

Dissemination Workshop on Senior Citizen's Rights Related Research Findings

Social Science Research Council arranged a Research Findings Dissemination Workshop-2017 on 19 October at ECNEC Conference Room in Dhaka with Mr. Md. Ziaul Islam, Secretary, Planning Division in the chair.

Mr. A. H. M. Mustafa Kamal, FCA, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Planning inaugurated the work as Chief Guest. Dr. Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister and Mr. Zillar Rahman, Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare attended the program as Special Guests.

Findings of three separate researches were presented by Dr. A S M Atiqur Rahman, a Professor of Dhaka University, Dr. Prasannajit Sarker, Senior Scientific Officer, Dr. Wazed Research Institute of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur and Dr. Aminul Islam, Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology, Rajshahi University.

In his address the Chief Guest emphasized on special care to old aged persons and their engagement in socio-economic development initiatives. "the new generation can be enriched by the wisdom and experience of senior citizens' - he added.

Dr. Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, former Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister acknowledged that, in many cases, the senior citizens are deprived of their rights and the societal role need to be enhanced to protect the rights of elderly persons.

Mr. Zillar Rahman, Secretary of the Ministry of Social Welfare mentioned few steps taken by the Government of Bangladesh for protection of the rights of elderly persons, such as old age allowance, widow allowance, the national policy for the welfare of senior citizens etc. He mentioned that in line with the national policy, the Ministry is now working on rules which will facilitate different public and private initiatives for better service towards welfare of senior citizens.

A total of 150 representatives from different ministries universities, research organizations, INGOs, NGOs, civil society organizations participated in the workshop and expressed their views for better service to establish the rights and dignity of old aged persons in the society

Seminar on Rebasing and Revision of GDP: Bangladesh Perspective

SSRC organized a seminar on Rebasing and Revision of GDP: Bangladesh Perspective at NEC conference room on 4 January 2018. Mr. A. H. M. Mustafa Kamal, FCA, MP, Honorable Minister for Planning inaugurated the seminar as chief guest. Dr. Moshir Rahman, Honorable Economic Affairs Adviser to Prime Minister, Dr. Shamsul Alam, Member, GED, Planning Commission And Professor Wahid Uddin Mahmud, Chairman, Advisory Committee for Rebasing and Revision of GDP attended the program as special guests. Professor S. R. Osmani, Ulster University, UK presented key note paper on this discussion topic. Mr. Md. Ziaul Islam, Secretary, Planning Division presided over the program, while it was moderated by Dr. P. C. Sarkar, Vice-Chancellor, Royal University, Banani.

In his presentation, Professor S. R. Osmani emphasized on new element in the national income accounting framework. He mentioned that, at macro level planning, distribution of GDP among different segments of population is one major issue to be considered. The existing practice for addressing the distribution of GDP through the Household Income and Expenditure Surveys, is not sufficient. He further added that, to make the exercise more robust, he proposed adding more information like functional income distribution at the aggregate level. This kind of exercise while calculating GDP may provide valuable policy insights into the structural dynamics of an economy, for example the state of labor productivity and real wage. “ For the purpose of calculation of Direct Estimate of Saving, it is suggested to learn good practices from other developing countries like India. However, India does not have Household Income and Expenditure Survey like Bangladesh, so they estimate household saving through various indirect and adhoc methods” he added.

Professor Wahid Uddin Mahmud said that, when GDP calculation is revised and the base year is changed, there opens an opportunity for gaining new policy insights into the dynamics of the national economic system. He added that the previous two rebasing exercises led to revised national accounts series adopted in 2001, with base year 1995~96; and again in 2013-14 with base year 2005-06. The ongoing rebasing will consider 2015-16 as the base year. The previous revisions did not affect the growth rate of the country; one of the reasons was the counterbalancing factor of slow growing traditional / informal sectors against new fast growing sectors of the economy. The evidence of strong growth performance of Bangladesh was not reflected during the previous GDP revisions. Bangladesh is an exceptional case of having consistent GDP growth since 1990, when measured within an interval of five years.

Professor Mahmud also mentioned that, we can be proud of Bangladesh that is now termed as 'development surprise'. Against many odds, Bangladesh achieved steady growth rate. Our achievement in social indicators like infant mortality rate, immunization program, primary school enrolment, female education has been excellent for last few years, in spite of having lower public spending for education and health. The recent development of our education and health sector is mainly supported by public spending, which ensures more equitable access, compared to such development generated by private spending.

In open discussion eminent economist Dr. Md. Forash Uddin complemented Professor Wahid Uddin Mahmud's presentation on demographic dividend, highlighting the need of creating high productive jobs; otherwise the demographic dividend may turn to demographic disaster.

Dr. Mirza A.B. Azizul Islam, former Adviser to Caretaker Government highlighted the importance of quality education and poverty alleviation, as well as more public spending for education and health. He also pointed out the challenge of direct calculation of savings, instead of the existing residual method.

A good number of academics, journalists, officers from different Ministries and Divisions took part in the open discussion. They suggested Rebasement of GDP and bringing changes to economic growth model for ensuring the reflection of new emerging sectors and sub-sectors like ICT, E-commerce, mobile banking into the calculation of national accounts.

It was also disclosed in the seminar that, the current state of data with BBS do not explain why in a rapidly growing economy like Bangladesh savings rate surpasses the investment rate, and whether it is due to poor investment climate or a combination of increased remittance flow and imperfect credit market. BBS should overcome the data limitation by addressing relevant methodological issues.

Dr. Moshir Rahnun, Honorable Adviser to Prime Minister emphasized on pragmatic solution for GDP calculation by BBS. From his past experience of serving BBS, he evaluates its strengths and opportunities, as well as organizational limitations and future evolution for the purpose of calculating GDP in a more rigorous way. He emphasized on proper representation of informal sector in the calculation of GDP.

Honorable Minister for Planning thanked all the special guests, discussants, academics for their valuable comments and suggestions on the highly technical and complex subject matter like national accounts. The minister

mentioned that, this kind of exercise develops Bangladesh's readiness for continue with its growth trajectory. Honorable Minister discussed about the complex structure of SNA 2008. He emphasized on the need for recognizing evolving technology in finance (i.e. Bkash, Moneygram, Western Union), for accommodating approximately 49% of the remittance, that remains uncountable as informal channel. In 2061, 65% of our population will be of working age, so the prospect of harnessing demographic dividend will be available for quite a long period of time. In coming years 100% employment will be achieved through different government interventions like setting up 100 new Special Economic Zones. A transformation of education that includes the recent frontier of knowledge and skills in nanotechnology, robotics, artificial intelligence, internet of things, material engineering, block chain, biotechnology, 3D printing, automated transportation is needed for harnessing the true potentials of 21st century. At conclusion, Honorable Minister justified the need for rebasing GDP for accommodating newly evolved sectors and subsectors of Bangladesh's economy. The seminar was concluded with vote of thanks by the chair.

Research Findings Dissemination Workshop-2018

A research dissemination workshop on **Food Safety** and **Tourism** was organized by Social Science Research Council, Planning Division on 15/04/2018. Mr. A. H. M. Mustafa Kamal, FCA, MP, Honorable Minister for Planning inaugurated the seminar as chief guest. Mr. Mofijul Islam, Secretary to IMED, Ms. Shamima Nargis, a member of Planning Commission and Ms. Shamima Sultana, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Food attended the program as special guests. Dr. A. M. Sawkat Osman, Professor, Dept. of Management, Commerce College, Dhaka and Dr. Md. Jahirul Islam, Asst. Professor, Dept. of Geography & Environmental Science presented key notes. Mr. Md. Ziaul Islam, Secretary, Planning Division presided over the program

Mr. Mofijul Islam, IMED Secretary emphasized on protection of cultural heritage for growth and sustainable development. He said environment and ecology should get same treatment . He further mentioned that, output based development initiatives can not guarantee long term benefit.

Ms. Shamima Nargis, a member of Planning Commission suggested to develop a digital repository where people will have access to all research documents of SSRC. She emphasized on enameling environment to turn the potentiality into resources. She also mentioned that, the green initiatives like Echo park attract foreigners and internal tourists, which contribute to our economy.

Research Findings Dissemination

Role and Status of Rural Elderly in Bangladesh: Patterns and Changes

Dr. Md. Aminul Islam, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology,
University of Rajshahi

The issue of aging is now an emerging aspect of all over the world. Bangladesh is not exception to this. Both the rural and urban societies of our country are not immune from this problem. This study mainly explored the role and status of the elderly in rural Bangladesh. It is based on empirical findings from the four villages of Gopal nagar union of Dhunat upazila of Bogra district. Besides, the study also depicts the socio-economic conditions of the elderly; their position in decision making process; the influence of wealth on the enjoyment of role and status; and their role and status in the family and the rural community. Mixed approach, (that is quantitative and qualitative) especially has been given priority in this study. Survey, observation, case study, and life history methods and focus group discussion technique have also been used in this study. Data has collected from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary data have been collected from August 2009 to August 2010. The primary data collected from January 2011 to January 2012. Simple random sampling procedure followed in this study. The study analyzed that the socio-economic conditions of the rural elderly are not good. That is low rate of literacy, male headed family, living below the poverty line, limited sources of income, spending lives without sanitary latrine, taking bath without bathroom etc are significantly existed among the elderly. The position of elderly in decision making process is also vulnerable. The element which helps to take part in decision making process is not sufficient for them. Maximum elderly possess little amount of homestead and cultivable lands. They have not enough domestic animals, bank-balance, and ornaments. The ability of the elderly to compel the family members is also not good. Although, nearly sixty percent elderly can take part in rural arbitration but their condition was supposed to be better. Near about sixty percent elderly don't

think themselves as the important members of the family as well as society. About half of the respondents admitted that the members of the family don't give importance to them. It has also found out that the wealth has greater influence on the enjoyment of role and status. Cultivable, homestead land, ponds, fruit garden domestic animals, bank- balance, ornaments etc are the sources of wealth. As they have not enough these, they are not able to perform their role and enjoy their status accordingly. This study has also found the declined role and status of the elderly in family and society as well. The study has also identified that in doing simple chores, daily activities, the elderly has strong engagement. On the other hand, those who are unable to do these and stay in worse economic condition perform various roles but can not enjoy their status which was enjoyed by the elderly in past. Considering this, the researcher made an attempt to develop a theory on this aspect which he entitled as the slighted/ ignored/ disregarded engagement theory.

[Supports and Abusive Behaviors to the Elderly: A Study between Poor and Non-poor Groups in Rangpur Division](#)

Dr. Prosannajid Sarkar, Senior Scientific Officer, Dr. Wazed International Research and Training Institute, Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur

This study focused on the supports and abusive behaviors to the elderly people between poor and non-poor groups in Rangpur division. Data from 847 elderly were collected randomly from Rangpur division. Wealth index was constructed using principal component analysis. The bottom 40 percent of wealth index was considered as "poor" and the top 60 percent as "non-poor" groups. Chi-square tests have been performed to examine the differences in supports and abusive behaviors between poor and non-poor groups. The logistic regression technique was used for determining factors that were affecting supports and abusive behaviors to the elderly population.

Results revealed that 61 percent respondents were young-old (i.e. 60-69 years), and 63 percent remained married. Around 86 percent respondents were illiterate. One-third respondents were Hindu. One in ten respondents was living alone. Six of ten respondents reported having poor or very poor self-

rated health. Although 47 percent respondents' expenditures were provided by their son/daughter, the elderly were not satisfied with their income. Around 19 percent were receiving any of the old age allowance, pension, VGD allowance or injured freedom fighter allowance. One of ten respondents experienced any types of abuse. Abandonment and neglect were found to more prevalent. Daughter-in-law was being reported as the perpetrators of elder abuse in the study areas.

In chi-square tests, compared to the non-poor elderly, poor elderly were found to receive any kind of government or non-government supports. However, there is no significant difference in elder abuse between poor and non-poor groups. In multivariate analyses, no significant association persisted between supports and poor and non-poor groups as well as between abusive behaviors and poor and non-poor groups. Respondent's age, sex, marital status, education, place of residence, living arrangements and self-rated health were found to have significant effects on supports while sex, marital status, education, religion, place of residence and living arrangements were found to have significant effects on abusive behaviors to the elderly people.

The research findings and policy recommendations should be taken into consideration by the policy makers and planners in developing suitable programs addressing supports and abuse to the elderly, not only in the Rangpur division but also in whole Bangladesh. Poor and unhealthy elderly should provide more supports either from their family or any government/non-government sides. We may also motivate people of all ages so that they would not perpetrate any violence/abuse to the older members of their families because the elderly have valuable experiences which could be utilized for the well being of the family, society and nation as well.
