



January 2017

BIGD & Copenhagen Consensus Center's Seminar on Smart Interventions for 7th Plan Priorities

Further priority should be given for the expansion of e-procurement, land digitization and union digital centre. The economic benefits would be much higher and service delivery would improve if the government gives further priority to digitization during the ongoing seventh five-year plan between 2016 and 2020, the researchers of BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University and Copenhagen Consensus Center (CCC) urged the government policy makers at a seminar on Smart Interventions for 7th Plan Priorities, on 09 January 2017, at the BRAC Centre Inn.

Dr. Nasiruddin Ahmed, Commissioner, Anti Corruption Commission (ACC); Mr. Mohammad Muslim Chowdhury, Additional Secretary, Finance Division; Mr. AKM Asaduzzaman Patwary, Research Fellow, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries (DCCI); and Mr. Shahariar Sadat, Academic Coordinator, South Asian Institute of Advanced Legal and Human Rights Studies (SAILS) attended the seminar as panelists.

Dr. Shamsul Alam, however, said the government should be careful about e-security with the expansion of digitization. Bangladesh Bank lost its US\$ 81 million



Five different papers on Impact of e-procurement on reducing corruption and promoting competition, by Dr. Wahid Abdallah, Research Fellow, BIGD; Land Digitization for Smart Governance, by Ms. Sumaiya Kabir Talukder, Katalyst; Justice at the village level: What is the smart policy?, by Ms. Nabila Zaman, BIGD; Strengthening UDCs for Accelerated Public Service Delivery, and RMG Palli and Factory Compliance, by Mr. Hasanuzzaman, Outreach Manager, CCC, were presented at the seminar.

Dr. Shamsul Alam, Member, General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning and Mr. Anir Chowdhury, Policy Advisor, a2i, Prime Minister's Office (PMO), attended the seminar as the Guests of Honour.

reserve fund due to security breach in electronic payment systems with its account holder, the New York Federal Reserve Bank. Hacking affected the recently held election in the US, he added.

On the basis of cost benefit analysis, the paper on UDC said benefit of Tk 8 would come from spending Tk 1 for expanding UDC service for giving service delivery of mobile banking, citizen certificates, application for machine readable passport and payment of utility bills. The paper also said international migration through the UDCs would generate benefit of Tk 22 from spending Tk 1.

In the other papers on land digitization and e-procurement, the BIDG researchers calculated that

there would be big returns against less investment.

In 2011, the government introduced electronic government procurement on limited scale. Only 9.5 per cent of the total government procurement was carried through e-tendering.

Discussants, mostly government officials, lauded initiatives of the BIGD. They said 'enforcement' of government policy decisions was more important for improving service delivery than expansion of digitization.

Mr. Muslim Chowdhury said, the cost-benefit analysis was not credible as the researchers did not consider the 'institutional issues' and continuous 'engineering process'. Digitization should not be regarded as a magical tool, he added.

Adviser to 'a2i project' of the PMO Mr. Anir Chowdhury said enforcement was always important for implementation of the government policy decisions. Giving an example of Chittagong Customs House (CCH), he said the authorities simplified the delivery

system without expansion of the digital devices. He said the CCH authorities decreased the checking points to 6 from previous 42 to implement the government decisions in improving the port services.

Anti-corruption commissioner Nasiruddin Ahmed said the land department was out and out a corrupt organisation. Only digitization would not be able to curb corruption in the sector, he said, adding that long-term reform was needed to tackle the problems in the land sector.

The discussants, however, admitted that the topics described by the BIGD researchers in their papers were crucial. They said the government already prioritised almost all the issues in its seventh five-year plan that would expire in 2020.

The seminar was jointly organized by BIGD and CCC which aimed to discuss the findings of research on a series of important governance and justice policy interventions. Distinguished personalities, senior government officials, academics and experts also attended the seminar.

In democracy people's trust is crucial

Dr. Gowher Rizvi said at regional conference on Government Performance Management System

In democracy trust of people in government is very crucial. When any government does not enjoy the trust of the people, democracy deteriorates," said Prime Minister's International Affairs Adviser Professor Dr. Gowher Rizvi. People become cynical if they cannot trust the government, when quality of service declines, people loses confidence and legitimacy of the

Dr. Rizvi claimed that in any criteria performance of the Bangladesh government has improved. He said governance is not about the economic performance but the quality of life, freedom and cultural activities. He added that the government links with citizens was established through service delivery and "if service delivery is good, government achieves the trust of



government erodes, he added as the Chief Guest of a regional conference on Government Performance Management System (GPMS) held on 22 January 2017 at a city hotel.

people (and on the other hand) when the quality of service declines, people lose their confidence in government".

The regional conference was organized with an aim to learn from each other and share best practices jointly by the cabinet division of the government and BIGD with support of the World Bank.

Mr. Md. Abul Kalam Azad, Principal Coordinator, Sustainable Development Goals and Dr. Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, Principal Secretary, Prime Minister's Office addressed the event as Special Guests. Mr. Mohammad Shafiul Alam, Cabinet Secretary, chaired the conference.

Mr. Ravindra Devagunam, Director, PMANDU, Malaysia; Dr. Prajapati Trivedi, Former Secretary, Performance Management Division, India; Mr. Chencho, Head of Government Performance Management Division (GPMD), Prime Minister's office of Bhutan and Mr. N M Zeaul Alam, Secretary, (Coordination and Reforms) Cabinet Division of Bangladesh made presentations on their country's

perspective at the conference.

Senior public servants of the country, representatives from India, Malaysia and Bhutan, and mainstream media took part in the daylong conference aimed to share experiences on public service delivery.

The main goal of this conference is to convene government officials, practitioners, and leading scholars to take stock and collectively envision current and future innovations in public sector performance management, leadership, and governance. Against the backdrop of GPMS implementation in Bangladesh, the conference will seek to foster peer learning and exchange of experiences among practitioners of performance management between South Asia Region (SAR) countries on performance management as the most adequate tool for policy dialogue and emulation, given the regional political economy.

Sylhet City Corporation agrees to join the global Joint Work Programme on Promoting Equitable Economic Growth in Cities

BIGD researchers and officials, along Brussels based 'Cities Alliance' Asia Regional Adviser, Dr. Ajay Suri met the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Sylhet City Corporation (SCC), Mr. Enamul Habib on January 22, 2017 at his office. The visiting team briefed the CEO about the 18-month long global joint work programme on "Equitable Economic Growth in Cities". Within the



auspice of this programme two studies will be conducted and evidence-based policy briefs will be produced. These knowledge products will be shared

with city level partnership forum comprising with relevant stakeholders and endorsed by the City Corporation. The CEO agreed to join this global campaign and nominated two SCC's officials – Mr. Md. Ruhul Alam, Executive Engineer (Electrical) and Mr. Joydeb Biswas, Assistant Engineer of SCC as focal point. BIGD's Research Fellow Dr. Md. Shanawez Hossain, Senior Manager (Communications) Mr. Ekram Hossain, Senior Research Associate Mr. Mohammad Sirajul Islam, , and Research Associate Mr. Raihan Ahamed, were present at the meeting.

Before, Dr. Salina Hyat Ivi, Mayor of Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC) expressed her willingness to join this programme. BIGD will facilitate partnership and vconduct city diagnostics to support this programme in two secondary cities in Bangladesh i.e. NCC and SCC. The joint work programme on "Equitable Economic Growth in Cities" is being globally implemented by Brussels based Cities Alliance, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

Narayanganj City Corporation agrees to join the global Joint Work Programme on Promoting Equitable Economic Growth in Cities

Honorable Mayor of Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC), Dr. Selina Hayat Ivy has agreed to join the global Joint Work Programme on Promoting Equitable Economic Growth in Cities campaign and nominated two NCC's officials – K M Faridul Miraj, Slum Development Officer as focal point and Md. Monirul Islam, Town Planner of NCC as Co focal point.



BIGD researchers and officials, along Brussels based 'Cities Alliance' Asia Regional Adviser; Dr. Ajay Suri

met Dr. Ivy on January 19, 2017 at his office. The visiting team briefed the Mayor about the 18-month long global joint work programme on "Equitable Economic Growth in Cities". Within the auspice of this programme two studies will be conducted and evidence-based policy briefs will be produced. These knowledge products will be shared with city level partnership forum comprising with relevant stakeholders and endorsed by the City Corporation. BIGD's Research Fellow Dr. Md. Shanawez Hossain, Senior Manager (Communications) Mr. Ekram Hossain, Senior Research Associate Mr. Mohammad Sirajul Islam, and Research Associate Mr. Mahan Ul Hoque, were present at the meeting.

BIGD will facilitate partnership and conduct city diagnostics to support this programme in two secondary cities in Bangladesh i.e. NCC and SCC. The joint work programme on "Equitable Economic Growth in Cities" is being globally implemented by Brussels based Cities Alliance, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

Seminar on Culture and Governance

BIGD organised a seminar on Culture and Governance in Bangladesh on 02 January 2016 at the BIGD conference room. Dr Taj Hashmi, professor of security studies at Austin Peay State University delivered a presentation on the topic. The presentation was based on his ongoing book titled Historical Sociology of Bangladesh, to be published by the Oxford University publication. Dr Taj Hashmi explained how the culture and governance are related in Bangladesh. According to him, development is not the infrastructure rather development is something not visible. Education is very important for a nation's development. Dr. Hashmi added that, the terrorism is the byproduct of bad governance. The presentation was followed by a question answer session. Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, Executive Director of BIGD chaired the seminar. Along with BIGD researchers, Professor Taiabur Rahman and Dr. Asif Sahan of the Development Studies of the University of Dhaka also discussed in the seminar.

Seminar on Informal Agencies of Influences: The Inter Dependence of Social, Religion and Political Trends



BIGD organized an in-house seminar on Informal Agencies of influences: the Inter Dependence of Social, Religion and Political Trends by Prof. Matthew J Nelson of SOAS, University of London. The seminar held on 18 January 2017 at the BIGD conference room. The discussion focused on the comparative and international politics of South Asia, with an emphasis on non-elite politics, comparative political thought, the politics of Islamic institutions, and democracy. The presentation was followed by a short question answer session.

Head of Gender Cluster presented paper at the International Conference on Human Capital, Food Security and Economic Development in South Asia

Simeen Mahmud, Head, Gender Cluster & CGST, BIGD presented a paper titled Exploring the drivers of female labour supply in rural Bangladesh, at the International Conference on Human Capital, Food Security and Economic Development in South Asia, held on 11-12th January, 2017 at a hotel in Sri Lanka. The conference was jointly organized by Institute of Policy studies of Sri Lanka (IPS) and Centre for Development Economics and Sustainability (CDES) and South Asia Research network (SARN), Monash University. The conference provided an opportunity for researchers from Monash University, the IPS and other academics to engage with scholars and policy analysts from the South Asia region to strengthen links, and plan and implement collaborative research activities on major development challenges facing South Asia. Following an overview of current developments and challenges in South Asia, the technical sessions of the conference focused on: 1) Gender and Women Empowerment; 2) Food Security, Rural Credit and Climate Change; 3) Entrepreneurship; 4) Education; and 5) Health.

Cities Alliances Scoping Mission held

Dr. Shanawez Hossain, Research Fellow of BIGD attended the meeting of Scoping Mission for the Project, 'Partnership Facilitation and City Diagnostics to Support Equitable Economic Growth in Two Secondary Cities in Bangladesh'. BIGD has an agreement with Cities Alliance to implement a project entitle "Promoting Equitable Economic Growth in Cities". The project aims to support the promotion of equitable access to public goods and services through focus areas adapted to the city's specific needs and context. BIGD and Cities Alliance selected Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC) and Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) as campaign cities based on some criteria (e.g. population, density, economic growth, existing foreign projects and so on). Each campaign city shall produce outputs including an Institutional Enabling Environment Report (IEER), a Local Assessment Report (LAR), and city-level, evidence based policy briefs and recommendations.

The meeting was also attended by Mr. Toby Roycroft of DFID; Mr. Ashekur Rahma of UNDP; Mr. Hamidul Islam Choudhary of GIZ; Mr. Chris Pablo of World Bank; Mr. Suresh Balakrishnan of UNCDF, mr. Dhiraj Ajay Suri, Regional Advisor City Alliances and K. Rajivan Consultant.

CIPS January 2017 Activities

CIPS January 2017 series examination was held at BIGD, BRAC University. This global examination of the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS), UK, took place at BIGD from 23 - 25 January 2017. 73 participants from different public and private organizations participated in the examination. As the only examination centre in Bangladesh, many external participants have participated in the exam too.

Researchers other activities

- Maheen Sultan, Visiting Fellow of BIGD facilitated two sessions titled Women's movement in Bangladesh: organizing in the context of shrinking democratic space, and Cross-movement building: intersection of women's rights and sex-worker's rights, at the training on Feminist Leadership, organized by Movement Building and Rights Institute (South Asia) on 16-21 January, 2017 at Kathmandu, Nepal.

- Dr. Shanawez Hossain, Research Fellow of BIGD attended the Inception Workshop project titled “Inclusive Budgeting and Financing for Climate Resilience (IBFCR)” on 29th January 2017 at a hotel in the capital. He also attended the book launching ceremony the ‘Immersion in Development Programme’ (IDP) 30th January 2017 at 11:00 am; Vice Cenllor Conference room, BRAC University.
- Lopita Huq, Research Fellow; Kabita Chowdhury, Research Associate; Sufia Khatun, Sanjida Parvin, Hossen Khan and Saklain al Mamun, Research Assistant of BIGD visited Bagerhat and Chapainawabganj for the Qualitative field work under the project titled Choice, constraints and the gender dynamics of labour markets in Bangladesh on 5-8 and 23-27 January, 2017.
- Maheen Sultan, Sahida Khondaker, Nuzhat Sharmeen attended the Inception report sharing of UNDP Women’s Economic Empowerment at UNDP, held on 02 January 2017.
- Simeen Mahmud, Head, Gender Cluster & CGST; Maheen Sultan, Visiting Fellow; Sahida Khondaker and Nuzhat Sharmeen, Research Associate of BIGD attended the Preliminary findings sharing of Lot 3- UNDP Women’s Economic Empowerment at UNDP on 19 January 2017.

Executive Director’s Activities

BIGD Executive Director Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman had several meetings in January 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 meeting with Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, Chairperson, BRAC; Candace Rondeaux, Senior Program Officer-USIP; L. McGann, Associate Coordinator, Research and Knowledge Management, RESOLVE Network; C A Dhiraj Ajay Suri, Regional Advisor & K Rajivan, Independent Consultant form Cities Alliance; Dr. Asadul Islam, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, and Coordinator, South Asia Research Network (SARN) of Monash Business School, Monash University; Mr. Ravindran Devagunam, and Mr. Fabian Bigar, Director of PEMANDU; Mr. NM Zeaul Alam, Secretary (Reforms and Coordination), Mr. Sultan Ahmed, Additional Secretary, Mr. Altaf Hossen Sheikh, Deputy Secretary and Mr. Kamrul Hassan, Deputy Secretary of Cabinet Division; and Prof. Sohela

Nazneen of Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.

Dr. Rahman took part at the Bangladesh Bank’s Monetary Policy Consultation meeting. He also attended the launching ceremony of An unknown Woman, authored by Jowshan Ara Rahman and published by YUKTA.

Dr. Rahman also delivered his speech as a designated discussant in a conference titled Bangladesh in Davos: some reflections organized by Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MCCI) in association with Ministry of Foreign Affairs- Bangladesh. As a designated discussant he also contributed in a symposium titled Agami Diner Bangladesh: Researches from DR. Nazrul Islam organized by Banglar Pathshala Foundation.

He also had attended several skype Meeting with Mr. Samar Verma, Senior Program Officer, Think Tank Initiative, IDRC, Delhi regarding developing a Regional Program for Public Policy.



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