

Well-planned City needs empowered city government

speakers said at a workshop on Equitable Economic Growth in Sylhet

Participants at a workshop on Equitable Economic Growth in Sylhet City demanded to build Sylhet a planned city through the implementation of master plan prepared by Professor Jamilur Reza Chowdhury. The participants also demanded ensuring clean, healthy and hygienic environment, making open space for playground and other entertainment facilities. They also urged to make the citizens aware regarding

Attending as the Chief Guest, Mayor Ariful Haq Chowdhury said that the public representatives allied with the ruling party get support from the Government but the other representatives do not and now it has become a culture which needs to be changed. Coordination and cooperation among the public offices and government organizations is essential before empowering the city corporation, he added. He



their rights and responsibilities. They felt the need for an empowered city government to fulfill the aspirations of city dwellers.

proposed for a monthly coordination meeting and said that without coordination and cooperation, it is impossible to complete a single task.

The kick-off workshop was held under the joint work programme titled Promoting Equitable Economic Growth in Cities as part of a global campaign. BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University and Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) with the support of Cities Alliance based in Brussels, jointly organized the workshop on May 24, 2017 in Sylhet.

Ajay Suri, Asian Regional Advisor, Cities Alliance; Consultant Dr. K. Rajivan, Dr. Shanawez Hossain, Research Fellow, BIGD and Team Leader of the Project; Mr. Sarwar Jahan Chowdhury, Head of Operations, BIGD; Engineer Ruhul Alam, Chief Engineer, Sylhet City Corporation also delivered their speeches in the event. The programme was moderated by BIGD's Research Associate S M Gubair Bin Arafat.

Advocate Irfanujjaman Chowdhury, President, Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC); Aminul Islam Chowdhury, Sammilita Sangskritic Jote; Nasim Hossain, Sylhet City President of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP); senior politician Barrister Aarash Ali; Gourango Patro, President, Adivasi Forum (Forum of Ethnic People); Professor Tahmina Islam, Department of Social Work, Shahajalal University of Science and Technology; senior journalist Ahmed Nur; City Corporation Counselor Sahanara Begum, Dinar Khan and others also shared their valued opinion and suggestions regarding different problems of the city

and their short term and long term solutions.

Recognizing the roles of cities and the challenges they present in developing countries, the Cities Alliance, a global partnership for urban poverty reduction and hosted by the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and BIGD have embarked on this project. The goals of this project are (i) to promote equitable access to public goods and services in context of cities' specific needs and (ii) support growth trajectories increasingly characterized by equity, inclusion and environmental sustainability.

Women's Capabilities in Education and Health improving, but remains insufficient in Economic and Political Field

- says *Human Development is South Asia 2016 report*

In South Asia, over the last decade and a half, there has been an improvement in women's social, economic and political empowerment. However worldwide, the region fares better than Sub-Saharan Africa only. Progress has been considerable in improving women's capabilities through education and health, but remains insufficient in economic and political fields. Beside this, a high prevalence of the incidence of violence against women points to the inadequate implementation of laws, finds the research on 'Human Develop-

ment in South Asia 2016: Empowering Women in South Asia' conducted by Mahbub ul Haq Research Centre (MHRC) of Lahore University of Management Sciences.

ment in South Asia 2016: Empowering Women in South Asia' conducted by Mahbub ul Haq Research Centre (MHRC) of Lahore University of Management Sciences. The report demonstrates that, the overall picture of progress in South Asia not only masks the inequality in opportunity for women both between and within countries, but also across women belonging to different socio-economic, ethnic and religious groups.



ment in South Asia 2016: Empowering Women in South Asia' conducted by Mahbub ul Haq Research Centre (MHRC) of Lahore University of Management Sciences.

BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, BRAC University launched the report at a city hotel in Dhaka

The report also suggests that despite overall progress in key indicators, the promise of the MDGs is still unfulfilled and the region needs to intensify its commitment towards meeting the SDGs aiming to complete what the MDGs did not achieve-especially targeting stubborn challenges, such as in female leadership, voice and representation, as well as violence against women.

Speaking on the women's empowerment, Chief Guest Rasheda K. Choudhury, Executive Director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) said, there is a fundamental difference between participation and Partnership. Women in Bangladesh have progressed far in participating in various economic activities but they still lack opportunity at partnership level.

While talking about sexual violence that has happened in recent times, she described the difficulties women face in professional fields. She urged the government to increase budget in research sectors and thanked MHRC for this report, which is a reminder that there's a long way to go for women empowerment.

Mr. M Syeduzzaman, Member, Board of Advisors, MHRC said, the report is a message to revisit and update the gender question in light of development in the world. The report shows the difference among different South Asian countries on gender development, educational progress, health progress, political empowerment and employment of women.

Earlier, BIGD's Executive Director Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, Rasheda K. Choudhury, Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Ms. Simeen Mahmud, Head Gender Cluster and The Centre for Gender and Social Transformation (CGST) and Dr. Rushidan Islam Rahman, Executive Chairperson, Centre for Development and Employment Research (CDER) launched the report in front of media. Maheen Sultan, Visiting Fellow, BIGD made a presentation on the key finding and recommendations of the report.

Prof. Mustafizur said gender-based violence costs 2.4 per cent of the country's GDP as existing laws remain inactive to protect women from violence. Bangladesh made significant progress since 2000, especially in

framing policies and laws, which eased women empowerment. But we have to monitor whether the laws and policies are implemented properly or not. He also mentioned that a large number of activities, performed by women, remain outside the national accounting system.

Simeen Mahmud said that though Bangladesh's economic growth rate was third highest in the world, its public spending in human development remained lower compared to neighboring countries.

Presenting the study findings, Maheen Sultan said Bangladesh scored 0.917 in GDI to be third among the South Asian countries, while Sri Lanka secured first place scoring 0.948 and Maldives placed second on the list with 0.937 points.

Female secondary school enrollment in the region reached 63.4 per cent from 36.8 per cent within the timeframe while Bangladesh lags behind reaching 57.38 per cent. However, Bangladesh has done really well in female tertiary education enrollment attaining 32.61 per cent comparing to South Asia's average 20.10 per cent in 2013. She also showed that the female life expectancy increased from 64 to 68 years between 2000 and 2013 while the country's overall life expectancy improved to 70.7 years from 63.5 in the same period.

Focusing on the empowerment of poor women, Dr. Rushidan Islam Rahman suggested improving their access to education, skill development and technology.

In conclusion, Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman said that political commitment was vital for women empowerment and hoped that the government would maintain the success while focus on addressing the challenges that remain.

To provide more accountable service, we need City Governance

– said Dr. Selina Hayat Ivy at a kick-off workshop

"Most of the budget of the local government is spent by unelected officers, not by the elected representatives. Budget allocations to the elected public representatives should be increased as they are accountable to the people, where the accountability of a DC or MD is very low." said Dr. Selina Hayat Ivy,

Mayor, Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC) at a workshop titled Equitable Economic Growth in Narayanganj City.

This kick-off workshop organized under the joint work programme titled Promoting Equitable Economic

Growth in Cities as part of a global campaign. BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University and NCC with the support of Cities Alliance based in Brussels, jointly organized the workshop on May 18, 2017 at Narayanganj.

Dr. Ivy claimed for city governance and raised question, Why DESA, Titas, Police, Magistrates are not

answer any questions of the mass people but a local government representative must have to and that is why it is high time to increase the power of local government. She added, though there are a lot of limitations, local government is trying to solve as much problems as they can.

Presenting the 'Institutional Enabling Environment



under the City Corporation? She urged all to tell the government, 'Give us city government'. If there is no city government, a city mayoral corporation will not be able to do much work. Now we have to request our magistrates, call the police, call to DPDC to get services. But in the system of city government, various organizations could work under an umbrella as a whole. In addition, when these will come under the elected representatives, they will be accountable to public to discharge these responsibilities either for the necessity of the citizen's service or to keep popularity or due to the fear of the upcoming election.

She told that, these unelected officers need not to

Report (IEER)', Dr. Shanawez Hossain, Research Fellow, BIGD and Team Leader of the project said, Analyzing the political, functional and fiscal arrangements under which Narayanganj City Corporations (NCC) operates this project will assist in facilitating city-level policy actions for enhancing Local Economic Development (LED) which will ultimately promote equitable access to public goods and services.

Dr. Dhiraj Ajay Suri, Regional Advisor for Asia; K Rajivan; Advisor, Cities Alliance; Advocate Mahmudur Rahmna Habib, Chief Executive Officer, NCC and Muhammad Jahangir, Media personality were also present at the workshop among others.

BIGD' Visiting Fellow chaired a session in knowledge fair

Maheen Sultan, Visiting Fellow of BIGD chaired a session titled Societal Perspective on Gender Based Violence at a daylong knowledge fair on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), organized by Share-Net Bangladesh on May 3, 2017 at a city hotel. Two presentations titled Prevention of Violence Against Women (VAW) by engaging Male Community Support Group and Young People's attitude towards Government of Bangladesh (GoB) were presented at

the session.

Mr. Hasanul Haq Inu, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Information, GoB, inaugurated the Knowledge Fair as Chief Guest. Three scientific plenary sessions were held on three major topics, child marriage; gender based violence; and menstrual regulation where almost 300 participants from more than 60 organizations joined the fair.

Researchers' other activities

- Simeen Mahmud, Head Gender Cluster; Maheen Sultan, Visiting Fellow, Sahida Khondaker and Nuzhat Sharmeen, Research Associate of BIGD attended the F.I.M. Nurul Abedin and Anjuman Ara Begum Memorial Lecture 2016 in Asiatic Society Bangladesh on May 2, 2017.
- Simeen Mahmud, Maheen Sultan and Sahida Khondaker attended the International Conference, organized by Department of English and Humanities, BRAC University on May 19, 2017.
- Nuzhat Sharmeen attended a session on Knowledge Platform on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, organized by Share-Net Bangladesh on May 3, 2017.

Executive Director's Activities

BIGD's ED Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman had several meetings in May 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 Dr. Muhiuddin Alamgir, consultant of Asian Development Bank (ADB); Dr. Fouzul Kabir, Managing Director, Keystone Consultant Ltd; Mr. Faruq Hossain, Director General, Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU), Ministry of

Planning; Ms. Paula Steele, Global Public Sector Manager- Central Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS); Dr. Ahmad Ahsan, Senior Economist, World Bank; Ms. Sunhwa Lee, ADB's Principal Social Development Specialist; Mr. Bruno Carrasco, Director, Finance and Governance, South Asia Department, ADB, Manila; Mr. Peter D'Souza and Dr. Stuart Davies, Senior Economic Adviser of Department for International Development (DFID) Bangladesh. He also attended several Skype meeting throughout the month.



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