



RED Update

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Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC

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Update on CFPR-TUP Research

Research on 'Gender Relations of TUP Women' initiated

This is an exploratory study that examines intra household gender relations of TUP women. The study is an analysis of the various components of gendered relations of TUP women and how they affect their level of socioeconomic empowerment within the households. This study uses qualitative methods to analyze how TUP programme participants in Domar, Nilphamari have been able to change their capacity to exercise greater voice and agency within the household. Some of the indicators used in this study are marital status, household structure, and types of assets the women received from the programme and what are the gendered impacts on women's agency.

Research on Microfinance for the 'Graduated' TUP Members

This study is being conducted to explore various questions of microfinance participation of the 'graduated' TUP members. Data will be collected through questionnaire survey on over 500 'graduated' TUP members, case studies of various types of 'graduated' TUP members, and group discussions with TUP micro-finance field staff. The draft report is expected to be completed by May 2005.

Village Level Public Health Provision and the Role of Local Elites

RED has been conducting a study on local elite's involvement in providing public health provision like water and sanitation. The study also aims to explore the underlying causes behind the support in providing water and sanitation

facility to the villagers specially the poor people of the community. To look at these issues, elite perception of disease and disease transmission, their understanding about the relationship between health and poverty, and their views about the role of local institutions will also be covered. The study is expected to be completed by May 2005.

Joint research with Economic Research Group on Development Programmes and Approaches for the Excluded Initiated

Objectives of the study are to:

- Develop an analytical framework to address broader issues surrounding 'exclusion';
- Operationalize the framework to profile organizations, programmes and approaches that specifically aim at reaching the excluded groups;
- Develop a *thana*/district level database and undertake geographical mapping of such programmes; and
- Identify a selected number of special programmes and undertake a comparative study.

Outputs of the study will be:

- An analytical directory that will map the various programmes and approaches currently being undertaken in Bangladesh for various excluded groups, especially the ultra poor. This is expected to be completed by August;
- A research report that provides a comparative analysis of some key programmes and approaches for the ultra poor. This is expected to be completed by February 2006.

This research partnership is funded by CIDA under the BRAC-AKFC Learning Partnership Project for CFPR/TUP.

Fifth Education Watch Report Launched

The Bangladesh Minister for Education Dr M Osman Farruk formally launched the fifth *Education Watch* report titled *Quality with equity: the primary education agenda* on 12 March 2005. This study attempted to answer three questions: a) Why a large portion of the children are deprived of quality primary education? b) Why the schools do not function better? and c) What can be done to ensure quality primary education for all children? Samir R Nath of RED and Manzoor Ahmed, Director of BRAC University Institute of Education and Development presented the main findings and policy recommendations. The sixth *Education Watch* has started recently. It will look into the internal efficiency of secondary education in Bangladesh.

'Building Social Capital for the Ultra Poor: Challenges and Achievements' Published

Assets provided to the TUP members might be vulnerable to theft and damage. To offset this potential problem, BRAC created local institutions of village elites called *Gram Shahayak Committees* (GSC) or Village Assistance Committees. The GSCs were designed to offer support, guidance and protection for the programme participants. This study found that though the mechanism has created new vertical linkages between the TUP members and the village elites, the relationships appear to reinforce traditional dependency interactions. This condition can be attributed to the lack of horizontal networks among the TUP members themselves, keeping this social capital from being truly effective.

Study on the Impact of Tobacco-related Illnesses Completed

RED and WHO jointly conducted a study on the impact of tobacco-related illnesses in Bangladesh. RED participated in different stages of the study like designing, data collection, analysis and report writing. Based on the study findings, the government recently enacted a law to restrict the use of tobacco in forms including smoking. The report was published as a WHO monograph, and was formally launched on 13 January 2005.

Study on HIV/AIDS Awareness Initiated

A study has been undertaken using participatory and qualitative research methods to look into the outcomes of the two different approaches used by BRAC that aim to equip the adolescents with HIV prevention information. The study will also explore the issues of comfort, embarrassment and credibility of these different approaches to find out the most effective methods of HIV/AIDS awareness raising according to the adolescents.

Medical Waste Management as Public Private Partnership

BRAC is actively involved in improving in-house hospital waste management. To work in a broader scale BRAC has initiated a discussion with Rajshahi City Corporation and different stake-holders in collaboration with Institution and Policy Support Unit, Ministry of Environment and Forest, government of Bangladesh.

Environment Guideline for BRAC Programmes

Environmental Research unit has initiated a study on 'Environmental assessment of BRAC development programme' to develop environmental guideline for BRAC programmes. The study is conducting programme revisit to assess how environmental component is incorporated and implemented to ensure environmental sustainability of BRAC programmes. At the end of this study an

environmental audit mechanism/tool and checklist for BRAC will be developed. This will be incorporated in programme specific training manual. Researchers of environmental evaluation as well as audit and monitoring department will use this guideline. The study is expected to be completed in June 2005.

Technical Workshop Organized

Sprinkles have been proven to be effective in combating iron deficiency anaemia among the young children globally. RED has been carrying out a series of population-based studies to popularize it in Bangladesh. Formative research on 'Development of effective social marketing, distribution and communication strategies for Sprinkles' is the third study in the series. Based on the preliminary results, draft outlines for social marketing, distribution and communication strategy were developed and shared in a technical workshop held in Dhaka in February 2005. Fifteen resource persons including social marketing research and communication experts and managers participated in the workshop. They have put forward suggestions towards development of Sprinkles social marketing and distribution protocol for Bangladesh.

Deworming Study Completed

RED has completed the study titled 'The effect of anthelmintic treatment on helminth infection and anaemia among the female workers of the Ayesha Abed Foundation in Bangladesh.' The objective of the study was to test the impact of anthelmintic treatment on the extent of change in the prevalence and intensity of intestinal parasite and on anthropometric, haemoglobin (Hb) and anaemia status. Study showed that three months interval albendazole treatment even in single dose is enough for infection control, which can raise the Hb level significantly. But, this level did not sustain after six months without any supplementation.

Conference/Symposium

Imran Matin gave a key note presentation titled 'Microfinance – a serious business opportunity: the BRAC story' at an international symposium on

'Microfinance: a business opportunity for the private sector.' The symposium, held in Zurich on 25 January 2005, was organized as one of the Pre-world Economic Forum Symposium by BHP Brugger and Partners Ltd.

He gave a presentation titled 'Social protection for the poorest: what works and what does not' at the inter-national conference on 'Social protection and chronic poverty' on 23 February 2005 at the University of Manchester, UK. The conference was organized by the Chronic Poverty Research Centre, UK.

He also presented a paper titled 'Delivering inclusive microfinance with a poverty focus: the experiences of BRAC' in a regional conference on 'Building inclusive financial sectors for development' organized by Asian Development Bank in Manila, Philippines on 14-16 March 2005.

Recent Publications

(Arranged alphabetically)

Journal article

Ahmed SM, Tomson G, Petzold M, Kabir ZN. Socioeconomic status overrides age and gender in determining health-seeking behaviour in rural Bangladesh. *Bull WHO* 2005;83:109-17.

Books and book chapters

Acharya A, *et al.* Impact of tobacco-related illnesses in Bangladesh. Dhaka: World Health Organization, 2005. x, 76p.

Ahmed M, *et al.* Quality with equity: the primary education agenda. Dhaka: Campaign for Popular Education, 2005. XLI, 203p. (Education Watch 2003/4)

Equity Watch paper

Ahmed SM, *et al.* Monitoring the status of health equity in Bangladesh: the BHEW survey 2002. Dhaka: Bangladesh Health Equity Watch, 2004. 30p. (Equity Watch Paper No. 3)

Newspaper articles

Abed FH. The promise must be kept. *The Daily Star*, 14 March 2005.

Ahmed M. Quality with equity: seven action priorities. *The Daily Star*, 14 March 2005.

Nath SR, *et al.* Provisions and quality: key findings. *The Daily Star*, 14 March 2005.

Nath SR. Nature of deprivation: key findings. *The Daily Star*, 14 March 2005.

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