Care The Pailly Star Invest more in girls

CARE Bangladesh, in association with The Daily Star, organized a roundtable to share CARE's investment study findings on June 28, 2022. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.

Rawnak Jahan, Acting Director, WGEP, CARE Bangladesh

The Tipping Point Initiative of CARE Bangladesh addresses the root causes of child early and forced marriage (CEFM) through gender transformative social norms programming. It is a multi-level advocacy initiative. Under this initiative, we have conducted a study titled 'An Analysis of Evidence of Priorities, Nature, and Size of Investment of Government and Donors in Response to Girls' priorities and SDG-5. The study evaluated how these investments are impacting girls' lives in Bangladesh. Today we will share the study findings with you. We are seeking your recommendations for making the study inclusive and effective to eliminate child marriage in Bangladesh through advocacy initiatives.

Mahmudur Rahman Khan, Technical Coordinator- Research, M&E, CARE Bangladesh. The study tried to identify the priorities for girls in Bangladesh. These include creating spaces for girls to meaningfully participate in dialogues; ensuring a conducive environment for girls within the family to decide on their life goals; ensuring equal opportunities in education and learning; ensuring girls have access to capacity building and livelihood opportunities; and equal access in ICT-based platforms; ensuring positive attitude of community towards the collective initiatives; access to SRHR information and services; access to adolescent-friendly mental health and psychosocial support; and creating a supportive legal and policy environment.

The study also identified gaps in relevant investments in response to girls' priorities. Although the allocation for the Ministry of Labor and Employment increased by 4.8% in the national budget for FY 2021-22, the ministry doesn't have any precise annual development plan for developing skills of adolescent girls, and existing programs are not accessible to girls under 18. The implementation of the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2017 and the National Plan of Action for Eliminating CEFM are still weak. Additionally, there are gaps in inter-ministerial and inter-departmental coordination in terms of designing programs, implementation and avoiding duplication.

REFLECTION FROM PARTICIPANTS

Sigma Ainul, Senior Programme Officer, Population Council

We need to rethink the effectiveness of our preventive measures. An underlying cause of child marriage is the lower status of women in our society, and we must invest in girls to improve their status.

We have to provide them education and life skills, such as SRHR, critical thinking, and financial literacy which should be made at an Investment without a clear focus will not bring early age, perhaps around 12, so that, we can any effective change.

Roundtable Discussion on CARP's investment Study Findings Tipping Point Initiative

build assets to support them in their future

Our training programs generally focus on home-based livelihoods such as raising cattle and poultry and sewing. We need to bring girls to public spaces and increase their visibility.

Investment has to be made alongside the government and they have to be kept involved and updated to ensure the best use of our limited resources and scale up the good practices.

Schools are the best place to reach girls. We need to ensure that mental-health counsellors who work with schools are making students aware of the harmful effects of child marriage.

Reefat Bin Sattar, Director- Program Development and Quality, Save the Children. We have to first understand that child marriage isn't a disease itself, it's a symptom. What's more important is to look at what's happening within education, livelihood, and health programs because those are inextricably linked to child marriage.

We need to focus on four areas. Firstly. we have to ensure voice and space for girls. Second, girls should be seen as human capital. Third, there should be adequate legal and policy support to prevent child marriage. Lastly, we have to change the societal attitude towards girls.

Increasing budget allocation is important but increase in spending is necessary as well. There should be a strong oversight mechanism to track and monitor public expenditure on girls.

Masuda Rehana Begum, Joint General Secretary, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad

We should think and consider safety and financial stability while investing in girls.

Conspirators out again

Civil society can play a big role in monitoring the public expenditure on girls. We must build a strong social movement to eliminate child marriage. We have to put pressure on the government to monitor the activities of the child marriage prevention committees at the grassroots level.

We want our girls to be established as independent human beings. To achieve this, we need to change the mind-set of their family as well as school teachers. The government must take the lead, and all of us have to work under the same umbrella for the betterment of our

Zarfisha Alam, Manager, Gender Justice and Department, BRAC

We need to change the social norms that a girl's eligibility for marriage decreases as she ages. In order to create a conducive environment for women choosing non-traditional livelihoods, the family members need to be counselled as

Girls are required to be minimum SSC graduate to receive govt. training. We have to advocate for the inclusion of dropouts and those who don't have an SSC certificate. There is a strong link between school dropout and

Ruma Sultana, Program Coordinator, Security and Rights of Women and Girls, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)

The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2017 includes a provision that allows child marriage in 'special circumstances. The minimum age of marriage under this special provision should be specified.

K.M. Syeduz Zaman, Consultant, SRHR, FPAB An autonomous body should be established to coordinate among programs for the elimination

All our interventions happen to be donor driven, instead of being driven by girls' demands. We should come out of this approach. Moreover, we should go beyond a project-based approach and undertake longterm initiatives to address the child marriage issue. We also need to involve the government in our initiatives so that they can carry forward the program and implement the good practices on a national level.

Sohanur Rahman, CEO, Bangladesh Model Youth Parliament

The Global Synthesis report (2017) on the economic impacts of child marriage warned that child marriage would cost the world \$4tn by 2030. We need to conduct a similar study to measure the economic cost of child marriage in Bangladesh. It will help us understand the importance of investing in girls for ending child

Md. Jamal Uddin, Advocacy & S.ACC Coordinator, World Vision

Local government representatives are generally reluctant to prevent child marriage. Their support is key to preventing child marriage at the grassroots level. We need to engage religious leaders to bring changes to our existing social

The implementation of the CMRA 2017 is still very poor. The minimum age of marriage under the special provision of the act should be specified.

We need to strengthen our advocacy efforts to bring a positive change in our existing social

Rabeya Begum Kalpona, Executive Director,

We provide various types of training to girls at the grassroots level. Most of the girls are interested in tailoring. They do not show much interest in learning non-traditional skills, such as mobile phone repairing, graphic design and auto mechanics. The reason behind their lack of interest is that women generally don't do these works in our society. We need to encourage women to adopt these non-traditional professions.

Sadia Karim, Project Coordinator- Adolescents & Youth & Gender Mainstreaming, Educo Bangladesh

Transformative thinking should be spread among both boys and girls. If a boy is aware of the harmful effects of child marriage, he would be able to say no to it. This is why we must involve boys in the fight against child marriage.

Dr. Farhana Ahmed, Director- External Relations, New Business, Marie Stopes Bangladesh Girls suffer greatly due to their lack of knowledge about SRHR. We will not be able to prevent all child marriages. However, if these girls have adequate SRHR knowledge, they will be able to delay their first pregnancy, and that

RECOMMENDATIONS

> Ensure coordination among implementing organizations to avoid duplication and support creativity and innovation.

➤ Strengthen research initiatives to evaluate both the existing interventions and future plans regarding the prevention of child marriage in a pragmatic way.

> Increase the budgetary allocation for the skill development of girls.

> A strong oversight mechanism should be established to track and monitor public expenditure on girls.

➤ Make marriage registration compulsory and build an online database.

➤ The minimum age of marriage under the special provision of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017 should be specified.

> Ensure boys' engagement in programs to eliminate child marriage

> Focus on the age group of 10-14 in the child marriage prevention programs.

will significantly reduce maternal mortality rates and other maternal health risks.

Younger adolescents are often neglected in our SRHR programs, so we should seriously address their needs.

Shawkat Akbar Fakir, Coordinator- Women Economic Empowerment, ActionAid Bangladesh The local government institutions need to be engaged actively in the child marriage prevention initiatives. A systematic and integrated effort is needed to achieve a reduction in child marriage.

Bilawal stops over

for foreign affairs, Hina's visit to Bangladesh to attend the D-8 ministerial meeting late last month was finalised, but it was cancelled at the last moment. She joined the event

Pakistan in recent years has sought to improve relations with Bangladesh. Bangladesh wants Pakistan to formally apologise for the genocide committed against the Bangalees during the Liberation War in 1971.

Webb telescope

FROM PAGE 12 sparking the formation of new stars.

Hubble telescope had previously captured images of the rare ring galaxy, which is believed to have been a spiral galaxy like our own Milky Way before it was hit by a smaller intruder galaxy.

But the Webb telescope, which launched in December 2021 and revealed its first images to global fanfare last month, has a far greater reach.

IMF stands ready

FROM PAGE 12 As part of the policy response, Bangladesh's request for an RST and accompanying IMF-supported programme will provide safeguards in the event of further deterioration of external conditions, while supporting the country's efforts to address the longer term macroeconomic implications of climate change.

Passenger, locals

FROM PAGE 2

over the issue. Enraged, the passenger suddenly started beating Arif. Several locals also beat up Arif and him.

Critically injured Arif was declared dead after being taken to a hospital, added Khonon.

The identity of the passenger could not be known till filing of this report last night.

Al Mamun Kobir, sub-inspector of Ashulia Police Station, who visited the spot, told this newspaper yesterday that no case was filed over

"We are trying to arrest the attackers.'

paid a courtesy call on her at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

She mentioned that conspirators had been out on their mission before the general elections in 2014 and 2018. "Now that the next election is getting closer, they are very much active." Hasina, also the Awami League

president, expressed wonder how the conspirators would gain by ousting her government. She, however, said she was certain about one thing that people would be the sufferers. The PM remembered the brutal

killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with most of his family members on August 15,

"The killers even did not spare Russel [her 10-year-old brother]. How could they do this!"

She said that killers Noor Chowdhury, Dalim, Ziaur Rahman and Khandaker Mushtague Ahmed used to frequent the home of Bangabandhu on Dhanmondi Road-

Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana survived the carnage as they had been abroad at that time.

"Many don't like that I'm achieving to it considering the possible future success for the country and have elevated Bangladesh's status as a developing nation," she said.

Expressing concern over the price spiral across the world, Hasina blamed it on Russia-Ukraine war and the consequent sanctions and counter sanctions.

"Only the arms producers are gaining and making profits. The common people are dying. The children are living very inhuman lives. This is very much unfortunate."

The PM said that the Middle Eastern and Gulf countries had problems earlier and now Russia and Europe are suffering.

"...and China is the next. If China gets involved, it will have an impact also on us," she observed.

In this regard, she said that she has asked all not to leave a single inch of land uncultivated as calamities would come from all around. "It's already coming."

The man-made calamities are compounding the sufferings from natural calamities, she added.

Regarding the recent load shedding in Bangladesh, Hasina said that the government has resorted

crisis as many developed countries have already been hit by power crisis. She said the government has taken the decision as a precautionary

measure to avert crisis in future. The PM said that this is now a proven truth that none but the Awami League work for the welfare of the country and its people. "To me power is an opportunity to serve the people

She mentioned that her government is taking the country forward overcoming the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

and I always try to use this properly."

"But we have to go for personal savings and practice austerity. We must not leave an inch of land without cultivation. If we don't become dependent on others for food production, that would be good for us. We are doing our job considering this."

During the meeting, Red Crescent Society board members briefed the PM about its activities in helping the people during floods, coronavirus pandemic and the Rohingyas sheltered in Bangladesh.

Chairman of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Major General ATM Abdul Wahab (retd) led the delegation.

DC of DMP the SP of Dinajpur; Mir Abu Touhid, AIG of PHQ the SP of Rangamati; Mohammad Saiful Islam, SP of Police Telecom the SP of Lalmonirhat; Muhammad Rashidul Hogue, SP of SB the SP of Naogaon: Mahfuzul Islam, DC of DMP the SP of Cox's Bazar; Foyez Ahmed, SP of SB the SP of Netrokona: Wahidul Islam. DC of DMP the SP of Barishal; Abdul Mannan, DC of DMP the SP Cumilla; Kazi Shafiqul Alam, DC of DMP the SP

of DMP the SP of Jhenidah; Sadira

Khatun, SP at Additional IG APBn the

SP of Narail; Abdullah Al Mamun, DC

of Gazipur Metropolitan Police (GMP)

the SP of Chuadanga; Arifur Rahman

Mandol, assistant inspector general

(AIG) of Police Headquarters (PHQ) the

SP of Sirajganj; Kazi Moniruzzaman,

SP of Special Branch (SB) the SP

of Satkhira; Shah Iftekhar Ahmed,

Biggest reshuffle of SPs

of Gazipur; Saidul Islam, DC of DMP the SP of Patuakhali; Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman Al Mamun, AIG of PHQ the SP of Munshiganj; Kamruzzaman, AIG of PHQ the SP of Sherpur; Mohammad Nur-e Alam, DC of GMP the SP of Joypurhat; Jakir Hossain, DC of GMP the SP of Feni; Asaduzzaman, DC of DMP the SP of Dhaka; Tariqul Islam, Commander of APBn 16 the SP of Bandarban; Abdus Salam, SP of SB the SP of Barguna;

Shahjahan, SP of In-Service Training

Centre the SP of Fairdpur; Naimul

Kishoreganj; Masud Alam, AIG of PHQ the SP of Madaripur; Al Asad Md Mahfuzul Islam, deputy director of Rab the SP of Kurigram; SM Sirajul Huda, deputy sergeant at arms of Bangladesh Parliament the SP of Panchagarh; Mashuddoula Reza. additional SP of Industrial Police the SP of Magura; Mohammad Afruzul Haque Tutul, additional SP of Chattogram the SP of Jhalakathi; Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman, additional SP of Narayanganj the SP of Nilphamari; and Saifur Rahman, additional SP of Shariatpur the SP of Natore.

the SP of Khagrachari; Mohammad

Rasel Shaikh, SP of PHQ the SP of

According to a separate circular, 10 SPs were transferred from districts to different units of police.

Mohammad Jahirul Islam, SP of Magura is now an AIG at PHQ; Hasan Nahid Chowdhury, SP of Sherpur an SP at Range Reserve Force (RRF) in Sylhet: Mohammad Jahangir Mallik, SP of Barguna an SP at RRF in Rajshahi; Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman, SP of Satkhira a DC at Chattogram Metropolitan Police; Fatiha Yeasmin, SP of Jhalakathi the SP at CID; Jerin Akhter, SP of Bandarban the SP at SB; Mohammad Yousuf Ali, SP of Panchagarh the SP at SB; Mohammad Abdul Aziz, SP of Khagrachari an AIG at PHQ; Jahidul Islam, SP of Chuadanga an SP at CID; and Abdul Momen, SP of Hoque, Commander of APBn 14 Munshiganja DC at DMP.

Dhaka too may feel the heat

FROM PAGE 1

SHAHAB ENAM KHAN

Jahangirnagar University. Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, he also said this visit could widen the trust deficit between major power blocs. Emerging economic power hubs like Bangladesh will face more difficulties in maintaining a balance in relations with Beijing and Washington.

The professor further said it would not be surprising to see increased trade and diplomatic protectionism, disruption in financial connectivity, and capital market instability as a result of tension over Taiwan.

"That means if I take the case of Bangladesh here, sustaining positive international trade and long-term financial stability may become more complex. Hence the act of balancing between these two powers will get

Professor Khan said Pelosi's visit comes with multiple geopolitical and geostrategic implications for Asian countries and beyond.

While the US recognised the One China policy, this visit gives a mixed signal to China and its allies. particularly when the prolonged Ukrainian crisis has polarised the world, he said, adding that Pelosi came to Taipei as per her own decision but was flown by a military plane, understandably due to security

"I think what is notable here is the White House has also distanced itself from this visit.' Prof Khan said Pelosi has been a

staunch critic of China, which Beijing sees as a reflection of an anti-China political stance. "Coupled with military tensions

over the waters of the South China Sea,

Beijing views the Indo-Pacific strategy pursued by the US and its allies as the return of the containment policy that the US implemented to curb the Soviet influence during the Cold War." He said Washington commits to

uphold its version of democracy and human rights as integral parts of Biden's foreign policy. "Most certainly, Speaker Pelosi's

visit marks a reiteration of such commitment. Hence, any absence of diplomatic and political engagement between Beijing and Washington can potentially intensify polarisation in the region. I won't rule out the possibility of a military crisis in case of diplomatic miscalculation and lack of high-level strategic communication."

however, said state-level mechanisms are still available to defuse any major strategic fiascos as neither Taiwan nor the two powers would benefit from a hike in tension.

Bhola JCD president dies

Alam's father-in-law Abdul Bashet Bachchu told The Daily Star, "His CTscan report clearly shows that three pellets were lodged inside his head." He alleged the law enforcers

opened fire targeting Alam as he was an important JCD leader. The family initially refused to have an autopsy done on Alam, saying

there was "no point". However, they changed their mind and took the body to Dhaka Medical

College for autopsy. The Daily Star could not independently verify the reason for

the return. The clash broke out when police Maybe he was struck by brickbats."

intercepted a procession from the BNP office in Bhola municipality around 11:30am on Sunday.

The procession was part of the party's countrywide demonstrations against the ongoing load shedding and mismanagement in the power

Police fired bullets and lobbed teargas shells, leaving Swechchhasebak Dal leader Abdur Rahim dead, and scores injured.

At a press briefing after the incident, Saiful Islam, superintendent of Bhola police, had said, "I don't know how the man died, but doctors said he died from a head injury ...