



The Daily Star
CELEBRATING
33
years of
JOURNALISM WITHOUT
FEAR OR FAVOR

READYING FOR THE NEXT BIG LEAP

SEGMENT 5

ANNIVERSARY SUPPLEMENTS 2024

DHAKA WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 28, 2024

FALGUN 15, 1430 BS

8

Improving the Human Development Index: The Bangladesh perspective



SELIM JAHAN
is a former Director of the Human Development Report Office and Poverty Division, UNDP.

schooling and expected years of schooling; and a decent standard of living, measured by gross national income per capita. The theoretical maximum value of the HDI is 1.0.

Over the years, Bangladesh has made tremendous progress on economic and human development fronts, as measured by the HDI. From 1990 to 2019, Bangladesh's HDI improved from 0.394 to 0.632 – a nearly

three-fifth increase. In fact, with China leading the race, Bangladesh is one of the top five countries in terms of the largest absolute gains in the HDI score during that period. Over the last 30 years, Bangladesh has moved to the medium human development category from the low human development category.

And on many human development fronts, its

progress has been better than its neighbors. Bangladesh has achieved a life expectancy at birth of nearly 73 years, compared to nearly 70 years in India and 67 years in Pakistan. In 2019, the under-5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births was 31 in Bangladesh, 34 in India, and 67 in Pakistan respectively. Its mean years of schooling at 6.2 years is better than that of Pakistan (5.2 years) and Nepal

(5.0 years).

When the male and female HDI of Bangladesh are compared, in 2019, while the HDI value for women in Bangladesh was 0.596, that of men was 0.660. The overall Gender Development Index (GDI) score for Bangladesh in 2019 was 0.904, higher than those of India (0.820) and Pakistan (0.745). Even though both Bangladesh and India started from the same GDI score (0.702) in 1995, by 2019, Bangladesh surpassed India, reflecting better progress in gender equality in human development, as measured by GDI.

The potential gains in human development are sometimes lost because of existing socio-economic inequalities. When measured by the income-inequality adjusted HDI (IHDI), Bangladesh loses 24 percent of its overall HDI. However, the good news is that during the last decade (2010-2019), the IHDI value of Bangladesh increased from 0.387 to 0.478, implying that inequality in human development declined during that period.

On the health front also, Bangladesh has made notable progress. During the last three decades, (1990-2019), Bangladesh reduced its infant mortality rate from nearly 100 per 1,000 live births to just

21 per 1,000 live births: the maternal mortality rate from 165 per 100,000 live births, down from 594 deaths per 100,000 live births. The country has also fared better in child immunization. The diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus (DPT) immunization rate now cover 98 percent of children aged 12-23 months. The situation of child nutrition has improved substantially in Bangladesh. During the period 1990-2019, the prevalence of stunting in children declined from 55 percent to 28 percent, and the incidence of underweight children reduced from 56 percent to 22.8 percent. Over the years, Bangladesh has successfully reduced its total fertility rate (TFR) from 4.5 births in 1990 to 2.04 births in 2019.

The country has also made notable progress in the area of education. The adult literacy rate in the country has improved to 74 percent in 2018 from just 35 percent in 1990. Between 1990 and 2019, the net primary enrolment rose from 75 percent to 97 percent, and the secondary enrolment up from less than 20 percent to 66 percent. One remarkable progress has been in female secondary education enrolment and in that indicator, Bangladesh has done better

SEE PAGE 9

Even with all the phenomenal human progress over the years, Bangladesh still faces several human development challenges. Some of the challenges represent lingering challenges, like poverty; some deepening challenges, like climate change; and some emerging challenges like pandemics.

People are the real wealth of a nation. The fundamental objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy a long, healthy, and creative life. Human development is simply defined as a process of enlarging choices and creating opportunities for everyone. In the ultimate analysis, human development is the development of the people, development for the people, and development by the people. The human development framework has also introduced a composite index—the Human Development Index (HDI) for assessing achievements in basic dimensions of human development. It consists of three basic dimensions of human development—a long and healthy life, measured by life expectancy at birth; knowledge, measured by mean years of



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Aspire
INSPIRE LIVING

ASPIRE IS A
PREPAID CARD FOR STUDENTS

Use Local & International

POS, Online & ATM Transaction Facilities

5 Years Card Validity

EMV Chip Card

Discount Facility at Selected Merchant Points

Reloadable Prepaid Card

Loading from Any Dhaka Bank Branch

Fund Transfer Through EFTN/NPSB

BOGO Offer Available



16474

+৮৮০৯৬৭৮০৯৬৪৭৪

আইএসডি/ওভারসিজ কল-এর জন্য

www.dhakabankltd.com

DHAKABANK
LIMITED