

State of Cities Report 2014 launched in Chittagong



Distinguished guests launching the report (Left); valued guests at the event (right)

BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University launched its another annual flagship research report titled *State of Cities: Governance for a Liveable Chittagong* on 29 January, 2015 at the Chittagong Club, in Chittagong. Distinguished civil society members, academics, researchers, representatives from NGOs, politicians from mainstream parties, senior and other journalists were attended the event at the Club auditorium.

Engineer Mosharraf Hossain MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Housing & Public Works launched the report as the Chief Guest. Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan, Managing Director, A.K. Khan & Company Ltd attended the ceremony as the Special Guest. Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, the Executive Director of BIGD presided over the programme.



Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman presiding over the ceremony

Speakers at the programme said, development projects undertaken by government agencies in Chittagong should be need-based and Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) and other agencies should be given enough administrative power to mobilise their own funds lessening dependence on the centre. The speakers also put emphasis on good political intention of the leaders as well as public opinion for efficient implementation of any development project in the port city.

BIGD Monthly Updates

January 2015

Followed by the report launching, Engineer Mosharraf Hossain MP admitted that the port city is not worthy of living for human beings in the recent years. Mentioning various development initiatives of the present government, he stressed on to work on the waste management and recycling system as well along with focuses on other issues like water logging, transport and city corporation services. He also added, "Chittagong had some unique advantages and we have to do a lot of work to make the city livable and explore its resources."

In the welcome speech, Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman said, urbanization is a serious and growing challenge for all the cities of the world. He said BIGD worked on this research in the basis of all the indexes of liveability. To turn once the beautiful city Chittagong into a planned and liveable one, he stressed on few important issues. Firstly, as lack of pure and healthy water affects public life and hinders normal business growth, proper water and waste management is very important to be taken care of in Chittagong. Secondly, planned development of infrastructure and improved mass transit should be ensured to avail public services for the citizens. Thirdly, personal and human security should be ensured to counter increasing inequality and restrained economic growth; and finally, community organization, the most important one to assure grassroots democracy and citizen's rights. He wished that this report will particularly contribute in re-building the beautiful and healthy Chittagong.



Engineer Mosharraf Hossain MP, Mr. Salabuddin Kasem Khan, , Dr. Tofail Ahmed, Mr. M. Shabidul Islam, Arch. Zarina Hossain and Professor Muhammad Sekandar Khan delivering their speeches (From left to right)

Mr. M Shahidul Islam, Research Fellow, BIGD presented the report findings.

Mr. Salauddin Kashem Khan said, the projects of CCC should not gather dust in government offices rather the City Corporation should be empowered to implement development projects under PPP (public- private partnership)."Why does not the government allow the CCC to take development project funds from the local and foreign private entrepreneurs? Proposals worth hundreds of millions of US dollar are lying pending with me for undertaking development initiatives," he added. Reminding Chittagong's 12 per cent contribution to the national GDP and 34 per cent to the national economic growth, he demanded real development for the welfare of the common people of Chittagong.

Followed by the speeches of the distinguished guests and speakers, the Chair moderated a question and answer session with the guests on the report.

The report is prepared considering all the indexes of liveability. It is the third report of its kind. The report provides an in-depth analysis of the economic and political dynamics which shape various facets of urban governance in Chittagong and aims to provide solutions in addressing the mounting problems that the policymakers face as far as urban governance is concerned.

This report indicates that systemic dysfunction of local institutions, lack of horizontal accountability, dualism in service delivery, weak administrative and fiscal autonomy and excessive dependence of the local government on the central government and other agencies, among other factors, are a constraint to good governance of Chittagong city.

The previous two reports, published in 2012 and 2013, analysed the state of urban governance of Dhaka and Narayanganj. The institute launched the series to promote research and analysis as well as to spur intellectual debates on city governance in Bangladesh.

The event was widely covered by the mainstream and local media.

BIGD's Executive Director attended 6th International Conference, titled 'Translating Research into Policy and Action' as Speaker

Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, Executive Director of BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University attended as a speaker at the 6th international conference, titled "Translating Research into Policy and Action," hosted by IFMR LEAD and the College of Agricultural Banking (CAB-RBI) held on January 16th and 17th, 2015 at the College of Agricultural Banking campus in Pune, Maharashtra.

The conference aimed to bring together policymakers, senior practitioners, bankers and researchers, to foster a productive and high-level dialogue based on evidence relevant to current and future policies and practices of financial inclusion and financing livelihoods. This year, renowned development experts from academia presented results from a number of recent studies on the subject. In addition, esteemed practitioners, bankers and government policymakers discussed the potential challenges and opportunities towards achieving greater financial inclusion. And the conference was well received among practitioners, representing a wide range of sectors from banking industry, microfinance, government departments, and academia.



Distinguished guests at the Conference

Shri H R Khan, Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India addressed the conference at the inaugural session. Mr. Khan discussed the importance of evidence based decision making where both policy and practice can inform high quality research and vice versa. At the valedictory session, Shri S S Mundra, Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India also voiced the need of bridging the gap between policymaking and research. He opined the need to increase our understanding of the relationship between financial inclusion and economic growth, and the need to consider and develop alternative financial products in order to ensure 100% financial inclusion.

The two day conference brought together policymakers, senior practitioners, bankers and researchers, to foster a productive dialogue based on evidence relevant to current and future policies and practices of financial inclusion and financing livelihoods. Renowned development experts from academia, Prof. Shawn Cole from Harvard Business School, Prof. Mudit Kapur from Indian School of Business, Daniel Keniston from Yale University, and Giorgia Barboni from Trinity College, Dublin presented their research results from a number of recent studies on the subject. Researchers from IFMR LEAD also presented results from a wide range of studies undertaken by them.

BIGD Researcher Presentation at HELVETAS

Dr. Mirza Hasan, Lead Researcher and Sadiat Mannan, Research Associate of BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, BRAC University presented a presentation on “Study on Institutional Relationships and Linkages” under the Sharique-III project report at Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation on 27 January, 2015. Representatives from SHARIQUE and BIGD also attended the program.

The study maps and analyzes the institutional-relational factors i.e., formal and informal linkages between Upazila Parishad (UZP) and Union Parishad (UP). Linkages refer to administrative, financial, legal and accountability relations between the institutions. The study also plans to explore the nature of relationships that exist between actors within each institution. These relations are also embedded in and shaped by larger contextual variables such as national and local politics and bureaucratic culture. A major focus of the study is to understand these institutional-relational and contextual variables and to explore how these influence the incentives, interests and power of the relevant actors. Given this political economy framework the study sheds light on the nature of institutional conditions which ensures citizens’ effective oversight over the local government functionaries and capacitates them to provide services efficiently and inclusively.

BIGD Staffs Publications: Op-Eds

The Daily Kaler Kantha: [“Local Government: Bangladesh & India”](#) by Dr. Tofail Ahmed

The Daily Star: ["Democracy, Elections and Misuse of Trust"](#) by the Institutional Advisor Barrister Manzoor Hasan

Dhaka Tribune: [" May we speak freely?"](#) by Mr. Sadiat Mannan, Research Associate, BIGD