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Economic development cannot be measured by GDP

said Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud

As Bangladesh is advancing fast in its efforts to ensure sustaining economic growth, the disparities between the income of workers and employers is also widening day by day. We are noticing the per capita income increasing as well as the economic development of our country, on the other side economic discrimination is also increasing. So, Economic growth should not be measured by Gross Domestic Production (GDP), said

improve their living standard. Though we often discuss the role of readymade garment sector, we have to formalise other sectors as well, he said.

He also said that the government needs to assist small entrepreneurs so that they can step into the formal sectors.



Prof Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud at the workshop on Formal-Informal Labour Nexus and Bangladesh's Growth.

BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University and Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised the workshop at BIDS's on March 28, 2017 in the capital. The workshop was organised in partnership with the Rand Corporation of the USA and was supported by the Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK and the Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA) of Germany.

Prof Mahmud went on saying that the labourers are still deprived of a healthy work environment and the dues, benefits and allowances they deserve. He also called upon the government to come forward to take pragmatic steps to help the labour community

The outcome of the study suggests that although export-led growth increases employment levels, in terms of employment shares, sectoral growth causes a reallocation away from formal and informal employment towards self-employment, said Dr Krishna Kumar of RAND Corporation where he was presenting his research paper titled 'the Formal-Informal Labour Nexus and Growth in Bangladesh' in the first session of the workshop.

Presided over by BIGD Executive Director Dr Sultan Hafiz Rahman, the panelists at the workshop included CPD Distinguished Fellow Dr Mustafizur Rahman, Economic Research Group Executive Director Dr Sajjad Zohir, Professor at the Department of Economics of Dhaka University Dr Selim Raihan, BIDS Research Director Dr Kazi Ali Toufique and BIDS senior Research Fellow Dr Nazneen Ahmed.

Dr Shanti Nataraj of Rand Corporation presented the second paper titled 'What Do Workers Value about Formal Employment- Results from a Worker Survey in Bangladesh' in the second session of the workshop. "Our studies found that policies that encourage job stability are likely to be beneficial for workers," said Dr Nataraj, adding: "It is also critical for policymakers to pay close attention to poor working conditions, particularly for informal workers."

Dr Minhaj Mahmud, Senior Research Fellow of BIDS said, It is also important to enforce existing regulations about overtime and pay in both formal and informal

sectors, at his presentation of the paper titled 'Employee and Employer Preferences for Worker benefits: Results from a Matched Survey in Bangladesh' at the workshop.

The research team analysed existing secondary data and also conducted several surveys on employers and employees of small and medium enterprises to find the links between informality and growth while also examining worker transitions between different types of jobs and estimating the valuations of specific job benefits by workers and employers.

Decision-taking process expedited through e-filing

Experts say at the Development Economics Conference

"Decision-taking process is getting expedited now as e-filing is taking place in 59 districts. But bringing more transparency in this process, mutual accountability of the people involved in the process will have to be ensured," said Dr. Mashiur Rahman while speaking at the Development Economics Conference jointly organised by BIGD and International Growth Centre (IGC), at a city hotel on 12 March, 2017.

Prime Minister's Economic Advisor Dr. Rahman said efficient officials are needed in the government offices

Dr. Minhaj Mahmud, Research Fellow of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) in his research paper 'Infrastructure and Well-Being: Employment Effects of Jamuna Bridge in Bangladesh' showed that several numbers of mega projects are changing rural economies and they are helping in the market integration. Infrastructure developments like a bridge over the river Jamuna are integrating economic factors in Bangladesh that are helping the economy to grow, He said.

Along with the ongoing economic development



for formulation of right policies and their implementation. Otherwise, it is not possible to implement the government's plans properly, he said, adding that at the same time emphasis will have to be given on taking decision quickly.

First and second sessions of the conference were chaired by Dr Shamsul Alam, member of the General Economics Division of the Planning Commission.

process the government needs to focus its attention on several other sectors like improving industrial sector, facing catastrophe due to climate change, increasing skill in revenue collection and bringing changes in bureaucracy.

Dr. Asadul Islam an Associate Professor of Monash University presented a paper on 'Social Network, Referrals and Technologies Adoption: Evidence from

Randomized Field Experience' in the conference. He showed that information technology adoption among rural people can increase productivity and can also provide right-time information to farmers about using seeds, plantation and use of instruments for mechanised farming.

In the second session Adnan Khan of IGC presented his paper on 'Incentivizing Bureaucrats through Performance-Based Postings' and Dr. Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak of Yale University presented on 'General Equilibrium Effects of Emigration on Rural Labor Markets'.

The last session chaired by Dr. Mashiur Rahman, was also marked by three research papers presented by scholars from Ohio State University, Harvard University and of BIGD.

Emily Breza of Harvard University in her research paper on 'Scarcity at the End of the Month - A Field Experiment with Garment Factory Workers in Bangladesh' said through removing bottlenecks in mobile financial transactions among garment workers it is possible to help them in proper money transfer among their family members. Wage payment through

electronic system, particularly to bank accounts, encourages workers to save, she added.

Joyce Chen of Ohio State University in her paper on 'Migration and Climate Change: Environmental Vulnerability and Location Choice in Bangladesh' has shown that Bangladesh's coastal people are badly affected due to climate change consequences. She said people are migrating to another places and some who are not migrating are fighting against the changed environment calamities like salinity, drought and others.

Dr. Wahid Abdallah, Research Fellow of BIGD in his research paper 'Electronic Filing System, Bureaucratic Efficiency and Public Service Delivery: Evidence from Bangladesh' suggested for adopting electronic filing systems in the public offices like deputy commissioner's office.

Among others the conference was attended by renowned economists, academicians, civil society members and senior public officials from home and abroad.

Women's economic opportunity draws on all factors in society

Experts said at a workshop



"Women's economic opportunity is not an isolated issue. It draws on all factors in society," said Dr. Kaniz N. Siddique, at the Technical Validation Workshop titled Evidence-based Foundation of Women's Economic Empowerment at UNDP on 14 March, 2017, to review a set of four studies on the current state and opportunities for women's economic empowerment in Bangladesh.

The study was done to gain a better understanding of the characteristics, opportunities and constraints for women's economic empowerment in Bangladesh. It also attempted to provide an evidence-based foundation for government, development, UN and civil society partners for promoting and supporting women's economic empowerment. Four related studies on Gender Aware Macro-economic Analysis,

Analysis of Institutional and Social Constraints to Women's Economic Engagement and Benefit, Opportunities Analysis: Market and Opportunities Analysis: Policy was completed for this purpose.

The Centre for Gender and Social Transformation (CGST) of BIGD, in partnership with United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh and UN Women Bangladesh arranged the workshop.

Sudipto Mukerjee, Country Director, UNDP Bangladesh inaugurated the session which was followed by introductory remarks from Christine Hunter, Country Representative, UN Women

Bangladesh and Shaila Khan, Assistant Country Director, UNDP Bangladesh. The presentation and open discussion sessions were moderated by Simeen Mahmud, Head, Gender Cluster and CGST, BIGD.

Representatives from different Ministries and Departments of the Government of Bangladesh were present as participants, along with representatives from development partners, think tanks, local NGOs, private sector and different UN Programmes. Discussants acknowledged that more intensive initiatives must be undertaken to strengthen women's economic empowerment in Bangladesh and suggested more critical perspectives through which market opportunities for women can be analyzed.

ED attended the Southern Social Science Congress as Guest of Honor

Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, ED of BIGD delivered his speech as the Guest of Honor at the Inaugural Session of the First Southern Social Science Congress on Social

Chancellor of Osmania University attended the congress as the Chief Guest. The three-day event was a meeting place for a wide variety of disciplines and



Science: New Paradigms Towards Sustainable and Prospective Future. The Institute of Public Enterprise (IPE) and Indian Council of Social Science Research Southern Regional (ICSSR) Centre organized the congress on 23-25 March, 2017 at Osmania University Campus, Hyderabad, India.

The Congress was inaugurated by Chairman of the ICSSR S. Thorat, and presidential address was given by Samar Verma, Senior Programme Officer for the Think Tank Initiative, IDRC's Regional Office for South Asia, New Delhi. Professor S Ramachandram, Vice

provides a forum for academicians, researchers, policy makers and practitioners.

Eminent social scientists and policy makers from reputed organisations and industry presented papers on major themes like Development models, Inclusive growth, Agriculture and Rural Development, Gender Issues, Corporate Social Responsibility, Health, Democracy and Development, Ecosystems and Sustainable Development, Social Justice and Equity and change, among others.

Simeen Mahmud attended as a Panelist at the meeting What Can We Learn from the Development Success of Bangladesh?

Simeen Mahmud, Head of the CGST at BIGD discussed and shared her opinions on the development success in Bangladesh as a Panelist at a meeting titled 'What can we learn from development success in Bangladesh?' The meeting held at Houses of Parliament, Westminster on 28 February 2017.

Anne Main, St Albans' Member of Parliament chaired the meeting organised by the Institute of Development

studies, University of Sussex. Dr Mushtaque Chowdhury, Vice Chair, BRAC Bangladesh; Naomi Hossain, Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies; Saul Walker, Chief of Staff, Asia, Caribbean and Overseas Territories Division, DFID; and Rushanara Ali MP, UK also spoke at the event as panelists. The programme tends to identify the ingredients of the success of Bangladesh and lessons for aid programs.



BIGD organized a training programme on Implementation of National Plans and SDGs

BIGD in association with the General Economics Division (GED), Ministry of Planning organized training Programme on Implementation of National Plans and SDGs: Project Identification and Design, held on March 11, 2017 at BRAC CDM. Dr. Shanawez Hossain, Research Fellow of BIGD chaired the event. Professor Shamsul Alam, Member (Senior Secretary),

General Economics Division (GED), Ministry of Planning attended the event as the Chief Guest. Mr. Fakrul Ahsan, Project Manager, Support to Sustainable and Inclusive Planning (SSIP) and Mr. Naquib bin Mahbub, Chief, GED & NPD, SSIP, attended the event as Special Guests.



BIGD Researcher attended the workshop on Countering Violent Extremism

Gubair Bin Arafat, Research Associate of BIGD participated in a three-day national workshop on “Countering Violent Extremism (CVE): Building Resilience and Capacity”, from the 28th-30th of March, 2017, jointly organized by Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) and Bangladesh Centre for Terrorism Research (BCTR). The Government of Canada has supported the programme. The workshop unified the diverse voices of some of the leading thinkers, speakers and innovators from within the country and beyond.



Shafqat Munir, Research Fellow at BCTR presented paper on What is Countering Violent Extremism: A primer; Chiran Jung Thapa, Senior Strategic and Security Analyst and former Regional Security Advisor, Saferworld, UK presented paper on Violent Extremism: Understanding the Threat Landscape; Syed Zain Al Mahmood, Correspondent, The Wall Street Journal presented paper on The Role of Media in CVE, Sameer Patil, Director, Centre for International Security at Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations Cyber Radicalisation at the workshop. Prof. Abu Zayed Mohammad, Research Fellow of BIPSS discussed on Preventing the threat on Youth Radicalization at the event.

Researchers' other activities

- Simeen Mahmud, Head, Gender Cluster and Nuzhat Sharmeen, Research Associate attended the workshop on "Creating Inclusive and Resilient Cities" organized by CORD (Collaboration for Research on democracy), Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Centre in Milan, Italy from March 6-10, 2017. Simeen Mahmud presented the paper titled "Engaging the urban poor to build resilient communities: realizing the right to water in urban Bangladesh".
- Simeen Mahmud; Maheen Sultan, Visiting Fellow and Sahida Khondaker, Research Associate presented paper titled 'Care work and Gender Roles', 'Exploring Care Work of Women' and 'Images of Caring Men' accordingly at the inauguration of the Center for Advanced Research at Central Women's University.
- Nuzhat Sharmeen attended the training on Elsevier (Science Direct) Digital Resource Awareness & Author Workshop in association with Access to Information (a2i), Krishibid Institute Bangladesh, March 02, 2017.
- Dr. Shanawez Hossain attended the award giving ceremony of Bangladeshi Winners of the 2016 Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA), held at the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Centre (IJKC) in Dhaka on March 09, 2017. He also attended the meeting between BRAC and Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), National University of Singapore, held at BRAC Centre on March 19, 2017. Dr. Hossain participated in a panel discussion on NGO and development in Bangladesh on the occasion of celebrating BRAC Day 2017, held on March 19, 2017. He also, attended a TV live Discussion on Traffic and Public Transport of Dhaka City Based on BIGD State of Cities Report, 2016 at News24 on March 29, 2017.

Executive Director's Activities

BIGD's ED Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman had several meetings in March 2017 with a number of distinguished personalities such as prominent academics, policy makers and researchers regarding the research collaborations and other relevant issues of BIGD.

Dr. Rahman had meetings with Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, Chairperson BRAC; Anir Chowdhury, Policy Advisor, Prime Minister's Office, Bangladesh; Md. Nojibur Rahman, Senior Secretary, Internal Resource Division (IRD) and Chairman, National Board of Revenue (NBR), Ministry of Finance; Tim Dobermann, Hub Economist for Bangladesh, IGC; Fahad Khalil, Chair, Castor Professor of Economics, University of Washington; Adnan Khan, Lecturer, London School of Economics and Political Science and Research & Policy Director, IGC; Dr. Nasir Uddin Ahmed, Commissioner, ACC; Samar Verma Ph.D. Senior Program Officer, IDRC; Professor Ramkumar Mishra, Director, Institute of Public Enterprise (IPE); Mohan Das Manandhar, Senior Advisor, Nepal; Dr. Zafrul Islam, Lead Procurement

Specialist of the World Bank and Task Team Leader, PPRP-II; Bethany L. McGann, Associate Coordinator, Research and Knowledge Management for the RESOLVE Network and Senior Program Assistant at the U.S. Institute of Peace and Barrister Manzoor Hasan, Chair, UNCAC Coalition, Executive Director, South Asian Institute of Advanced Legal Human Rights Studies (SAILS).

Dr. Hafeez attended the Consultation Workshop on Strengthening Public Private Partnership for Inclusive and Sustainable growth of Bangladesh Fisheries Sector as distinguished discussants organized by the Department of Fisheries and Bangladesh Shrimp and Fish Foundation.

Dr. Rahman also attended seminar on "Bangladesh in Focus: What can we learn about sustainable and inclusive development?" at IDS; IGC's International Conference on Development Economics; and Gunijon Songbordhona - 2017 organized by Daily Bonik Barta.



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