

The Subir & Malini Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies at UC Berkeley
and the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies present

BANGLADESH



A Preconference at the 45th Annual Conference on South Asia in Wisconsin-Madison
FROM THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

FROM MDGS TO SDGS BANGLADESH AS A CASE IN POINT

A day-long preconference organized by the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies (AIBS) and The Subir and Malini Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies at UC Berkeley at the 45th Annual Conference on South Asia in Wisconsin-Madison.

Thursday, October 20, 2016

Senate Room B, Madison Concourse Hotel, Wisconsin, Madison

CONFERENCE ORGANIZER

- **Dr. Golam M. Mathbor**
President, AIBS; Professor of Social Work, Monmouth University

CONFERENCE CO-ORGANIZERS

- **Dr. Rebecca Manring**
Secretary, AIBS; Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Indiana University at Bloomington
- **Dr. Sanchita Saxena**
Treasurer, AIBS; Director, Subir & Malilni Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies, UC Berkeley

OVERVIEW

As the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) era comes to a conclusion in 2015, the year of 2016 ushers in a new set of official commitments from the world leaders for a more ambitious and bold 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Despite its relatively young age and exposure to major environmental as well as socio-political challenges, Bangladesh has been a role model in the developing world for making substantial progress in achieving MDG targets. The country has a steady economic growth rate of 6 to 7%, reducing dependence on foreign aid significantly over the decades. In addition, Bangladesh has made remarkable social progress in the areas of poverty reduction, infant and maternal mortality rate, child health, access to and gender parity in primary school enrollment, immunization coverage, and communicable disease control. However, Bangladesh is still in the process of regenerating its cultural, social, political, economic, physical and other structures and practices by strengthening existing institutions. As the country now accentuates the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted last September at the United Nations, engaging dialogues and critical discussions from multiple disciplines and scopes need to take place at this juncture.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This 2016 preconference invited eight faculty members from different public and private universities in Bangladesh to participate in a week-long workshop on writing and publishing in the US at the Subir and Malini Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies at UC Berkeley. In this workshop, participants reviewed and refined their submitted proposals, ultimately for submission to refereed journals for publication. The proposals are centered around the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that focus on: no poverty; no hunger; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation, and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; life below water; life on land; peace, justice, and strong institutions; and partnerships for these goals. We hope that the featured presentations will highlight how Bangladesh is now preparing to achieve the SDGs in each of the respective areas of their presentations.

AGENDA

- 8:30 am **Opening Remarks**
- Golam M. Mathbor, President, AIBS; Professor, School of Social Work, Monmouth University
 - Sanchita Saxena, Director, Subir and Malilni Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies, UC Berkeley
 - Mahbub Hassan Saleh, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Bangladesh, Washington, D.C.
- 9 am **Opening Keynote: Ageing Situation and Support Systems in Bangladesh**
- A.S.M. Atiqur Rahman, Professor, Institute of Social Welfare & Research, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 9:45 am **Challenges of International Water Laws for Water Management of the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin**
- Speaker: M. Anwar Hossen, Professor, Sociology, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh
 - Discussant: Mokammal H. Bhuiyan, Professor, Archeology, Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh
- 10:30 am Tea Break at Second Floor Reception Area
- 11 am **Elder Abuse & Neglect: A Study in Rural Bangladesh**
- Speaker: Md. Rabiul Islam, Associate Professor, Institute of Social Welfare & Research, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh
 - Discussant: Golam M. Mathbor, Professor, School of Social Work, Monmouth University
- 11:45 am **Bangladesh, Islam, Politics and State**
- Speaker: Mubashar Hasan, Assistant Professor, Political Science and Sociology, North South University, Bangladesh
 - Discussant: Mahbub Hassan Saleh, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Bangladesh, Washington, D.C.
- 12:30 pm Luncheon at Wisconsin Ball Room
- 1:45 pm **Uneven Geography of Remittances among Migrant Households in Rural Bangladesh**
- Speaker: Mohammad Jalal Uddin Sikder, Assistant Professor, General Education, University of Liberal Arts, Bangladesh
 - Discussant: Sanchita Saxena, Director, Subir and Malilni Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies, UC Berkeley
- 2:30 pm **Integrated Water-Energy- Food Nexus and the Role of Regional Cooperation in Promoting Energy Security in Asia**
- Speaker: Md. Shanawez Hossain, Research Fellow, Institute of Governance and Development, BRAC University
 - Discussant: Jason Cons, Assistant Professor, Anthropology, University of Texas at Austin
- 3:15 pm Tea Break at Second Floor Reception Area
- 3:30 pm **Elderly Vulnerability to Home Care Receive in Bangladesh**
- Speaker: Mohammad Abdul Hannan Pradhan, Associate Professor, Economics, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Bangladesh
 - Discussant: ASM Atiqur Rahman, Professor, Institute of Social Welfare & Research, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 4:15 pm **Closing Remarks**
- Golam M. Mathbor, Professor, School of Social Work, Monmouth University
 - Sanchita Saxena, Director, Subir and Malilni Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies, UC Berkeley
- 5:15 pm **Reception**

ABSTRACTS

Ageing Situation and Support Systems in Bangladesh

A.S.M. Atiqur Rahman

Professor, Institute of Social Welfare & Research, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the densely populated disaster prone LDCs in the world having about 13 million (8%) older persons (OP). In 2025 and 2050 projected number of OPs will be 18 million (12%) and 45 million (20%) respectively. This change in population characteristics will have serious consequences on the overall socio-economic development of the country. Mass poverty, increasing huge population size, decreasing small usable land, growth of nuclear families, rise in both internal and international migration, erosion of rich cultural tradition, absent of sufficient GO and NGO intervention Bangladeshi OPs are increasingly confronting from physical, economical, social and emotional challenges. Older women, OPs with disabilities, without families and widows are among the most vulnerable in this country. Bangladesh society still stresses the importance of showing respect and providing care for the OPs through family, kin, neighbors, community, social organizations etc. Government introduces Retirement Pension system in 1925, Old Age Allowance Program in 1998, and formulated the National Policy on Older Persons and Maintenance of Parents Act in 2013. Studies and information on ageing issues are seriously inadequate in Bangladesh. Recently, this issue receives increasing interest of social scientists and some universities start offering courses on Gerontology. Having thousands of registered NGOs, only a handful of them working with OPs in Bangladesh. BAAIGM, the oldest and largest NGO working exclusively on ageing issues since 1960 with a vision to providing health care, accommodation, publication, training, advocacy, liaison, collaboration, and doing wellbeing for OPs in close association with GoB, UN, INGO & NGOs throughout the country. Preparing the younger generation for their active and healthy ageing, BAAIGM tries to sensitize the academia, media and civil society by different ways. With 56 years of experience BAAIGM has achieved sustainability in her age-care activities involving the Government and other stakeholders.

Challenges of International Water Laws for Water Management of the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin

M. Anwar Hossen

Professor, Sociology, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

International water laws encounter major challenges for protecting ecological integrity and community vital human needs due to hydropolitical domination over the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin (GBB). This ecological integrity and vital human needs are two major components of the laws which can only be secured when the GBB countries respect local community-nature bonds. However, a powerful country like India in this basin fails to recognize these bonds because of their hydropolitical domination over basin water management. For example, the bilateral agreements between India and Bangladesh regarding the Ganges Basin management encounter negative experiences of asymmetric power. This bilateral basin management approach causes major ecosystem failures and local community survival challenges in Bangladesh. The international water laws and conventions: e.g., 1966 Helsinki Rules, 1997 United Nations (UN) Watercourses Convention, and 2004 Berlin Rules fail to perform proper roles in overcoming these negative outcomes. In this context, this paper seeks to address the question: what are the challenges for these laws to reduce these outcomes and to develop a sustainable water management approach? This question is addressed with the four major points: (i) review of ecological integrity and hydropolitics in South Asia, (ii) international water laws and conventions, and (iii) challenges of the laws for the GBB management. In this paper I argue that proper recognition of these international water laws can promote sustainable water management within the GBB.

Elder Abuse & Neglect: A Study in Rural Bangladesh

Md. Rabiul Islam

Associate Professor, Institute of Social Welfare & Research, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bangladesh is the eight largest countries in the world with a population of more than 160 million. The present statistics shows that the number of aged population is 12 million which represents 7.5 percent of the total population. Bangladesh is basically a country of rural societies and 80 percent of elderly people live in rural areas. Older individuals who are frail, alone or depressed as well as those with a physical disability or mental illness are vulnerable to abuse. Bangladesh society and culture is

in transition now. In traditional joint family or kinship system, the elderly people used to enjoy care, respect and honor. But today, the traditional joint family is transforming into nuclear family due to poverty, over population, migration from rural to urban areas, changing social norms and values, globalization, high cost of living materials and so on. This changing situation has been creating a number of problems in older person's life such as unhappiness, elder abuse and neglect, deprivation, health and food problem etc. The aim of this study is to explore the nature, causes and consequences of elder abuse and neglect as well as draws some policy recommendations that will be helpful to address the problem of the elderly in Bangladesh. The study is both quantitative and qualitative in nature that represents the primary data. Survey method and case study method have been used in this study. Elder abuse affects older men and women across all socio-economic groups, cultures, races and ethnicities. Decreases in earning capacity, inability and economic dependency, health hazards, maladjustment, changing social values have a distinct role in the causation of older abuse. Elder abuse and neglect is a burning issue in Bangladesh which deserves the national attention to deal with the situation.

Bangladesh, Islam, Politics and State

Mubashar Hasan

Assistant Professor, Political Science and Sociology, North South University, Bangladesh

This article argues that the theological concept of Islam- Ummah or the global nation of Muslims shapes the politics of Bangladesh. Evidences gathered through archival research, textual analysis and interviews, suggest that externally the state of Bangladesh, administered by major political parties- Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party confer political commitment to Ummah. Internally, implication of such commitment generates policies and state support for the growth of Islam in politics and public life. Goals of such pattern of politics are to restrict citizenship and inhibit democratization so that political elites continue to exploit state resources through corruption and dynastic enterprise of politics. Such finding is significant in two perspectives: a) it nullifies the scholarly claims that underpin secular-religious distinction in Bangladesh politics as my article demonstrates in Bangladesh secular is religious too and b) it extends the framework of political Islam actors

Uneven Geography of Remittances among Migrant Households in Rural Bangladesh

Mohammad Jalal Uddin Sikder

Assistant Professor, General Education, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, Bangladesh

Bangladesh has become one of the major sources of migrants in the world. According to data from the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), Government of Bangladesh, from 1976 to 2015, 9.6 million Bangladeshis went abroad as short-term labour migrants, with over 90 per cent based in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Between 200,000 and 250,000 Bangladeshis leave the country each year to seek overseas employment opportunities. Migration, therefore, is a key livelihood strategy of many Bangladeshi households, and remittances are one of the main ways in which migration can influence the social and economic changes in the migrants' places of origin. Remittances play a critical role for the Bangladeshi economy generally but a vital role for those in precarious economy circumstances. This paper adopts a cautious interpretation of the impacts of remittances on migrant households. Drawing on data from a recently completed ethnographic study of 36 migrant households across three rural villages in Bangladesh, the paper argues that social and economic benefits of remittances are not equally distributed among all migrant households and that both the social interactions of migrants and all stages of the remittance process need to be better understood. *(This is an abridged version. The complete abstract may be read at http://bit.ly/Sikder_Abstract)*

Integrated Water-Energy-Food Nexus and the Role of Regional Cooperation in Promoting Energy Security in Asia

Md. Shanawez Hossain

Research Fellow, Institute of Governance and Development, BRAC University

There has been tremendous economic growth in Asia since the 1990's; referred to by some as the beginning of the "Asian Century". Yet concerns about the readiness of Asian nations to embrace this opportunity endure. This paper examines an integrated water-energy-food nexus and the role of energy security in realising Asia's full economic potential. The paper argues that regional cooperation

is critical in leveraging the growing economic needs for energy sector development necessary to sustain Asia's economic trajectory

Elderly Vulnerability to Home Care Receive in Bangladesh

Mohammad Abdul Hannan Pradhan

Associate Professor, Economics, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Bangladesh

The face of aging in Bangladesh is undergoing a profound transformation as the proportion of people aged 60 years and above has increased rapidly due to combined effect of falling fertility and increased life expectancy. With the increase of elderly, it is also required to increase in the provision of care for them, either informal or formal. Home care can be classified as financial, practical and personal. Traditionally though the family is the prime informal care giver. The rapid urbanization, modernization, industrialization and globalization have changed the traditional concept of family and traditional sources of home care systems for elderly. Besides, the formal care system such as old age home is very limited. A number of research related to the home care for elderly were conducted in developed countries. A few studies were carried out in the developing countries like Bangladesh. This study investigates current the home care; such as financial, practical and personal, provider for the elderly, focusing on the role of relatives, friends and neighbors to determine the vulnerability. A cross-sectional survey was conducted. Respondents were selected aged 60 years and above living in urban and rural areas of Sylhet district. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire from the respondents interviewed individually. Besides descriptive statistics, binary Probit regression model were used to determine the vulnerability of the elderly in home care received. The findings revealed that most of the respondents received financial care from spouse or at least one child. However, the receiving this care is not enough for maintaining the minimum standard of living. In addition, the responded also received financial care from relatives occasionally. A few number of elderly respondents received personal care from spouse and children mostly from spouse. Besides, the study also found that the majority of elderly received practical care from spouse or at least one child for outside care. A few number of elderly received personal care from relatives specifically from daughter-in-laws and grand-child. The study also finds that the majority of elderly received practical care from at least one relative specifically from daughter-in-laws. Daughter-in-laws help them in preparing meals and house work. Friends and neighbors are most important practical care giver for the elderly if they live alone. The findings also indicate that the elderly are more vulnerable in personal care receive than financial and practical care. Thus elderly become more vulnerable with increasing age. The findings also indicate that, most of the elderly are more vulnerable in receiving personal care. Findings suggest that policymakers urgently need to take stapes to provide personal and practical care for elderly with the financial assistance if required.



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