coordinator: Dr. Mirza Hassan, funded by DFID and in collaboration with ESID research program, University of Manchester.*

A two-year comparative research with Ghana exploring the politics of education reform, the project examined the make-up of the political actors behind education reform, and how bargaining between different social groups over reform shaped the quantity and quality of educational provisions. In 2013, BDI completed document analysis and is conducting interviews with key informants.

13. Gender and Political Settlement: Comparative Analysis- *Project Coordinator: Dr. Sohela Nazneen, funded by DFID in collaboration with ESID research program, University of Manchester.*

A two-year multi-country research project being implemented during 2013-2015, will focus on the quality of women’s inclusion and participation in formal political institutions, informal processes and women’s movements, and their ability to negotiate gender equity concerns in legislative reform and policy formulation in the following areas: education and violence against women. BDI is coordinating the multi-country research project in Bangladesh, Ghana, Uganda and Rwanda. The inception workshop for this research was held in September in Manchester, UK.

14. A Study to Identify Effective Advocacy and Social Communication Practices- *Project Coordinator: Dr. Ferdous Jahan, funded by BRAC.*

The objective of this study is to identify the most effective models, practices and tools of advocacy and social communication in Bangladesh. Three policy advocacy areas- gender, environment, and anti-corruption have been selected for study.

15. Land Governance Assessment Framework (LGAF) of Bangladesh- *Project Coordinator: Alamgir Kabir, funded by: World Bank.*

The Land Governance Assessment Framework (LGAF) aims to create a comprehensive diagnostic tool that covers five main areas for policy intervention: Legal and institutional framework; land use

planning, management and taxation; Management of public land; Public provision of land information; and Dispute resolution and conflict management.

Completed Research at BDI

I. Women's Empowerment

1. Follow-up to Dhaka Declaration: Women's Access to Justice- Project Coordinator: Maheen Sultan, funded by UN Women.

"Follow up to the Dhaka Resolution" is a UN Women funded research on the impact on access to justice among the beneficiaries of Promotion of Legal and Social Empowerment of Women intervention (PLSEW, Phase II) undertaken by German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) between 2008-2011. This research assessed the impact of the PLSEW to contribute to strengthening local governance and government services to respond effectively to reduce violence against women. A dissemination workshop on the findings of the study was organized on 8 December 2013 at Bangladesh Shishu Academy. A review of laws on violence against women has been completed and a position paper prepared for the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. Furthermore, a video documentary was also made and shared within the participants of the workshop.

2. Preliminary Overview of the Home Based Component of the Garment Sector in Bangladesh- Project Coordinator: Simeen Mahmud, funded by WIEGO.

Although factory-based garment sector employment has featured prominently in academic research and activist arenas, not much is known about the situation of home-based workers in this sector. The purpose of this study was exploratory in nature, to undertake a situation analysis of home-based workers in the export garment sector.

II. Environment and Climate Change

3. Community and Institutional Responses to the Challenges Facing Poor Urban People in Bangladesh in an Era of Global Warming- Project Coordinator: Dr. Ferdous Jahan, funded by Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and DFID.

The project is a collaborative initiative between Manchester University and BRAC University. The research seeks to create policy relevant knowledge about how climate change impacts on the livelihoods and living conditions of poor urban people and communities in Bangladesh. Six low-income settlements in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna were studied in previous two years. Moreover, a household survey was conducted in 95 settlements of Dhaka to compare or support evidence found in these six settlements and to assess the quality of the findings at the national level and several publications have been produced.

4. Engendering Disaster Management in Bangladesh- Project Coordinator: Alamgir Kabir, funded by World Bank.

BDI started a research program named "Engendering Disaster Management" to provide assistance to Department of Disaster Management (DDM) and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA) of the Government of Bangladesh with objective of improving governance in disaster management by designing, administering and advocating gender responsive disaster management practices. The research areas were Satkhira, Bagerhat, Barguna, Patuakhali, Sunamgonj covering a total of 24 unions. A Two-day Training Module was developed in collaboration with Prip Trust.

PUBLICATIONS

Books

1. Azim, Firdous. (Eds.). (2013). *Islam, Culture and Women in Asia: Complex Terrains*, London: Routledge.
2. Nazneen, Sohela & Sultan, Maheen. (Eds.). (2013). *Voicing Demands: Feminist Activism in Transitional Contexts*, London: Zed Books.

Book Chapters

1. Huq, Lopita & Mahmud, Simeen. (2013). Mediation at the Grassroots: Claiming Rights by Empowering Citizens in Bangladesh, *Citizenship as Mediation: The Role of Intermediaries in Relations between States and Poor & Marginalised Groups in the Global South*, Palgrave Publishers.
2. Huq, Samia. (2013). Piety, Music and Gender Transformation: Reconfiguring Women as Culture Bearing Markers of Modernity and Nationalism in Bangladesh. In F. Azim (Eds.) *Islam, Culture and Women*, London: Routledge.
3. Nazneen, Sohela. (2013). Men Aboard? Movement for a Uniform Family Code in Bangladesh. In M. Al-Sharmani (Eds.) *Feminist Activism, Women's rights and Legal Reform*, London: Zed Books.

Publications in national and international peer reviewed journal

1. Azim, F & Hasan, P. (2013). Language, literature, education and community: the Muslim Bengali Woman in the Early Twentieth Century, Special issue, Researching Women's Empowerment, *Women's Studies International Forum journal*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2013.10.013>, published online: December 23, 2013.
2. Jahan, Ferdous & Shahan, A.M. (2013). Power and Influence of Islam-Based Political Parties in Bangladesh: Perception versus Reality, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, <http://jas.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/06/26/0021909613488350>, published online: June 26, 2013.
3. Jahan, Ferdous, Roy, Manoj & Hulme, David. (2013). Contrasting Adaptation Responses by Squatters and Low-Income Tenants in Khulna, Bangladesh, *Environment and Urbanization*, April, 25, pp. 157-17.
4. Kabeer, Naila, Huq, Lopita & Mahmud, Simeen. (2013). Diverging Stories of Missing Women in South Asia: Is Son Preference Weakening in Bangladesh?, *Feminist Economics*, pp. 1-26 | DOI: 10.1080/13545701.2013.857423, published online: November 19, 2013.
5. Nazneen, Sohela & Sultan, Maheen. (2013). Positionality and Transformative Knowledge: Conducting 'Feminist' Research on Empowerment in Bangladesh, *Women's Studies International Forum Journal*, special issue on Researching Women's Empowerment. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2013.11.008>, published online: December 19, 2013.
6. Jahan, Ferdous, Osman, F.A. & Shahan, A. (2013). Managing Natural Disasters in Bangladesh: Activating the Network Approach, *Public Organization Review*, Springer, USA and Germany.
7. Schuler, S., Lenzi, R., Nazneen, Sohela & Bates, L. (2013). A Perceived Decline in Intimate Partner Violence in Bangladesh: Qualitative Evidence, *Studies in Family Planning*, Vol 44, No 3, pp. 243–257.

Working Papers, Research Reports

1. Hassan, Mirza. (2013), Political Settlement Dynamics in a Limited Access Order: The Case of Bangladesh, *ESID Working Paper 23*, University of Manchester, UK.
2. Hassan, Mirza & Pritchard, Wilson. (2013). Negotiating the Politics of Tax Reform in Bangladesh, *ICTD working paper 14*, IDS, University of Sussex, UK.

3. Huq, Lopita. Kabeer, Naila & Mahmud, Simeen. (2013). Diverging Stories of Son Preference in South Asia: A Comparison of India and Bangladesh. *BDI Working paper, issue 7*, BRAC Development Institute.

Research Briefs and Other Publications in Peer Reviewed Periodicals

1. Afroze, Rahnuma. (2013). Women Parliamentary Caucus. *SARSWP Technical Brief, issue 2*. Center for Gender and Social Transformation (CGST).
2. Afroze, Rahnuma. (2013). Regional Mechanism for Women's Political Participation in South Asia: Problem and Perspective. *SARSWP Technical Brief, issue 3*. Center for Gender and Social Transformation (CGST).
3. Akter, Marufa. (2013). Women in Politics in South Asia. *SARSWP Technical Brief, issue 1*. Center for Gender and Social Transformation (CGST).
4. Akter, Marufa. (2013). UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and its Implication. *SARSWP Technical Brief, issue 4*. Center for Gender and Social Transformation (CGST).

SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS, TRAININGS, CONFERENCES & EVENTS

- Designing an MA in Gender, Culture and Development: Teaching, Research & Activism
- Seminar: New Directions in Asian Feminism(s)
- Publication of Management of Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLARR) manual
- The First Meeting of the South Asian Regional Network of Women Parliamentarians
- Consultation between Women Parliamentarians and Civil Society on Implementation of the Sri Lankan Women Parliamentarians National Action Plan
- Dr. Mirza Hassan at a Conference on Political Economy of Taxation In Developing Countries organized by the German Development Institute
- Participation at the Master of Development Practice (MDP) Summit 2013
- BDI Director Chaired a Session at a Symposium Organized by Columbia University and BRAC
- Dr. Sohela Nazneen at the Politics of Evidence Conference at IDS, UK
- BDI Facilitated Documentary Film-Making for the World Bank-EDMB Project
- Training On Management of Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLARR) at Pakistan
- Launching of Centre for Resettlement Studies (CRS) at BDI
- Public Lecture: Dr. Sohela Nazneen on "South Asian Feminisms: Paradoxes and Possibilities
- Three-days Training on Introducing Research Tools under the project 'Strengthening Women's Collectives in Bangladesh'
- Panel Discussion on Implementation of Land Governance Assessment Framework (LGAF) Bangladesh
- Workshop on "Unpaid Care Work: Situating it in Research and Policy Context in Bangladesh"
- BDI Leads the Research Design Workshop on Gender and Political Settlement for ESID at University of Manchester, UK
- Regional MLARR Learning Workshop at Sri Lanka
- Training Course on Management of Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLARR) at Rural Electrification Board (REB), Bangladesh
- Visit to Kathmandu University (KU), Nepal for Consultation Workshop on Management of Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLARR)
- Roundtable Discussion on Women's Access to Justice: Follow-up to the Dhaka Declaration and Ministerial Meeting on Beijing Plus Fifteen