

2007 Research Report of the Bangladesh Development Research Center (BDRC)

This 2007 Research Report summarizes the main research activities of the Bangladesh Development Research Center Inc. (BDRC) between January 5, 2007 (the day of its incorporation) and December 31, 2007. Following the first meeting of the Board of Directors on March 02, 2007, the BDRC announced its tentative Research Program on March 03, 2007. It included three topics: (1) Aid, Debt, and Development, (2) Climate Change, and (3) Bangladesh Development Strategies. Furthermore, there are four BDRC projects that imply indirect research activities: (1) the BDRC's Bangladesh Development Bibliography, (2) the BDRC's Resources for Researchers, (3) the tracking of Bangladesh's ranking/progress with regards to some 20 international indices/indicators, and (4) the BDRC's list of Bangladesh Development Researchers of the Millennium.

I. Main Research Activities

I.1. Aid, Debt, and Development

The BDRC has started to work on this research project in summer 2007. Following a call for papers by the Bangladesh Development Initiative (BDI) for a two-day Conference on "Bangladesh in the 21st Century", to be held at Harvard University (June 13-14, 2008), a proposal for such a paper (entitled: "Aid, Debt, and Development: Synergies or Contradictions in Bangladesh") was submitted by Dr. Gunter on September 30, 2007, jointly with Dr. A. F. M Ataur Rahman (at North South University) and Jesmin Rahman (at the IMF). Both co-authors have volunteered their services for this paper. The proposal/abstract had been selected on December 29, 2007; with the completed paper due by February 29, 2008, after which the final selection of papers will be made by BDI.

I.2. Climate Change

The BDRC's research on climate change included two activities. First, in July 2007, a research proposal was submitted jointly with the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS), the International Institute on Environment and Development (IIED) and

the Millennium Institute (MI), proposing an International Planning Workshop on Conceptualizing Effective and Efficient Adaptation Policies to Climate Change in Bangladesh. Given the positive reply by one of the foundations approached, the full research proposal that was then submitted on December 13, 2007 to the Rockefeller Foundation (which subsequently agreed in to hold the proposed workshop at its Conference and Study Center in Bellagio, Italy, where it is currently scheduled to be hold on May 20-22, 2008).

Second, in mid-September 2007, a research proposal was submitted jointly with Dr. Atiq Rahman (at the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies) and Dr. A. F. M. Aatur Rahman (at North-South University) for a conference paper entitled “How Vulnerable are Bangladesh’s Indigenous People to Climate Change”. The proposal had been accepted and the paper that compares the vulnerabilities to climate change and climate variability of the indigenous people with the Bengali population of Bangladesh was then presented at a Conference “Indigenous People and Bangladesh Environment” in Dhaka on December 17-18, 2008, by Dr. A. F. M. Aatur Rahman. The paper has also been posted on the BDRC website and is planned to be submitted to a professional journal after some further improvements.

I.3. Bangladesh Development Strategies

While a considerable amount of literature has been collected and communications on collaborations are ongoing, no concrete output has been provided yet for this research topic.

II. Indirect Research Activities

I.1. Bangladesh Development Bibliography

The Bangladesh Development Bibliography is the world’s largest collection of publications (books, journal articles, working papers, reports, etc.) relevant for Bangladesh’s development. While it contained 3,574 items when it was first posted on the BDRC website (on January 27, 2007), it has grown significantly during 2007 and

included at the end of 2007 more than 7,000 items. This bibliography is updated regularly, at least every four weeks. Indeed, it was updated 15 times in 2007. An analysis of visits of the BDRC websites has shown that the bibliography is one of the most visited sites of the BDRC website.

II.2. Resources for Researchers

“Resources for Researchers” was the BDRC’s first project, with resources posted on the BDRC website a few days after the BDRC’s incorporation. Over the year, the content of these resources has been revised, improved and enlarged. At the end of the 2007, the project contained a total of four lists (all of which are posted on the BDRC website): a list of professional journals that publish articles related to Bangladesh development issues; a list with links to online Bangladesh development reports and Bangladesh country briefs; a list with links of official data sources; and a list with links to research organizations working on Bangladesh development issues.

II.3. Tracking of Bangladesh’s ranking and progress

This project tracks Bangladesh’s ranking and progress with regards to 12 indices for which more than one observation is available. The project also provides information on Bangladesh’s ranking with regards to 7 indices for which only one observation is available. The information is updated regularly as new information becomes available.

II.4. List of Bangladesh Development Researchers of the Millennium

This project has been added to the BDRC website on December 30, 2007. It contains the names and profiles of persons who have (co-)authored and/or (co-)edited at least 10 studies/reports within this millennium (based on the collection of studies/reports in the BDRC's Bangladesh Development Bibliography). The list is actually divided into two parts, a) those persons who have (co-)authored and/or (co-)edited at least 25 studies/reports and b) those persons who have (co-)authored and/or (co-)edited at least 10 but less than 25 studies/reports within this millennium.