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Administrative decentralization is necessary to reduce pressure on Dhaka and make the city liveable. Many people will relocate from Dhaka if they get different facilities including good educational institutions, healthcare services and employment opportunity in other districts, said urban experts and economists in a roundtable.



## Administrative Decentralization Required to Make Dhaka City Liveable

The roundtable titled “Migration, Spatial Planning and Housing Pressure in Asia Mega Cities: Lessons for Dhaka” was jointly organized by International Growth Centre (IGC), A2I project under PMO and BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University on July 20, 2017 at the city.

Forty four percent of the country's formal employments are in greater Dhaka, which is only one percent of the country's territory. Thirty-six percent of the country's urban population also lives in Dhaka, said Prof. Tony Venables, CBE of the University of Oxford while presenting a keynote paper titled “Migration, Spatial Planning and Housing Pressure in Asia Mega Cities: Lessons for Dhaka”, at the round table.

In his lecture, Prof. Venables spoke on the most challenging urban issues in Bangladesh – land use, planning and its enforcement, 'livable' and affordable housing in the wake of a rising middle class, and the efficient supply and sustainable management of public services, especially utilities, associated with rapid migration. He said that Bangladesh experienced faster urbanization than South Asia as a whole between 2000 and 2010 and according to the prediction it will be 45 percent in 2030 and 55 percent in 2050.

Prof. Venables has offered evidence from his work on how coordinated public policy is essential in addressing interrelated constraints to affordable urban housing. Poor land administration policies are responsible behind urban housing being prohibitive for low-income groups.

Executive Director of BIGD and Country Director of IGC, Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman moderated the round table in the presence of Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, former caretaker government adviser; Dr. Wahiduddin Mahmud, renowned economist; Professor Emeritus of BRAC University Dr. Ainun Nishat; Professor of geography and environment department of Dhaka University AQM Mahbub and other urban experts and economists.

Dr. Nishat said, preference should be given to the flood action plan for preparing urbanization plan in Bangladesh. Dhaka's drainage system is very vulnerable

as we are still continuing the drainage system from the British period. It is necessary to upgrade the system.

Dr. Zillur said that the urban development plan of Dhaka is not being implemented because of political interests. There is a lack of good governance in every level of the country. Although there are investments in infrastructure for the development of the country, there is hardly any investment in their management.

Dr. Mahmud said, urban development is essential for

the overall development of the country. Urbanization is important to reach the middle income country.

Mr. AQM Mahbub said although most of the raw materials of garments industry are supplied from other regions, 80 percent of the country's garment factories are located in Dhaka. And all the development of the country is centered on Dhaka. Emergency services are not available in rural and municipal areas. Decentralization of government services should also be done.

## BIGD Co-organised Public Policy and Governance in South Asia Conference in Nepal

Public policy, which tends to change the society, needs to be public in process and outcome. Although there are less opportunities of studying public policy in South Asia but there are some hope also. The academicians, researchers and policy makers need to be involved in public policy and coordination among organizations of South Asian countries, experts said at the policy conference in Nepal.

"There is a huge demand of studying public policy but the opportunities are too less in Bangladesh. However, the optimism lies in the fact that there is a growth in recognition at the central policy quarters about the importance and utility of studying Public Policy" said

Dr. Hafeez, ED of BIGD while presenting his paper at the



conference along with Sumaiya kabir Talukdar, Research Associate of BIGD at the session titled Building academic strength in public policy making in South Asia. The session was chaired by Prof. Dr. Shiva Lal Bhusal, Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University where Subash KC, Dean and Professor, Kathmandu University School of Management was the panelist.

BIGD, Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC); Niti Foundation, Nepal; The Asia Foundation, Nepal; Institute of Public Enterprises (IPE), India; and Think Tank Initiatives (TTI), India jointly organized "Policy Discourse and Research Conference on Public Policy and Governance in South Asia" on 10-11 July 2017 in Kathmandu at Nepal.

Dr. Shanawez Hossain, Research Fellow & Head, Urban, Climate Change and Environment Cluster of BIGD

presented his paper titled, 'Governing cities: the challenge of providing transport services to burgeoning urban populations of Dhaka' in the session on Public Sector Governance. The session was chaired by Mr. Kedar Bahadur Adhikari, Secretary, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD), Nepal and Dr. Prakash C Bhattarai, Professor University of Kathmandu was a discussant.



"We must make public policies both public in process and public in outcome" said Dr. Samar Verma, Senior Program Officer of International Development Research Centre (IDRC) at the Inauguration of the conference. "Policies are made to bring changes in the society" said Dr. Tirtha Khaniya, Vice Chancellor of Tribhuvan University at the session. Mr. Bhola Thapa, Registrar Kathmandu University hope involvement of academia in the policy making is necessary.

While presenting the souvenir at the Inauguration Mr. Punya Prasad Neupane, Executive Director, NASC said, "Our Strength lies in the collaboration and Coordination. I thank and welcome all the delegates from India and Bangladesh, representatives of different eminent organizations, Media and NASC family".

"Trade is not only about volume or worth but also the value addition. The immense trade prospects between India, Nepal and Bangladesh still remain unexplored." Said R.K. Mishra, Director, IPE at the session titled Regional Policy Dialogue and Policy network in South Asia where Dr. Hafeez was a panelist and chaired by Punya Prasad Neupane.

This academic discourse and conference intends to bring scholars, policy makers and emerging researchers into a forum initiate discussion and sharing experiences on how South Asia should strengthen its institutional capacity in policy making and governance through academic discourse. Researchers and policy makers from Bangladesh, India and Nepal presented papers in sessions on Public Sector Governance, Corporate Governance and Public Finance, Issues in Public Policy, Accountability and Socio-political.

## Mobile Banking Improving Rural Economy

The economy of Bangladesh has grown at a rapid rate over the past years, driven by the remarkable growth of the ready-made garment (RMG) sector. Mobile banking puts an immense impact on the economy of rural households through its fast and affordable cost of money transferring options. But to keep pace with the growing economy, vocational training programmes in such growing sectors can reduce skill gaps and improve income and employment potentials, experts said at a conference.

Mobile banking improved the economy of rural households and they reduced borrowing, increased savings and saw gains in health, education and



agricultural productivity, said Prof Jonathan Morduch of New York University at the conference titled "Seeds of Change in the Garment Industry". The conference was jointly organized by International Growth Center (IGC), Innovations for Poverty Action and the BIGD, BRAC University on 16 July 2017 at a city hotel.

“They also saved more and were less likely to be poor. Overall, the results suggest that mobile banking has an insurance function. It increases the welfare of rural households but has mixed effects on the welfare of migrant workers,” said Prof Morduch while presenting his paper titled “Poverty and Migration in the Digital Age: Experimental Evidence on Mobile Banking in Bangladesh”.

According to another recent study titled “Overcoming barriers to female managers in the RMG sector”, more than three-quarters of sewing operators are women but at the same time, number of female sewing supervisors is only five percent. The study prepared and presented by Prof Christopher Woodruff of the University of Oxford, also revealed that, in last 25 years economy of Bangladesh grown high with the remarkable growth of RMG sector.

Three other papers titled ‘On-The-Job Training Increases Employment for Rural Poor in the Manufacturing Sector: Experimental Evidence from Bangladesh’ by Prof Abu Shonchoy of the New York University, Monitoring and Improvement in Physical Working Conditions: Evidence from The Accord

Initiative in Bangladesh by Dr. Atonu Rabbani of the University of Dhaka and ‘Consequences of Imperfect Information about building safety and garment workers and factories’ by Laura Boudreau of the University of California Berkeley were also presented at the conference.

“The progress was generally slower for the types of problems that require larger fixed costs,” said Dr. Rabbani in his presentation. Prof Abu Shonchoy’s study shows that vocational training programmes in growing sectors can reduce skill gaps and improve income and employment potentials.

President of the Bangladesh Employers’ Foundation (BEF) Mr. Salahuddin Kasem Khan was the chief guest and Chief Executive Officer of the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) Mr. Ali Ahmed was the special guest in the programme.

In his speech, Mr. Khan said that RMG sector is playing a key role in the economic growth of Bangladesh and research in this area is very important. “I think such researches would also help add value to this important sector,” he added.

## **BIGD Co-organized Public Hearing of ACC**

Despite economic progress, corruption remains a formidable problem in Bangladesh. As shows in Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Bangladesh finds itself among the most corrupt countries in the world. Corruption became systematic that sufficiently undermines a state’s ability to carry out its basic functions such as supplying public goods and services (IMF, 2016). In response to that, with the help of a social accountability tool, such as public hearing, it is thought to be possible to deliver corruption-free public services to citizens. The Cabinet Division in a circular issued on June 5, 2014 authorized the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to conduct public hearing for improving integrity and preventing corruption in public offices. Public hearings are formal meetings at the community level where citizens express their grievances on matters of public interest to public officials and service providers try to address their grievances. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) conducts public hearings at the Upazila level for ensuring the accountability of public officials and also transparency of their work.

To ensure accountability, Anti corruption has been conducting public hearing at Upazila across the country. In this effort, BIGD, BRAC University is co-organizing and assisting Anti corruption commission financially under the banner of Think Tank Initiatives in four public hearings at four selected Upazila, of which two hearing were conducted at Paikhgacha Upazila, Khulna and Lohagara Upazila, Chittagong on July, 2017.

On July 5, 2017, the 58th public hearing of ACC was organized in Paikgacha Upazila Parishad. With the help of Upazila Anti-corruption Committee and under supervision of Upazila Administration, 9 service providing agencies participated in this hearing. The sectors including, Upazila Land office, Settlement office, Sub-register office, Polli Biddut office, Health complex, Accounts office, Project Implementation Office, Social Welfare office and education office. About 91 complain were registered against these 9 sectors by individual citizen.



Dr. Nasiruddin Ahmed, Commissioner of Anti Corruption Commission attended the event as chief guest, where the hearing was moderated by Deputy Commissioner of Khulna. Director of ACC, Khulna, president and Secretary of Anti-corruption committee, Upazila Chairman, Mayor and representative from press, Upazila Nirbahi Officer also attended the hearing. Mr. S M Gubair Bin Arafat represents BIGD in this event as a special guest. The event was entirely funded by BIGD, BRAC University.

Public hearing was also organized at Lohagara Upazila Auditorium on July 24th, 2017. It was the 61th hearing of ACC at Upazila level. With the help of Upazila Anti-corruption Committee and Sotota Songho and under supervision of Upazila Administration, the

hearing was organized where 8 service providing agencies participated in this hearing. The sectors including, Upazila Land office, Sub-register office, Polli Biddut office, Health complex, Accounts office, Project Implementation Office, Social Welfare office and education office. About 50 complains were registered against these 9 sectors by individual citizen.

In this event, Dr. Nasiruddin Ahmed, was the chief guest and the hearing was moderated by Deputy Commissioner (In charge) of Chittagong. Among other guests, Director and Deputy Director of Anti-Corruption Commission, Khulna, president and Secretary of Anti-corruption committee of Lohagara, Upazila Chairman, representatives from press, and Upazila Nirbahi Officer (incharge) also participated at the hearing. Dr. Hafez, ED of BIGD attended the event as special guest.



## BIGD's Research Associate attended the Summer School of the University of Manchester and Presented a Paper at AHE Conference

Ms. Nuzhat Sharmeen, Research Associate of BIGD attended the Summer School hosted by Methods@ Manchester, a faculty-funded initiative, highlighting Manchester's strength in research methods in the social sciences from July 3-7, 2017 at The University of Manchester.

She received training on NVivo and fsQCA software used for qualitative data analysis. The course focused on mixed methods data management; qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) and the comparative method; fuzzy set analysis of pathways of causality;

and methods of using qualitative data to strengthen an argument and make the analysis rigorous and transparent. She attended there as a part of The Win-Win International Partnership at The University of Manchester and contributed to their internationalization efforts by commenting on the use of software for educational purposes at universities in Bangladesh and in the United Kingdom.

Ms. Sharmeen also presented a paper titled "Sustaining the Urban Poor-Evidence from Bangladesh" at the 19th Association for Heterodox Economics (AHE)



Conference 2017: Sustainable Economy and Economics, Dalton Ellis Hall, The University of Manchester, UK on 12th July 2017. The paper discussed findings from Dhaka slums and how community engagement rather than institutional strengthening

enabled the urban poor residing in the slums to access basic services, namely water. She also chaired the plenary session in paper presentation titled “Effective Demand and Profitability: Implications for Keynesian Policy” by Prof. Anwar Sheikh at the conference.

## MDS Field Visit

Students of Master’s in Development Studies (MDS) programme visited Manikganj of Dhaka Division, on July 17, 2017, to observe the Targetted Ultra Poor (TUP) programme of BRAC, as an integral part of a course on Rural Development. A key element of the course involves a field visit (practicum), designed to provide an opportunity to the students for learning a practical aspect of development interventions. The field tour included 17 students in total and was moderated by Professor Taiabur Rahman, course faculty, MDS



program, along with Ms. Farheen Khan, Head of Advocacy and External Relations and Ms. Upoma Mahbub, Manager, Global Advocacy, T U P , BRAC.

The students

conducted two FGDs - one with the Specially Targetted Ultra Poor (STUP) members and another with the Other Targetted Ultra Poor (OTUP) members of the TUP programme – in order to know about their views on the process, the benefits and problems associated with the TUP initiative. The students heard about the success stories directly from the beneficiaries who have graduated from ultra-poverty level to BRAC’s mainstream development activities. Meetings were also held with the members of the Gram Daridro Bimochon Committee (GDDBC) to learn about their roles in the TUP programme. Finally, one key Informants Interview (KII) was conducted with a field staff to know his role in the TUP initiative and the challenges that he/she faces in implementing TUP in the field.



## BIGD Researcher Attended GAGE Learning Exchange

Ms. Simeen Mahmud, Head, Gender Cluster and Centre for Gender and Social Transformation (CGST); Ms. Maheen Sultan, Visiting Fellow and Ms. Sahida Khondaker, Research Associate of BIGD attended the 4 day GAGE Learning Exchange programme which was an innovative knowledge building initiative that will be the primary forum for generating innovation and learning, in relation to evidence-based programming, research and evaluation methodologies, knowledge-sharing and capacity - strengthening - within and beyond GAGE from July 18-22, 2017 at Kathmandu in Nepal.

Ms. Mahmud presented country level findings from the GAGE Policy and Legal Analysis (PLA) study completed in 2016 where Ms. Maheen shared country level findings from the GAGE Formative Qualitative Work (FQW) completed in 2016. Ms. Khondaker attended a session on Data Management where the tools of research and problems of uploading data management were discussed.

Representatives of Overseas Development Institute (ODI), International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) from India and country research teams from Nepal, Bangladesh, Rwanda and Ethiopia were present at the event.



## Researchers' Other Activities

- Dr. Shanawez Hossain attended the meeting of 1st Training Management Committee (TMC) held on July 15, 2017 at BIGM Campus, Dhaka. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Md. Mozammel Haque Khan, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration Government of Bangladesh (GoB). He also attended the international conference titled "Towards Great Dhaka: International Conference on Development Options for Dhaka Towards 2035" held on July 19, 2017 at a city hotel in Dhaka.

## Media Contribution:

- Dhaka Tribune: Animal Rights, Environment and Sustainable Development by Nazneen Ahmed, Programme Officer, BIGD, BRAC University on July 28, 2017

## Executive Director's Activities

BIGD's ED Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman had several meetings in July 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; Mr. Imran Matin, Director, IGC; Professor Asadul Islam, Monash University, Professor Mustaq Khan, SOAS University of London, and Dr. Nasir Uddin Ahmed, Commissioner of ACC regarding SOAS-ACC Project of Public Hearing.; Mr. Mohammad Anis, Senior Energy Specialist at The World Bank Dhaka regarding an upcoming research project on rents and investment in the power sector; Mr. Tony Venables, CBE of University of Oxford, Member of IGC's Steering Group; Dr. Moshir Rahman, Economic Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister regarding research

partnership with Prime Minister's Office; Mr. Shahidur Rashid, Senior Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), regarding a research collaboration; Dr. Fouzul Kabir, Managing Director, Keystone Consultant Ltd.; Ms. Mafruza Khan, Director, Bangladesh Country Programme, Porticus, Mr. Hasanuzzaman Zaman, Outreach Manager, Copenhagen Consensus Center, regarding a research collaboration; Laura E. Boudreau, PhD Student of Business and Public Policy at the Haas School of Business of the University of California, Berkeley regarding collaboration between BIGD and Berkeley University; Dr. S. R. Osmani, Professor of Development Economics at Ulster University in the United Kingdom and Mr. Daniel Rakove, Political Advisor, US Embassy in Bangladesh. He also attended several Skype and Dinner meetings.



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