CPD Annual Report 2018





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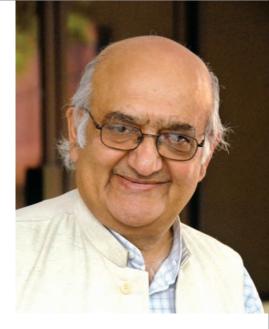
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Message from CHAIRMAN



CPD was a product of Bangladesh's democratic renaissance in the 1990s, in the aftermath of fifteen years of cantonment rule. Its founders themselves were directly engaged in the struggle for national liberation, and were strongly committed to the foundational principles of the liberation war: democracy, nationalism, secularism and socialism. The retreat from these principles in the era of autocracy, remained of deep concern to the founders' generation. So we were strongly motivated by the need to serve the new democratic era, through renewing public focus on policy agendas associated with the spirit of the liberation war. We hoped to do so by providing an institutional fora for generating policy ideas through the medium of constructive public reasoning. Our expectation was to draw upon the wealth of professional expertise which lay underutilised in

Bangladesh, while donor-driven policy agendas prepared by expatriate consultants monopolised the attention of the autocratic regimes.

Our perspective on the need for promoting policy dialogue was inspired by my own experience as an Advisor of the first Caretaker Government, then under President Shahabuddin Ahmed, in early 1991. At that time, I was given the opportunity to draw upon Bangladesh's indigenous skills through assembling around 250 of our best and brightest professionals in 29 Task Forces, to prepare policy agendas for a prospective elected government and its parliamentary opposition. Unfortunately, the elected government made little use of the fertile ideas presented to them, though the then leader of the parliamentary opposition exposed her parliamentary party to a full presentation of the Task Force

reports. CPD decided to use these reports to provide the basis for intensive policy dialogues, which could connect policymakers in the government and their political opposition with members of civil society to discuss, through civilised engagement in policy alternatives available to the country. In creating such a public for a, CPD's founders aspired to build serviceable bridges between the policy and political establishment with the academic community, where their research work could be productively utilised in the service of the people.

Today, after 25 years, indeed CPD's aspirations have exceeded the expectation of its founders. Over the years, as the institution evolved from its modest beginning of convening periodic policy dialogues, into a think tank built on quality research, which

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could project its influence from the national, to the regional, and even the global sphere. The rapid growth and broadening of CPD's work output made it possible for me to draw in a new generation of expertise to work with me. Their energy and effectiveness made it possible for me to devolve the direction of the organisation into their hands, and establish the tradition of passing on CPD's leadership from one generation to another, a marked departure from the dynastic tradition, which characterises the transition phase in many civil society organisations.

Over the years, CPD has established a tradition of collective management, which has provided openings for the most talented products of our universities, and given them opportunities to grow into researchers of merit and repute, whether remaining in CPD or moving beyond. As a consequence, CPD has generated a wealth of research to service its innumerable public dialogues, all of quality and relevance. Such an extensive portfolio of work remains quite disproportional to the size of the organisation.

The unique feature of CPD's research and dialogue programmes is provided through its wide public reach, established through its access to the print and electronic media. Much of CPD's policy messages, have moved well beyond the narrow confines of the seminar rooms, and have been made accessible to a national audience. It is this national exposure, which has transformed the institution from a merely well-regarded think tank into an institution of influence, where CPD has graduated into a household name. Today, it is CPD's high visibility and prominence, which has captured the attention of policymakers, parliament and civil society, though not always in a positive way. The ability to project your voice at the national level, far outside the realms of academe—can always be a two-edged sword, in which those in influence may, quite wrongly, perceive the organisation not as their ally, but as their competitors.

Over the last quarter of a century, CPD has played a pioneering role in publicising a number of important policy issues, at the national, regional and global levels, where we have partnered with likeminded institutions at home and abroad. Some of the most important initiatives are presented below:

- CPD was perhaps the first such organisation which went out of its way to bring in the government and the opposition to engage with a broad cross-section of civil society in discussing policy issues. During the lifetime of successive parliaments, where the opposition regularly boycotted the house, CPD provided the arena of choice for Finance Ministers and their opposition counterparts to debate the national budget and other important policy initiatives.
- CPD's Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD), initiated as far back as 1995, has over the last 24 years, established itself as a national reference point for reviewing, at a high professional

standard, the state of the economy. CPD's annual post-budget debate drawing on the work of IRBD, has now become a recognised public event in the national calendar.

- CPD, from the mid-1990s took the initiative in promoting governance studies, which challenged the conventional wisdom of the Washington Consensus, propagated by the World Bank and the IMF, that neo-liberal policy outcomes were the panacea for the problems of Bangladesh and other developing countries.
- CPD played a pioneering role, again from the mid-1990s, in promoting the idea of engaging in constructive dialogues at the level of civil society to address outstanding problems constraining Indo-Bangladesh relations. It partnered with some of India's leading think tanks to hold around 15 such dialogues, which played a valuable role in influencing settlements at the intergovernmental level, for such vital issues as, the sharing of the Ganges waters and providing unrestricted access for Bangladesh's exports to the Indian market.
- CPD partnered with some of the major think tanks across South Asia in promoting South Asian cooperation. It eventually hosted the South Asia Centre for Policy Studies (SACEPS) in Dhaka, which for a long period was the premier institution in the region for keeping the idea of South Asia alive.
- In recent years, CPD has partnered with think tanks in China, India and

Myanmar to promote the idea of sub-regional cooperation between Bangladesh, Myanmar, North-East India and Yunnan Province of China. The BCIM grouping, as this initiative has come to be known as, has now graduated from a Track-2 to a Track-1 initiative, but CPD along with its regional partner organisations, has continued to contribute research inputs to the official agenda.

 CPD has emerged as the prime mover in a global initiative to bring together think tanks from the global South to play a vanguard role in the implementation of the SDGs. At the national level, CPD has taken the lead in partnering with a wide range of civil society institutions, NGOs and private sector to establish oversight mechanisms at the grassroots level, to ensure that Bangladesh meets its obligations to realise its SDGs.

Beyond these major initiatives, CPD has continued to engage in a variety of civil society initiatives designed to both hold the government accountable for its performance, and to provide policy suggestions on how to improve its performance. Prior to the 2001 elections, CPD constituted another body of Task Forces to provide policy guidance to the prospective elected government. Prior to the 2007 elections, it initiated a series of public dialogues around the country, to engage with the public in order to understand their principal concerns. Out of these consultations, emerged CPD's national policy agenda, Vision 2021, which sought to give policy direction to our policymakers for the next two decades. The CPD document subsequently provided the caption for the Awami League's election manifesto for the 2009 elections, which drew upon a range of ideas derived from CPD's 2021 Vision statement.

In the wake of the Rana Plaza tragedy, CPD again took the initiative to bring together a group of civil society institutions to track governmental and global initiatives to address the problems of the victims. Beyond Rana Plaza, CPD had been engaged in addressing the problems of the wage workers in the garment industry. In recent years, CPD conducted a major study on the future of the RMG sector, which takes into account the issue of ensuring justice and protecting the human rights of its workers.

CPD's wider research agenda which has provided a variety of policy ideas to the government and public, has kept faith with its founding mission. Through various projects, CPD has promoted social, gender and environmental justice, argued for the deepening of democracy through strengthening our parliamentary institutions, and democratising our political parties. Thus, the above account of some of CPD's principal programmes could be greatly expanded. However, if we look back over the years, the central contribution of CPD's various initiatives has been to establish the presence and voice of civil society as an important factor in policy-making and governance.

The contribution of civil society, and particularly CPD, has been recognised by successive governments of the day, which have, over the years, taken notice of some of our key initiatives, sometimes on an adversarial basis, occasionally as a partner. While it is flattering to the self-esteem of organisations such as CPD, that some of their activities are noticed at the highest levels of state, it is unfortunate, that it should be treated as an adversary. It was always CPD's mission to be of service to the people of Bangladesh, and their elected representatives. We regard it as a public duty to point out where policies and public actions are occasionally misconceived. But we invariably seek to provide constructive suggestions for corrective actions, and much of our research initiatives are invested in such a purpose. At the end of the day, a working democracy does need a strong civil society, as its partner.

Professor Rehman Sobhan Chairman, CPD

Message from Executive Director



CPD's transformative journey during **25 years**

The year 2018 marked 25 years of CPD's establishment. CPD was set up in 1993 by Professor Rehman Sobhan, an eminent economist of the country, and well known in South Asia and globally, for his academic and professional accomplishments. CPD's launching coincided with the beginning of a democratic practice in Bangladesh after nine year-long military regime in the early 90s. This had created a space for the civil society think tanks to promote progressive ideas and take part in debates on Bangladesh's development process. Committed to remain a demand-driven and independent think tank, CPD came into being with key objectives to influence the

policy-making process of the country, and raise issues on behalf of the marginalised people.

In the course of these two and a half decades, CPD has been doing this through research and knowledge generation, dialogues and outreach, and publication and dissemination. In doing so, CPD grew from strength to strength, and made a few distinctive transitions in its journey.

CPD made its first transition when it blended its research and dialogue activities with policy activism that sought to involve stakeholders in shaping the future of the country. Making a departure from the traditional research organisations that emphasise only on producing and publishing intellectual outputs, CPD wanted to take it forward. CPD wanted to tread in the area of policy influencing through evidence-based rigorous analysis and effective dialogue between the common people and policymakers. CPD's Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD) has been one of its earliest efforts to assess the macroeconomic development of the country throughout the year and analyse the national budget. IRBD covers a whole range of macroeconomic governance-relaed issues that include growth, employment, investment, resource mobilisation, public expenditure, and much more. IRBD has been CPD's flagship programme that seeks expert views before preparing reports, and presents the findings in the dialogues to initiate public discussion. Additionally, CPD attempts to be at the forefront of highlighting national and international issues, which have potential implications for the development of Bangladesh in the short-, medium- and long-terms. Hence, CPD's portfolio covers several issues that

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included, among others, policy activism for accountable development process, addressing the economic, social and environmental compliances in the readymade garments factories, ensuring quality of public services and improving governance in the financial sector. Over the years, CPD has received the goodwill and appreciation of a large section of the people in its challenging endeavour.

The second transition was made when CPD started to pursue programmes and activities to promote economic cooperation and integration in South Asian region, and to strengthen global integration of low-income countries such as Bangladesh, through active interest in multilateral institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). During the late 1990s and early 2000s, CPD began to play an active role in promoting the interest of least developed countries (LDCs) through conducting research and organising LDC Forums both in and outside Bangladesh, in the context of the WTO. It has also been working on regional connectivity issues including economic cooperation within the Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor. It has partnered with several South Asian think tanks in carrying out research, organising conferences, and providing training to relevant stakeholders on regional and global issues. CPD has also been involved in pursuing interests of developing countries in climate-related discourse and negotiations.

CPD made a third transition by positioning itself as a global think tank. The high quality of its research and publications, strong organisational performance, and enhanced communication and outreach capacity of CPD have contributed in doing so. The institutional strength and networking ability have made it possible for CPD to give leadership in initiatives whose ambition is to advance interest of low-income and developing countries on a global scale. Thus, CPD has been leading two global initiatives, namely, Monitoring the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the LDCs (in short, LDC IV Monitor) and Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals (in short, Southern Voice) and working as Secretariats for both these initiatives. Drawing on synergies in work programmes and interests of other institutions around the world that have common interests, CPD is providing leadership to these initiatives, in terms of conceptualisation and giving content to the initiatives, building partnership and mobilising the participating institutions to chalk out activities and programmes to take the initiatives forward. Several publications have been made and dialogues organised internationally under these initiatives.

The fourth transition of CPD is the expansion of its network within the country, and outside the capital Dhaka. Following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 by the global leaders, CPD conceived the idea of involving the citizens in the SDG process. CPD launched the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh in June 2016, in partnership with a few reputed fellow organisations in the country. The objective of this Platform is to engage the non-government actors to contribute to the delivery of the SDGs, and enhance accountability of the SDG implementation process. The Platform has organised several national-level dialogues, townhall meetings and capacity-building workshops on various SDG-related issues. A unique example of partnership between the government and non-government sectors was set, when in 2017, the NGO Affairs Bureau of the Government of Bangladesh approached the Citizen's Platform to organise a conference on "Role of NGOs in Implementation of SDGs in Bangladesh." Two more major events of the Platform—"Citizen's Conference on SDGs in Bangladesh 2017" (on the theme 'Leave No One Behind') and "Youth Conference 2018" had created a lot of enthusiasm among stakeholders across the country, and helped raise awareness on SDG-related issues. With more than 80 non-government organisations, including the private sector, as its members, the Platform is a well-regarded initiative with which many organisations aspire to be associated.

Building on its experience and strength in working towards achieving an equitable and just society, CPD is now well-positioned to look forward to the next 25 years. It is in this spirit and enthusiasm, that CPD sees its future role in contributing towards the development of Bangladesh.

CPD's Annual Report 2018 is a snapshot of its research, dialogue and outreach activities throughout the year. Like all previous years, it was again an extremely busy period for CPD. This Annual Report, hence, could not do iustice to all the activities that the Centre had undertaken throughout 2018. However, the following pages of this report will show, how CPD was actively engaged locally, nationally, regionally and globally. In addition to regular issues, it had worked on emerging issues. For example, as 2018 was as the year of national elections, CPD undertook special research on priorities for the electoral debates, and organsied media briefing to highlight those issues. Also, given the deteriorating health of the banking sector, CPD felt the need to flag this issue of governance to rescue the

sector, so that the newly elected government takes some effective measures on this.

CPD's large volume of work speaks of the commitment of its members. I am indebted to Professor Rehman Sobhan. Chairman, CPD for his overall guidance in undertaking CPD activities. My sincere thanks to CPD's Distinguished Fellows—Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya and Professor Mustafizur Rahman—for their intellectual stewardship and operational suggestions in navigating CPD activities smoothly. Ms Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, Director, Dialogue and Communication, CPD has put in exceptional effort, and has done too many things too well. Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Research Director,

CPD has led the Research Division efficiently, and maintained high quality of CPD's research. Mr M Shafiqul Islam, Director, Administration and Finance has been a crucial part of the Centre, in ensuring good governance in financial and administrative affairs.

Indeed, CPD stands on its collective strength. Each and every member of CPD family puts the best effort to bring out the most from any endeavour it engages in. This is true now, as this was true 25 years ago. I extend my deep gratitude to the CPD collective for their unparalleled devotion to fulfil CPD's vision. It is a matter of pride and pleasure for me to work with this active and committed team.

Johnida

Dr Fahmida Khatun Executive Director, CPD



shape and influence the country's development prospects

equity, justice, fairness and good governance

research, dialogue, dissemination and policy advocacy

poverty alleviation, trade, investment, transport

Our Focus

CPD strives to focus on the frontier issues that are critical to the development of Bangladesh in the present context, and which are expected to shape and influence the country's development prospects over the mid-term horizon.

Our Vision

To contribute towards building an inclusive society in Bangladesh that is based on equity, justice, fairness and good governance.

Our Mission

To service the growing demand of civil society of Bangladesh for a demand-driven and accountable development process by stimulating informed debate, generating knowledge and influencing policy-making through research, dialogue, dissemination and advocacy.

Our Objectives

To enhance national capacity for economy-wide policy analysis; foster regional cooperation in key areas such as poverty alleviation, trade, investment and connectivity; facilitate Bangladesh's effective integration into the process of globalisation.

CPD gets new Board Members

In 2018, CPD further strengthened its governance by including two members to its prominent list of Board of Trustees (BoT).

CPD welcomed Ms Parveen Mahmud FCA, former Managing Director for Grameen Telecom Trust, former President, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) and former Director, Dhaka Stock Exchange. Ms Mahmud had a versatile career. She has worked for national and international development agencies, and was a practicing chartered accountant. Among many of her leading roles in various organisations and boards she belonged to, Ms Mahmud became the first female President of ICAB in 2011, and the first female Board member in the South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA), the apex accounting professional body of the SAARC. Her contribution towards society has been recognised widely. She received the "Women at Work-2017" award from Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services, "Women of Inspiration Awards 2017" from the BOLD Bangladesh, and "Begum Rokeya Shining Personality Award 2006" for women's empowerment by the Narikantha Foundation, Bangladesh.

Another inclusion to CPD's BoT was the eminent economist and Distinguished Fellow of CPD, Professor Mustafizur Rahman. He was the Executive Director of CPD during 2007–2017. Professor Rahman taught at the Department of Accounting and Information System of Business Studies Faculty of University of Dhaka. He was awarded the prestigious Ibrahim Memorial Gold Medal by the University of Dhaka for excellence in research. Professor Rahman was a member of the University of Dhaka Senate during 2009-2013. He is currently a Senate member of the University, and a Syndicate member of the BRAC University.

Professor Rahman has served as member of various important national bodies and committees set up by the Government of Bangladesh. These include WTO Advisory Committee, National Coal Policy Review Committee, Regulatory Reforms Commission, Committee to Review National Sustainable Development Strategy, National Task Force to Monitor the Impact of Global Financial Crisis, Consultative Group of Economic Relations Division (ERD), Core-committee on Transit and Connectivity and Study Team for BCIM-Economic Corridor. He is a member of the Core Group of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. Professor Rahman served as member of the Panel of Economists for Bangladesh's Sixth and the ongoing Seventh Five Year Plans, and is currently a member of the Panel of Experts for the Second Perspective Plan of Bangladesh (2021–2041).

SPECIAL Works of 2018

The year 2018 has been a remarkable year for Bangladesh. The country has been recommended for graduation from the LDC status, as it fulfilled all three required criteria for graduation. Bangladesh also had its 11th Parliamentary Election through which the new government took office for another five years. While CPD continued its research on diverse issues, it paid particular importance to these two issues is 2018, and worked extensively both on implications of LDC graduation for Bangladesh and election pledges of political parties.

LDC Graduation Strategies for Smooth Transition

In March 2018, the United Nation's Committee for Development Policy (CDP) announced Bangladesh's eligibility to graduate from LDC status as the country fulfilled all three required criteria. If Bangladesh continues this momentum, it is expected to graduate from the LDC group by 2024. While this achievement calls for celebration, there are challenges along the way for a smooth transition, and for life after graduation.

CPD undertook a programme focusing on the graduation prospect and possible challenges for Bangladesh. Research under this programme was initiated in 2017, while other activities were implemented throughout 2018.



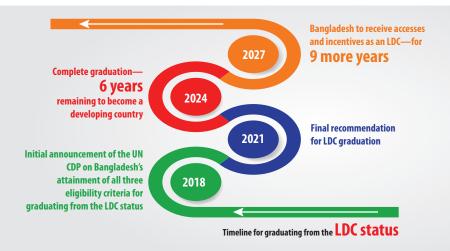
Session One of the public dialogue was attended by Professor Dr Gowher Rizvi, International Affairs Adviser to the Hon'ble Prime Minister as the Chief Guest; and Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Bangladesh as the Guest of Honour.

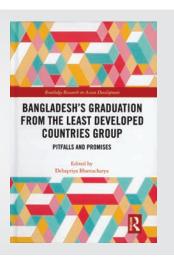
Based on the findings of the research, CPD organised a day-long dialogue titled "Bangladesh's Graduation from the LDC Group: Pitfalls and Promises."

Research outputs were published as a book by the globally-reputed publisher Routledge, London. Besides, six policy briefs were published by CPD.

Key recommendation from the study

Addressing the new set of challenges that is to emerge with LDC graduation, will entail designing and delivering a well-planned and smooth transition strategy that will ensure both sustainability and graduation with momentum.





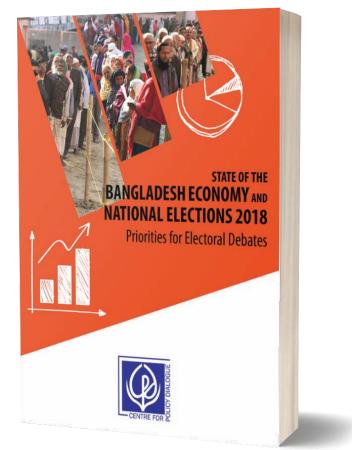
Priorities for Electoral Debates

The 11th National Parliamentary Election of Bangladesh was held on 30 December 2018. During the run-up to the national elections, CPD carried out a special exercise to identify what needs to be done to address some of the emerging and most pressing economic challenges for Bangladesh at that point in time.

The study aimed to contribute to the pre-election debates and discourse by providing a set of evidence-based recommendations to deal with contemporary challenges. The purpose was to help the voters prioritise their demands and make policy actors accountable for addressing issues following the election.

The key issues that were examined in the study included—macroeconomic management challenges, unemployment of the educated youth, price incentives for agriculture, financial sector governance, energy security and pricing, quality of education, health for all, and social protection.

A unique contribution of the study was to present it before the political parties, in the hope that, the recommendations will be taken into due consideration, and eventually be reflected in their respective election manifestos.





The Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD), CPD's flagship programme, has been assessing the country's macroeconomic development since 1995. Under this programme, CPD conducts periodic reviews of the state of the Bangladesh economy. CPD scrutinises the macroeconomic indicators, puts forward recommendations for the national budget, and provides objective analysis of the national budget presented by the Finance Minister of the country. IRBD programme also includes pre- and post-budget dialogues at the local and national levels. These dialogues are participated by top-level policymakers and key stakeholders.



HIGHLIGHTS of **State of the Economy** Reports in 2018

Despite continued growth in Bangladesh, inequality and unemployment situations have not improved. Macroeconomic stability is also under pressure, owing to creeping food inflation, high banking interest and high import payments, leading the balance of payments situation to negative terrain.

In this backdrop, CPD highlighted three issues of concern in the national macroeconomic performance of FY2018, through its three readings of state of the economy reports.

QUALITY OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

- GDP growth could not generate enough decent employment.
- Income and wealth inequality continues to rise.
- Impact of growth on poverty reduction has slowed down.

CPD recommends more focus on the distributional aspects of growth for a sustainable economy.

STRENGTH OF FISCAL FRAMEWORK

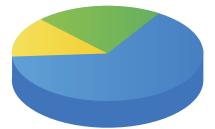
- Mismatch between target and actual accomplishments on government expenditure and revenue generation made fiscal framework weak.
- Revenue mobilisation for FY2018 lagged behind the target of 7FYP, primarily due to shortfall in collection of income tax, VAT and supplementary duty.

CPD recommends broadening of tax net for higher revenue collection.

BALANCE OF EXTERNAL SECTOR

 Higher growth rates of export and remittances could not account for import growth, resulting in negative balance of payment.

CPD recommends the central bank to maintain stability in the foreign exchange market to avoid any speculation and short-term volatility.



CPD's Analysis of the **PROPOSED NATIONAL BUDGET**

Core observations were:

- Fiscal measures taken to strengthen domestic-oriented industries and enhance revenue earnings are commendable.
- Support to the social safety net programmes is also appreciated.
- Low allocation for education and health; hence, the budget does not adequately prioritise social justice and equity.
- Compared to the macro-stresses, inclusivity has been better addressed in the budget, albeit through short-term measures.
- The budget does not have any directive towards strengthening revenue collection, managing the pressure on the macroeconomy and effective delivery of public expenditures.
- Budgetary measures favour the affluent class through reduction of the corporate tax rate, and by ignoring interests of the middle-class.







What Do We Do with the Banking Sector of Bangladesh?

Saturday 8 D - 2018, Khazana Ga

Dialogue on Banking Sector Crisis

CPD organised a dialogue titled "What do we do with the banking sector of Bangladesh?" on 8 December 2018, which spurred a lot of discussion and debate among policymakers, bankers and other stakeholders, especially in view of the then imminent national elections.

2018

Promoting

The dialogue presented findings of a CPD study on the performance of the banking sector by analysing official data.

It showed that, the banking sector currently is facing a number of serious challenges due to persisting malpractices, scams and heists. As a result, various efficiency and soundness indicators have deteriorated.

Key findings

- State-owned commercial banks have failed to maintain minimum capital adequacy requirements since 2013.
- NPLs are sharply rising, with NPL being 28.2% as of June 2018—the highest in the decade.
- A fluctuating advance-deposit ratio was observed during 2008–2018, which indicates inefficiency in liquidity management of some banks.
- From FY2009 to FY2017, the government spent around BDT 15,705 crore in recapitalising the banks.

Key recommendations

- Setting up an independent commission to address emerging challenges in the banking sector
- Implementing speedy recovery of default loans through a special tribunal

BUDGET DISCUSSION in Chattogram Perspectives from the Grassroots

As in previous years, CPD took its dialogue to the grassroots level in 2018 as well. On 13 May 2018, CPD organised two dialogues in Chattogram on issues pertaining to the upcoming national budget—one focusing on the Rohingya crisis, and the other on youth budget.

The dialogue on Rohingya issue was participated by Chattogram's development and research community, political and business leaders, and the media. The dialogue was also the occasion to present key findings and recommendations of a study undertaken by CPD. The study assessed the economic implications of this crisis for Bangladesh. It revealed the need for a budgetary allocation for the Rohingyas, which should be aligned to their ultimate repatriation to Myanmar, and would not undermine the efforts. towards serving the marginalised in Bangladesh.

Participants at the dialogue expressed concerns over the fact that wages of locals have been declining since many unregistered Rohingyas were working illegally. Various solutions to the problems were offered:



- A Rohingya Fund may be set up, where both the government and citizens can contribute.
- A special economic zone for Rohingyas can be established as an intermediate solution.
- Local Bangladeshis also need support from the donors to meet their development needs.
- Rohingyas should be repatriated as soon as possible.



Another interesting event was a consultation with the local university students from Chattogram, where more than 100 students participated. The event provided an opportunity for the youth to understand the national budget better. CPD researchers also gathered knowledge on the issues which are of interest to the youth constituency; these include education and employment opportunities for them.



Apparels Sector of Bangladesh

The RMG sector, which employs millions of people in the country, is the top export earner of Bangladesh. In 2018, CPD successfully completed its two-year long project on the new dynamics in Bangladesh's apparels enterprises. CPD also undertook research and outreach activities on issues of minimum wage and labour standards in the RMG sector.



CPD's RMG study, which had been initiated in May 2016, successfully concluded in August 2018. Employing extensive survey on enterprises and workers, the study looked at the state of ongoing transformation in the apparels sector of Bangladesh. The special focus of the study was on economic and social upgradation.

Key messages from the study

While social upgradation and gender-embedded upgradation have occurred in case of 59% and 51% of the factories, respectively, progress on economic upgradation occurred among only 21% of total factories under the survey.

As a result, an unbalanced upgrading has taken place, with limited focus on

economic and technological issues. This is particularly true for small and medium-sized enterprises.

CPD recommends:

An economic upgradation strategy

Investment in advanced machineries, design and product development, new departments, non-cotton textiles, and development of IT-based merchandising and marketing facilities needed.

• A gender-embedded upgradation strategy

Investment on female education, training and specialised skill development is required. Awareness on rights, entitlements and harassment in the workplace is also important.

• A cluster-development strategy

Initiatives should focus on improving employability of the local people through skills development, facilitating investment in modern machineries and technology, sensitising factory management and workers about gender-related issues, and strengthening communication between factory-owners and buyers.

The CPD-RMG project culminated in the production of various research outputs. These include research reports, working papers and policy briefs, and organisation of a conference.



CPD dialogue on RMG sector's minimum wage issue offered a constructive platform for all stakeholders, in the presence of Md Mujibul Haque Chunnu, MP, Hon'ble State Minister for Labour and Employment, Md Siddigur Rahman, President, BGMEA, and Advocate Montu Ghosh, eminent labour leader.

Dialogue on Minimum Wage and Livelihood Conditions of RMG Workers

When the new Wage Commission for the RMG sector was formed in 2018 to review workers' pay, CPD undertook a study to estimate a minimum acceptable wage scale. A survey was conducted as part of the study to investigate the living expenses of RMG workers in Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Savar, and was found that, at present, the minimum wage does not ensure decent living of RMG workers.

CPD recommended:

Structural changes to the minimum wage, to include new components like childcare and education allowance,

transportant and communication allowance and 3% basic service benefit. CPD proposed: (i) a grade-wise wage structure for the workers; (ii) to abolish the seventh grade in the wage structure; (iii) minimum wage for the sixth grade to be **Tk. 10,028 per month** for workers with children and a family of two earning members.

Other non-wage benefits for RMG workers may include: development of housing facilities under the private sector through public-private partnership model, subsidised healthcare through local NGOs, banking facilities through mobile-based financial services, and the establishment of government schools, colleges, hospitals, clinics and entertainment facilities. Consideration of livelihood issues, while fixing minimum wage is a new concept. CPD shared the findings of this study with the stakeholders in a public event.

When you talk about workers' wages, you have to keep in mind that the central driving force is not to give him a living wage, but to give him justice.

> **Professor Rehman Sobhan** in his closing statement at the dialogue

CPD Dialogue on Emerging Labour Standard Demands in the Era of LDC Graduation ard SDG Enplementatic

Dignitaries discussing the labour standard issues included Hon'ble State Minister for Labour and Employment, BGEMA President, ILO Deputy Country Director and labour leaders.

Dialogue on Emerging Labour Standards

Organised by

Tuesday 15 May 2018

Khazana Gana Grand Hall, D

Marking

1993-2018

Years of Giving Voice, Prom

Recognising the importance of reforming labour law and its effective enforcement in compliance with the ILO conventions, CPD undertook a study and organised a dialogue to generate discussions on the issue. Complying with human rights and labour-related conventions has become critically important as the country has entered into the SDG era, and is moving towards LDC graduation by 2024.

The study, which was undertaken specifically to investigate the level of non-compliance in the sector, in terms of human rights and labour-related conventions, involved conducting key informant interviews with various stakeholders from sectors such as agro-processing, jute goods, RMG and real estate, among others. The dialogue provided unique opportunities to gather their perceptions about the enforcement of these laws and conventions in Bangladesh.

The study found the enforcement of relevant laws and conventions to be at a very unsatisfactory level. It investigated the reasons for this phenomenon.

CPD SUGGESTED

- Private sector and the government can raise awareness about the emerging labour standards among export-oriented industries
- Development partners and international organisations focusing on workers and labour rights could provide necessary support.



Youth and Women

This section showcases two of CPD's studies conducted in 2018, which explore the broader thematic concern of decent work in Bangladesh. One study provides a systemic exploration of the nature and causes of youth unemployment in Bangladesh, while the other study looks at the nature and extent of women's participation in the job market.

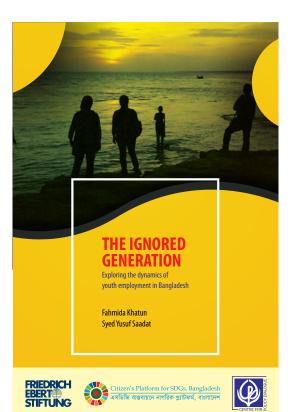
New research on YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN BANGLADESH

Ensuring a decent income through generating employment is at the heart of the ethos of 'Leave No One Behind', which is the core commitment of the SDGs. Bangladesh, despite its vast young population, has fallen prey to the phenomenon of youth unemployment. The Quarterly Labour Force Survey 2016-17 of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) reveals that, while the national unemployment rate is 4.2%, youth unemployment rate is as high as 10.6%. Unemployment is highest among youths having secondary-level education (28%).

To analyse the nature and extent of such unemployment, along with its underlying causes, CPD conducted a study and published a book titled "The Ignored Generation: Exploring the Dynamics of Youth Employment in Bangladesh."

Quick facts

- Share of unemployed youth in total unemployment is 79.6% in the country.
- Unemployment rate among youth having a tertiary-level education is 13.4%.
- About 29% youth are not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- On average, unemployed youth are more educated than employed youth.
- Percentage of female NEET is higher than male NEET in every division.
- Years of schooling, years of potential labour market experience, and hours spent doing household tasks—all increase the probability of a young person entering NEET status.



Key recommendations

- Develop technical and vocational skills through training facilitated by both government and private sector.
- Create enabling environment for female youth to be engaged in the labour market and entrepreneurship.
- Explore employment opportunities both in the existing and new markets outside Bangladesh.
- Increase access to computers and broadband internet, particularly in the rural areas.
- Support aspiring young entrepreneurs by providing access to credit from financial institutions and incentives from the government.

WOMEN in the workforce How far has Bangladesh

How far has Bangladesh progressed?

In 2018, CPD undertook a study to examine the nature and extent of women's participation in Bangladesh's job markets. The research offered valuable insights on the subject that include:

- 92% of all female employment in Bangladesh is in the informal labour market.
- Women receive about 14% less income in the informal sector compared to men.

- One-fourth of the employed women in Bangladesh is engaged in self-employment and the share has been on the rise.
- There is a premium in earning for schooling among female employees in the labour market, and this is more significant for higher wage-earners.
- Female labour force participation tends to rise with female education beyond the higher secondary level.

Key RECOMMENDATIONS

- Creating formal employment opportunities for women ought to be the desired labour market strategy for Bangladesh.
- Targetted programmes for upskilling female employees will be required to reduce wage gap.



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

CPD undertook a number of initiatives in 2018 that focused on challenges related to SDG implementation at the regional, national and grassroot levels. Among these was, developing an effective regional framework for South Asia for delivering the SDGs. Also, CPD, as the Secretariat of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh organised a national youth conference. CPD also began to facilitating the localisation of SDGs in Bangladesh.

TOWARDS A REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SDGs IN SOUTH ASIA

Recognising the need for an effective regional collaboration in South Asian countries to achieve the SDGs, CPD launched a multi-country research and policy initiative titled "Interpreting SDGs for South Asia: In Search of a Regional Framework."

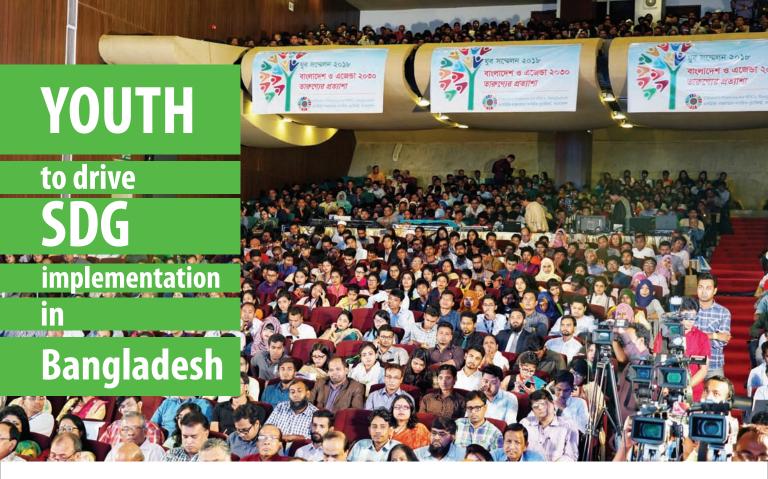
The project aims at designing a regional development cooperation framework and identifying the policy priorities at country-level to implement the SDGs. It will also identify the regional priorities, policy instruments, financial resources and institutional set up required for delivering the SDGs in South Asia.

On 20–21 November 2018, a meeting was held in Dhaka, to conceptualise the study. Participants included study team members from leading think tanks in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka.



Opening Session of the two-day Research-Policy Meeting was addressed by the International Affairs Adviser to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh, and representatives from event partners—UNESCAP South and South-West Asia Office, New Delhi and FES Bangladesh Office.





CPD, as the Secretariat of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, organised a day-long conference, titled "Youth Conference 2018—Agenda 2030: Aspirations of the Youth" on 14 October 2018. The conference aimed to improve the knowledge of the youth regarding the SDGs, and create an opportunity for them to build a network that would facilitate to play their due role in SDG implementation.

Speakers stressed that as today's youth are the major beneficiaries and key stakeholders of the Agenda 2030, their potential needs should be valued and supported by formulation and implementation of appropriate policies for achieving the SDGs.

Over **2000** Bangladeshi youth from all over Bangladesh with diverse ethnic, religious and professional backgrounds and gender identities joined the conference. Eight parallel sessions were conducted on the themes of: employment and entrepreneurship; participatory youth leadership; inclusive society; quality education; technology and innovation; good governance and law enforcement; youth against radicalisation and drug addiction; and health, nutrition and sanitation.

In the closing session, Youth Declaration 2018 was adopted, which put forth 25-points chapter of demands. The need for building a fair and prosperous Bangladesh, with adequate opportunities for the youth was underscored. The session also emphasised on developing their talents and realising their potentials, so that, no one is left behind.



The Youth Conference 2018 of the Citizen's Platform was not only a one-off event. Prior to the conference, a number of competition events were organised to engage the youths, on the theme of 'Aspirations of the Youth'. These included a short film competition, a photography competition, debate tournament with university-level students, and a special debate event for the visually challenged students. At the side of conference's discussion sessions, there was a Youth Fair, participated by 32 organisations from Platform and beyond; and an Open Platform, where partner organisations of Platform launched a number of knowledge and technological products, including 15 Policy Briefs, 3 research reports, a survey report, a job portal, a website for e-library, and a toll-free call centre for health service information.

Localizing SDGs for inclusive development

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Planning Commission Member Dr Shamsul Alam speaking at the CPD dialogue, where development partner representative and eminent development activists are present.

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Localising SDGs in Bangladesh

Better knowledge and leadership capacities of grassroot level CBOs and CSOs are critically important in realisation of the SDGs. These organisations can uphold social and economic rights of vulnerable groups through contributing in the design and implementation of government policies, programmes and budgets related to the SDGs. This is the core objective of the project titled "Enhancing the Participation of **Community-based Organizations** (CBOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Democratic Governance in Bangladesh," which was initiated in

January 2018, in partnership with the Oxfam Bangladesh, with support from the European Union.

One of the activities of the project was a baseline survey. Conducted among CBOs, CSOs and local authorities, the baseline survey revealed that only 2.8% CBOs received training on SDG-related issues.

Other activities under the project included workshops in 13 districts. More than 500 participants, comprising of local authorities, local government representatives and media professionals attended these workshops.

Additionally, a national dialogue was held in Dhaka to share findings of the baseline survey and the action agendas from the workshops. Speakers emphasised that, empowering the local government and local authorities, and providing them with adequate resources are imperative for mitigating SDG implementation challenges. The need for partnerships among and within local stakeholders was also underscored.

CPD's global programmes

CPD continued its persuasion for intervening in the global development discourse of SDGs through its various activities of Southern Voice on Post-MDGs. Southern Voice is a network of 50 think tanks from Africa, Asia and Latin America, which was set up in 2013; with the adoption of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, now concentrates to contribute in issues related to implementation challenges.



CPD is the initial convener and founding host of the Southern Voice network. It functioned as the Secretariat, and later as the host institution since its inception. CPD also hosts the office of the Chair of the network. During the year of 2018, CPD has been the driving force behind conceptualising and implementing two major global research programmes of Southern Voice. CPD also provided necessary organisational support to the network in rolling out its new mid-term strategy, and ensured orderly transition to a new governing structure during this year.

Southern Voice on the State of SDGs (SVSS)

The SVSS research programme is designed to contribute to the follow-up and review process of the SDGs implementation by initiating a conceptually innovative policy-relevant empirical exercise. Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya is anchoring the programme as the Team Lead. In 2018, the six country studies (Ghana, Nigeria, India, Sri Lanka, Bolivia and Peru) and three regional surveys (Africa, Asia and Latin America) planned under the programme fully rolled out. Of these, CPD will carry out the Asian regional study, which will come out in Fall of 2019. In July 2018, a workshop was organised in Negombo, Sri Lanka to finalise the research methodology for the SVSS programme.

Re-thinking Development Effectiveness: New Approaches to Measuring Results and Impact of Public Development Finance

The objective of this reserach programme is to prepare the necessary background knowledge, as well as a

SOUTHERN VOICE

forward-looking framework, for a future phase of the Southern Voice programme, involving country-level assessment of development effectiveness. Three out of the nine knowledge products under this programme are being authored by CPD researchers. In 2018, an inception EGM was held in Washington, D. C. on 20 April, and a final EGM took place in New York on 11 December, in connection with the programme.

Southern Voice Research Conference

Southern Voice organised a Research Conference in Bangkok on 15–16 November 2018, where researchers of both the SVSS and Development Effectiveness programmes shared their interim outputs with the participating development experts from and beyond the Southern Voice.

Southern Voice General Assembly

Southern Voice organised its General Assembly on 14 November 2018, in Bangkok, on the sideline of the Think Tank Initiative Exchange 2018 (TTIX 2018). Total 32 delegates from 50 partner organisations attended the General Assembly, where the activity report along with finance report of the network (of last five years) were presented by CPD.



In 2018, a number of outstanding developments took place for CPD in 2018, including membership of a CPD official in a high-level influential committee at the UN. CPD also organised a wide range of events beyond its regular work plan. Among these were—a regional meeting of South Asian think tanks, two public lectures by global personalities, and a special programme to honour two of CPD's board members.



CPD Distinguished Fellow appointed to **UN body on LDCs**

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow, CPD was appointed as a member of the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP) in August 2018, at a session of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on recommendation of the UN Secretary-General. The appointment will be effective for a three-year term, from 2019 to 2021.

Established in 1965, the CDP is an independent body under the UN, which advises on development cooperation policies in support of the LDCs. Every three years, the CDP reviews the list of LDCs for inclusion in and graduation from the group.



7th South Asian Regional Meeting of TTI



The 7th South Asian Regional Meeting (RM7) of the Think Tank Initiative (TTI), was hosted by CPD in Savar, during 5–7 February 2018. The theme of the threeday long meeting was "Remaining Relevant in the Policy World: Sustainability Challenges of Think Tanks." Continuity of policy engagement by think tanks, during the post-TTI support, by South Asian cohort awardees was a major focus of the discussion during RM7. It may be mentioned that, under TTI, 48 leading think tanks from South Asia, Africa and Latin America received support. TTI is a consortium of five donors, who include International Development Research Centre (IDRC), UK Aid, NoRAD, Gates Foundation and Hewlett Foundation.

About 100 participants from 18 leading South Asian think tanks exchanged ideas and experiences, discussed challenges and opportunities, and shared their most compelling success stories.

CPD Anniversary Lecture 2018

Assessing the Challenges of SDG Implementation Food, energy and inequality



CPD Anniversary Lecture 2018



Annual Lecture 2018 by Jomo Kwame Sundaram

CPD invited Professor Jomo Kwame Sundaram, former Professor of Economics and United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, to deliver its Anniversary Lecture 2018 on 8 September. This was the fourth CPD Anniversary Lecture. The theme of this year's lecture was challenges in SDG implementation.

In his speech, Professor Sundaram touched upon various issues of global interest, such as renewable energy and food security—as well as country-specific issues for Bangladesh, including crises in the areas of health and nutrition. The lecture was attended by a diverse set of participants including policymakers, experts, diplomats, and representatives of development partners, media and the private sector.

It may mentioned that, the First, Second and Third CPD Anniversary Lectures were delivered by Dr Louka Katseli, Professor of Economics at the National Kapodistrian University of Athens; Mr Simon Maxwell, CBE, Executive Chair, Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), Chair, European Think-Tanks Group and former Director, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London; and Professor Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, Vice-Chair of the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP), respectively.

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i**my** tial Envoy of the French Governr

Public Lecture on Knowledge to Share, Planet to Care

On 6 January 2018, Mr Pascal Lamy, former Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Special Envoy of the French Government, delivered a public lecture organised by CPD. The lecture was titled "Knowledge to Share, Planet to Care".

While delivering the lecture, Mr Lamy said that there was a positive relation between economic development and political stability in the past. There was also a consensus that economic development leads to more welfare, causing less social and political conflict. However, the relation has somehow changed in today's world. Economics is rather doing better than politics in recent days, the French Special Envoy observed.

Key points:

- Rising inequalities and environmental degradation are fuelling tensions, conflicts and frustration worldwide, particularly among the new generation.
- The problem of rising inequality in countries across the world could be resolved at the local level, through national policies focusing on education, health, housing and taxation.
- Shared knowledge and resources can address the environmental concerns; this will lead the world to further development and achieve a secure planet for mankind—which is very much aligned with the theme of Sustainable Development Goals.



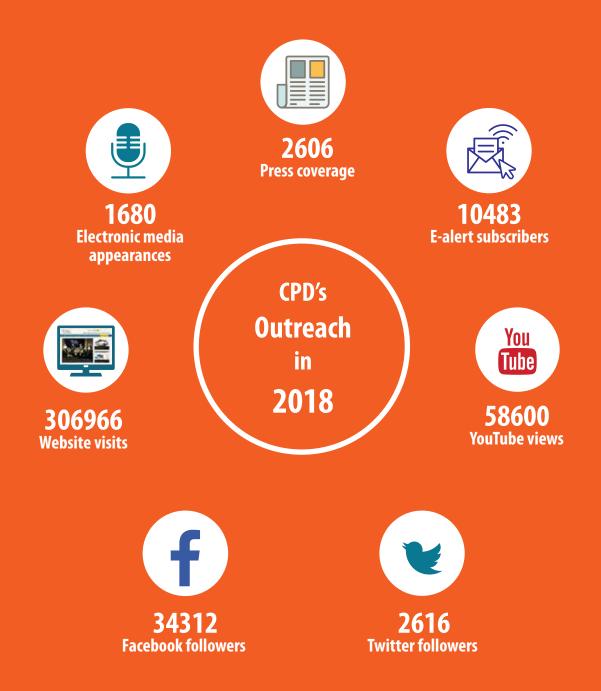
Felicitations to M Syeduzzaman and Professor Anisuzzaman

CPD organised a reception in honour of M Syeduzzman and Professor Emeritus Anisuzzaman for their extraordinary contributions to Bangladesh, and for their exceptional dedication and support to CPD, as respectable members of its Board of Trustees.

M Syeduzzman, who previously served Bangladesh as Finance Secretary, Planning Secretary, Secretary for External Resources Division and Minister for Finance of the Government of Bangladesh, is a prominent administrator and economic policymaker.

Professor Anisuzzaman is a renowned Bangladeshi academic of Bengali literature, most widely known for his participation in the country's Language Movement, Mass Uprising and War of Liberation.





Institutional Structure

CPD's governance framework is one of its key strengths, ensuring the independence of its research and dialogue activities, and relevance of the CPD initiatives to diverse stakeholders. The three divisions of the Centre—Research, Dialogue & Communication and Administration & Finance—function in an interconnected manner to serve the institutional work plan.

Governance and Internal Management

Board of Trustees (BoT)

The highest body in CPD's governance structure is the Board of Trustees. The Board, with the aid of an Executive Committee (comprising of the BoT's Member-Secretary and the Treasurer), is entasked to provide the overall guidance to the activities of CPD.

Chair of the Board Professor Rehman Sobhan Chairman, CPD

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed Founder and Chairperson, BRAC

Ms Khushi Kabir Coordinator, Nijera Kori

Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus Chairman, Yunus Centre

Mr M Syeduzzam Former Finance Minister

Mr Syed Manzur Elahi Chairman, Apex Group

Dr Anisuzzaman Professor Emeritus, University of Dhaka Chairman, Bangla Academy

Advocate Sultana Kamal Former Member (Minister), Advisory Council of Caretaker Government **Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya** Distinguished Fellow, CPD

Ms Rasheda K Chowdhury Executive Director, CAMPE

Dr Shahdeen Malik Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh

Professor Dr Syed Manzoorul Islam Formerly with Department of English, University of Dhaka

Ms Parveen Mahmud FCA Former President, ICAB and Former Director, DSE

Professor Mustafizur Rahman Distinguished Fellow, CPD

Dr Fahmida Khatun Executive Director, CPD (Member-Secretary: CPD-BoT)

Management and Implementation Committee (MIC)

The MIC is mandated with the task of overall supervision, monitoring and decision-making of the day-to-day work and administrative issues of CPD. A total of 31 MIC meetings were held in 2018. The MIC members' list in 2018 included:

Dr Fahmida Khatun

Executive Director

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya Distinguished Fellow

Professor Mustafizur Rahman Distinguished Fellow

Ms Anisatul Fatema Yousuf Director, Dialogue & Communication

Mr M Shafiqul Islam Director, Administration & Finance (Member-Secretary: CPD-MIC)

Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem Research Director The other institutional bodies that contribute towards governing the CPD are:

Research Management Committee (RMC)

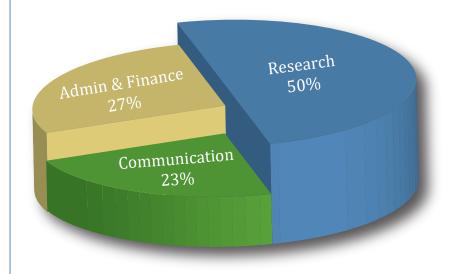
The committee that takes stock of progress in research works, designs and implements strategic coordination among various research programmes/ activisms, and discusses research proposals of the CPD. RMC is chaired by the CPD Research Director, and participated by all mid- to senior-level researchers.

Three meetings of the RMC were held in 2018.

Review, Coordination and Planning (ReCAP)

A discussion platform of all CPD staff on issues pertaining to any institutional activity and/or matter.

In 2018, five ReCAP meetings were held.



CPD's Staff Strength in 2018

Financial Affairs

CPD is committed to maintain the highest possible standards with regards to its financial management by following stipulated rules and regulations and best accounting practices, through internal auditing and independent external auditing, which are conducted on a regular basis. On financial matters, CPD remains accountable to its Board of Trustees, NGO Affairs Bureau, National Board of Revenue (NBR) and its supporting agencies and institutions.

Financial Statement of CPD

In line with financial year followed by the Government of Bangladesh, CPD has also changed its financial year to July–June from 2018. Hoda Vasi Chowdhury & Co., Chartered Accountants has carried out the audit of the financial statements of CPD for the period from 1 January to 30 June 2018.

The Auditor has reported that, the financial statements, prepared in accordance with Bangladesh Financial Reporting Standards/Bangladesh Accounting Standards, give a true and fair view of the state of the CPD and its projects' affairs as on 30 June 2018, and of the results of its consolidated operations and its consolidated cash flows for the year then ended, and comply with the requirements of applicable laws and regulations.

The summary of the Statement of Income & Expenses for the period from 1 January to 30 June 2018 and the Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) as on 30 June 2018 are provided below. Financial summary reports of previous two financial years are also presented here for comparison. These extracts provide an overview of the state of financial affairs of the Centre.

	Amount in Taka ('000)		
	Period ended	Year ended	Year ended
	30 Jun 2018	31 Dec 2017	31 Dec 2016
Incoming Resources			
Fund and grants	91,049	149,687	129,929
Other receipts	3,783	5,533	6,910
Total resources	94,832	155,220	136,839
Resources Expended			
Administrative & management expenditures	39,822	84,477	80,164
Project/programme expenditures	55,010	76,482	63,807
Total expenditure	94,832	160,959	143,971
Reserve/(Deficit)	-	(5,739)	(7,132)

Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) as on 30 June 2018

	Amount in Taka ('000)		
Assets	As on	As on	As on
	30 June 2018	31 Dec 2017	31 Dec 2016
Non-current assets	142,041	137,885	132,586
Current assets	176,410	146,781	167,934
Less: Current liabilities	(53,900)	(14,238)	(25,874)
Net Assets	264,551	270,428	274,646
Represented by			
Unrestricted funds	180,317	189,032	199,170
Restricted funds	84,234	81,396	75,476
	264,551	270,428	274,646

Statement of Cash Flow as on 30 June 2018

	Amount in Taka ('000)		
	As on 30 June 2018	As on 31 Dec 2017	As on 31 Dec 2016
Cash flows from operating activities	40,985	2,983	7,289
Deficit for the period ended June 2018 Adjustment for non-cash items	- 40,985	(5,739) 8,722	(7,132) 14,421
Cash flows from investing activities Cash flows from financing activities	(8,207)	(9,460)	(12,097)
Net increase decrease in cash & cash equivalents	32,778	(6,477)	(4,808)
Opening cash and cash equivalents	113,849	113,849	118,657
Closing cash and cash equivalents	146,627	107,372	113,849



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