

RMG growth boosts female school enrolment: study

Two economists tell the success story

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

THE phenomenal growth of the garment sector between 1983 and 2000 significantly increased the female school enrolment rate, according to a study by economists Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak and Rachel Heath.

The average yearly growth rate of 17 percent from 1983, when the garment sector employment stood at 40,000, has resulted in a current employment of over 3 million, of which 80 percent are female.

An econometric study -- Does Demand or Supply Constrain Investments in Education? -- revealed that growth in garment sector employment increased school enrolment for girls aged 5-16, while it decreased it for girls aged 17 and 18.

In contrast, the Female Stipend Programme, run by the government with support from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, has paid for 2 million girls to remain in school, and yet it did not have any statistically significant impact on enrolment, according to the study.



Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak



Rachel Heath

In fact, the authors found that school enrolment of both boys and girls increased by the same amount, suggesting the supply-side interventionist programme did not lead to desired results.

Mobarak, an associate professor of economics at Yale University and Heath, an assistant professor at the University of Washington, presented their paper at the "IGC South Asia Growth Conference" at the Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka yesterday.

The rapid increase in girls' edu-

cational attainment, both in absolute terms and relative to boys, allowed Bangladesh to surpass the third millennium development goal of gender equity in enrolment, a feat which many other countries in Western Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are yet to achieve.

The authors' findings suggest that education policy in developing countries needs to be closely tied to trade or industrial policy, as enrolment appears to strongly respond to job creation that requires education.

Deutsche Bank says it will cooperate in rate probe

REUTERS, Frankfurt

Deutsche Bank may escape with a lighter penalty than other banks in Europe if investigators impose fines in the wake of an interest rate-rigging scandal, two sources familiar with the bank told Reuters on Sunday.

They said Deutsche Bank has applied to cooperate with authorities in their investigation under the leniency programmes of the European Union and in Switzerland, but that it did not mean the bank was admitting any guilt.

"The bank last year obtained the status of being a witness for the prosecution in the EU and in Switzerland," one source said.

"As a result of that, the bank could get a lighter penalty if a punishment is imposed," another said.

Deutsche Bank's application under the leniency programme has been approved.

A global investigation into manipulation of inter-bank lending rates widened two weeks ago with Britain's fraud squad taking up the case.



Nobel Peace Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus presents the plaque of Social Business City to Samuele Bertinelli, mayor of Pistoia city in Italy on July 11, as the city was declared the first Italian Social Business City. Story on page 1

Cooking with clean stoves

M NURUL ISLAM

THE Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves (GACC) organised a two-day workshop on dissemination of clean cookstoves (CCS) at Dhaka in May 2012. At the programme, Environment and Forest Minister Hasan Mahmud highlighted that the government is committed to implement CCS programme and already made allocation from the climate change trust fund to scale up dissemination operation.

Prime Minister's Energy Advisor Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury said the government is committed to improve the quality of life of poor people. Looking to remarkable success of dissemination of one million solar home systems by Infrastructure Development Company Ltd (IDCOL) and its partner organisations, different organisations now working with the CCS programme should try to reach 100 percent households of Bangladesh.

The alliance has set the goal of enabling 100 million households to adopt clean cooking solution by 2020. CCS is an important technology to improve the quality of life and economic conditions of about 500 million millions of households using traditional cookstoves in developing countries.

The alliance has planned to reach 20 percent households with CCS. In Bangladesh, about 90 percent households depend on biomass-fuels for cooking. In urban areas generally one stove and in rural areas two stoves per households are used for cooking.

In line with the goal set by the alliance, in Bangladesh if it is planned to reach 20 percent households with CCS it will require to disseminate 5.4 million CCS, and if it is planned to replace 20 percent stoves it will require disseminating 9.3 million stoves by 2020.

The government will provide all assistance along with GACC to reach universal access to CCS. The two-day workshop was well planned and participated by a large number of stakeholders actively involved in the promotion of CCS.

I was impressed with the commitments and achievements of the field level promoters of CCS. If the government provides enabling environment for the promotion of CCS all the households of Bangladesh will be able to cook with CCS on the silver jubilee year of our independence in 2021.

CCS achieve complete combustion of fuels and improve energy efficiency, thereby requires less fuel to cook; it reduces smoke thereby improve air quality around the stove and it reduces emission of green house gases.



GRAMEEN SHAKTI

A woman cooks food on a clean stove that requires less fuel and reduces smoke.

Saving of fuels and less smoke in the kitchen directly benefit the users and reduction of green house gases helps the world for which the developed countries are ready to pay carbon credit to the promoters on yearly basis.

Because of these reasons currently CCS programmes have become more attractive for implementation, which was lacking when it initially tried to disseminate in 1980s.

Against many odds, Dr M Eusuf and Dr Hasan Rashid Khan of IFRD and BCSIR persistently carried out research to develop different models of improved cookstoves in Bangladesh and take them to the users through demonstration projects.

In the international arena, Prof KR Smith of University of California, Berkeley through his continuing research on the effects of smoke on women's health has drawn the attention of the global community to develop and promote clean cookstoves to improve women's health.

The government should establish Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority on an urgent basis. The renewable energy policy should be revised to include all types of primary renewable

energy sources (solar, wind, biomass, bio-fuels, hydro, geothermal, tidal and wave) and all possible end uses (cooking, heating, drying, lighting, pumping and shaft power).

A National Renewable Energy Action Plan should be prepared for the next 25 years to promote all types of renewable energy sources. It should include research and development, demonstration, commercialisation and large-scale dissemination of RETs. The plan should fix the targets to meet future energy and electricity needs of the country by using RERs.

The National Clean Cookstoves Programmes should be considered as a priority programme under the National Renewable Energy Action Plan. The NCCP should be prepared with due consideration to demand-supply balances of biomass-fuels at district or upazila level.

Districts or upazilas having more scarcity of biomass-fuels should be given priority during implementation. Active participation of all the concerned ministries should be ensured by SREDA to support the implementation of the programme.

It would also be necessary to involve private sector institutions like FBCCI and non-governmental organisations (Grameen

Shakti, Practical Action) to implement the NCCP.

Active participation of development partners (GIZ, USAID, the World Bank) would help the programme attain sustainability. A National Alliance for Clean Cookstoves may be formed with the inclusion of all stakeholders to give advice periodically.

The national alliance should maintain effective collaboration with the global alliance and interact with the national stakeholders to transfer the experiences of best practices from other partner countries.

At present the monthly tariffs of natural gas for domestic cooking with a single burner and a double burner are Tk 400 and Tk 450 respectively. Average monthly expenditures for domestic cooking by an average family using firewood, kerosene and LPG are Tk 2,000, Tk 2,100 and Tk 3,300 respectively.

Due to the shortage of natural gas, the government has decided not to give any new connection to domestic gas consumers.

In order to rationalise energy tariffs for domestic cooking, the government should consider increasing the tariffs for single and

double gas burner as Tk 1,800 per month and Tk 2,000 per month respectively and should allocate increased revenue earning from the domestic gas consumers for the promotion of NCCP.

There is a need for continuing research to develop better models of ICS locally and adaptation of CCS models imported from foreign countries.

The government should provide necessary funds to continue research work on CCS. No attempt has been made to mass fabricate CCS made of ceramic material in Bangladesh. In future the private entrepreneurs may be sensitised through R&D about the possibility of manufacturing accepted CCS model(s) made of ceramic for large-scale dissemination.

At household level, women are totally responsible for the management of cookstoves. All the agencies involved with promotion and diffusion of CCS should engage women in marketing and promotion.

UN Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy was organised in 1981 for increasing the use of renewable energy resources. Promotion of improved cooking stoves was also discussed in the conference. Later on scientific research were undertaken in developed countries.

As per the decision of UN Conference of 1981, Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century and International Renewable Energy Agency have been established in 2005 and 2009 respectively.

Study of evolution on promotion renewable energy sources and clean cookstoves indicate that much progress has been achieved in promotion of renewable sources of energy as indicated by increasing share of renewable energy in total energy mix.

However, promotion of CCS has remained a neglected area both at national as well as at international level. In this context, in September 2010, the UN Foundation and other donors launched the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, a 10-year \$250 million public-private partnership in support of a bold vision of universal adoption of clean and efficient cooking solutions and an interim goal to enable 100 million households to adopt clean and efficient cookstoves and fuels by 2020.

If the alliance continues the promotion of CCS programme for sufficient duration, they will be able to bring notable changes in the cooking arena of the developing countries, including Bangladesh.

The writer is a professor of Institute of Appropriate Technology at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and can be reached at nurul1946@gmail.com