



Bangladesh Development Research Center (BDRC)

2008 Research Report

This 2008 Research Report summarizes the main research activities of the Bangladesh Development Research Center Inc. (BDRC) between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008. The year 2008 constitutes the first full year the BDRC exists, following its incorporation on January 5, 2007. The research undertaken in 2008 follows the decision made at the first meeting of the Board of Directors on March 02, 2007, that the BDRC's research program is initially comprised of three topics: (1) Aid, Debt, and Development, (2) Climate Change, and (3) Bangladesh Development Strategies. In addition to these three [Research Topics](#), the BDRC has undertaken and improved a variety of [Projects](#) and [Tasks](#) that imply indirect research activities.

BDRC Research Topics

I.1. Aid, Debt, and Development

The BDRC's research on aid, debt and development started in summer 2007. Following the acceptance of a proposal in late December 2007, a research paper, entitled "Aid, Debt, and Development: Synergies or Contradictions in Bangladesh" was completed in the first two months of 2008 and then accepted for presentation at an International Conference on "Bangladesh in the 21st Century" at Harvard University (June 13-14, 2008). The paper was presented at the conference by Dr. Bernhard G. Gunter. Shortly before the conference, a related research paper focusing specifically on Bangladesh' debt sustainability was completed and published as the second paper in the BDRC's Bangladesh Development Research Working Paper Series (BDRWPS). On August 19, 2008, Dr. Gunter presented a revised version of the Harvard paper on "Aid, Debt, and Development: Synergies or Contradictions in Bangladesh" at the 38th Policy Dialogue of UNDP Bangladesh in Dhaka. The announcement of Dr. Gunter's presentation stayed on the main [homepage of UNDP Bangladesh](#) until the end of December 2008, when it got replaced by the announcement for the 39th Policy Dialogue. However, the presentation and executive summary of the paper remain available from UNDP's [Policy Dialogue-website](#). On August 26, 2008, *The Daily Star* (Bangladesh's most popular newspaper) published an article by Dr. Gunter as the second piece in a series of summaries of papers presented at the conference held at Harvard University in June 2008. The article remains available on the [Daily Star's website](#). In September 2008, the BDRC also launched a feature calling for [more aid and debt relief for Bangladesh](#), which continues to get much attention. On December 7, 2008, [Bangladesh has demanded debt relief](#) for the first time.

I.2. Climate Change

Research on climate change adaptation in Bangladesh constituted the BDRC's most time consuming research topic in 2008, building on some groundwork that had been done in 2007. First, following the presentation by Dr. A. F. M Ataur Rahman of a paper jointly written by Dr. Bernhard G. Gunter, Dr. Atiq Rahman, and Dr. A. F. M. Ataur Rahman at the Conference "Indigenous People and Bangladesh Environment" in Dhaka on

December 17-18, 2007, a revised version was published as the first paper within the BDRC's Bangladesh Development Research Working Paper Series (BDRWPS) in April 2008. A shorter version of that paper is scheduled to be published in a collection of conference papers in 2009.

Second, after many months of intense planning and fundraising, the BDRC's research on climate change adaptation took finally off with an International Workshop on "Conceptualizing Effective and Efficient Adaptation Policies to Climate Change in Bangladesh", which was held at the Rockefeller Foundation's Conference and Study Center in Bellagio, Italy, from May 20-22, 2008. The workshop was co-organized by the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS), the Bangladesh Development Research Center (BDRC), the International Institute on Environment and Development (IIED), and the Millennium Institute (MI). At the workshop, Dr. Bernhard G. Gunter made a presentation on "[The Bangladesh Climate Change Literature: Lessons & Gaps](#)". In June 2008, Dr. Gunter also authored together with two other workshop participants (Ms. Jessica Ayers and Dr. John D. Shilling) the [Proceedings of the Bellagio workshop](#).

Third, consistent with one of the suggestions of the workshop, the BDRC published jointly with Bangladesh's Climate Change Cell a comprehensive [Annotated Bibliography on Climate Change and Bangladesh](#), first in October 2008, and then an updated version in November 2008. The BDRC continues to work on the implementation of other workshop recommendations, especially the workshop's recommendation to apply the MI's Threshold 21 to allow the comprehensive modelling of climate change and their policy responses in Bangladesh.

I.3. Bangladesh Development Strategies

Continuing with the literature collection and communications on collaborations that began in 2007, the BDRC has identified various sub-themes within this broad research topic which are expected to bear results in 2009. For example, a research paper analyzing the substitution of wood with nonwood fibers for papermaking in Bangladesh is expected to be completed in early January 2009. Furthermore, various initiatives have been taken in 2008 that might allow the BDRC to undertake future research on the implications of

alternative development strategies on child labor. Various researchers have indicated their willingness to collaborate with the BDRC on this topic, but still require funding.

BDRC Projects

The BDRC has improved and enhanced all five projects that were initiated in 2007 (i.e., the [Bangladesh Development Bibliography](#), [Resources for Researchers](#), [Tracking Bangladesh's Ranking and Progress](#), [Bangladesh Development Researchers](#), and [News](#)).

II.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. The number of items in this bibliography has increased from about 7,000 in January 2008 to over 10,000 at the end of December 2008. The bibliography is updated regularly, at least every four weeks. Indeed, it was updated 21 times in 2008. In addition to updating the bibliography, information has been added on how to find Bangladesh-related development literature before 2000. This includes (a) a list created by the BDRC with publications details of [916 items related to Bangladesh from 1973-2008 \(pdf\)](#) based on the [IDEAS/RePEc database](#), and (b) the link to a list of publications of [RePEc-registered Bangladesh-related economists](#), whereby the BDRC has identified these 150 economists.

II.2. Resources for Researchers

“Resources for Researchers” was the BDRC's first project, aimed at providing useful internet resources on Bangladesh, mostly targeted at the international development community and development economists. At the end of 2007, these “Resources for Researchers” provided the following four lists:

- 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.

In addition to improving and enhancing these four lists (for example, the list with links to [data sources](#) includes now also non-official data sources), the following two lists have been added to these “[Resources for Researchers](#)” during 2008:

- a list of resources related to [universities in Bangladesh](#), and
- a list of / links to [forthcoming and past conferences / fairs](#).

The scope of these internet resources have grown and improved so much during 2008 that all kind of researchers, policymakers, and even the general public interested in Bangladesh make frequently use of these free online resources.

II.3. [Tracking Bangladesh’s Ranking and Progress](#)

This project, which at the end of 2007 tracked (a) Bangladesh’s ranking and progress with regards to 12 indices for which more than one observation is available and (b) Bangladesh’s ranking with regards to 7 indices for which only one observation is available, has not only been updated throughout 2008 (as new information became available), but also been enhanced in its coverage by providing a graph with Bangladesh’s record for each indicator since 2000 and by adding the following international indices:

- Child Development Index (Bangladesh ranked for 1990-94, 95-99, and 2000-06)
- Environmental Performance/Sustainability Index (which exists for 2005 and 2008)
- the 20 indicators used by the World Bank to create its Country Policy and Institutional Assessments (CPIA) index, and
- six governance indicators from 1996-2007, provided by the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) research project covering currently 1996-2007.

II.4. [Bangladesh Development Researchers](#)

This project, which had been added to the BDRC website on December 30, 2007, has been improved and enhanced considerably during 2008, containing now the following seven lists:

- [Top International Awards](#) received by Bangladeshi Development Researchers/Organizations;
- [Most Popular Bangladeshi Development Researchers](#);

- [Top Bangladesh Development Researchers](#) (based on SSRN downloads)
- [Top 25 Bangladesh Development Researchers of the Millennium](#) [defined as persons who have (co-)authored and/or (co-)edited at least 25 studies/reports within this Millennium]
- [Other Major Bangladesh Development Researchers of the Millennium](#) [defined as persons who have (co-) authored and/or (co-)edited at least 10 (though less than 25) studies/reports within this Millennium]
- [RePEc-registered Bangladesh-related Economists](#) [which provides a list of about 150 economists who (a) are registered with the RePEc Author Service and (b) have published items specifically on Bangladesh (as listed in RePEc); and
- [All Bangladesh-related economists with publications listed in RePEc \(pdf\)](#) [This is a list (compiled by the BDRC) of all Bangladesh-related Economists (those who are registered as well as those who are not registered with the RePEc Author Service) based on Bangladesh-related publications as listed in IDEAS/RePEc database (as of October 13, 2008).]

II. 5. [News](#)

The content within this BDRC project contains the following four lists or links, which have been improved and enhanced during 2008:

- [Latest BDRC news/changes/additions](#)
- [Developmental Newsletters](#) (as of end 2008, this list contains information/links to 32 newsletters)
- [Some daily Bangladeshi newspapers](#)
- [Some Bangladeshi news websites](#)

BDRC Tasks

Tasks are some combination of BDRC research and BDRC projects. Tasks were officially initiated on November 17, 2008, when the BDRC decided (in recognition of Universal Children’s Day) to provide some information on [Children of Bangladesh](#), though some parts of BDRC tasks had been created previously in other sections of the BDRC website.

III.1. [Bangladesh Development Research Working Paper Series \(BDRWPS\)](#)

In March 2008, the BDRC launched a new Working Paper Series, entitled “Bangladesh Development Research Working Paper Series (BDRWPS)”. The BDRWPS has been initiated to present the findings of work in progress to encourage the exchange of ideas

about development issues in Bangladesh. The main objective is to disseminate findings and ideas quickly, compromising to some degree on quality. The papers are signed by the author(s) and should be cited and referred accordingly. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this paper are entirely those of the author(s). They do not necessarily represent the view of the BDRC. The invitation to submit manuscripts for publication in the BDRWPS is offered to all professionals as long as the topic is relevant to Bangladesh's development and the manuscript's quality measures up to the standard of the BDRWPS. Copyrights of the contents of the work submitted remain with the author(s) and/or the institution(s) submitting the work. Working Papers published within the BDRWPS are also listed/published at [RePEc \(Research Papers in Economics\)](#) and [Social Science Research Network \(SSRN\)](#). In 2008, the BDRC published the following three working papers within the BDRWPS:

- BDRWPS No. 1 (April 2008): "How Vulnerable are Bangladesh's Indigenous People to Climate Change?", by Bernhard G. Gunter, Atiq Rahman, and A. F. M. Aatur Rahman
- BDRWPS No. 2 (June 2008): "Analyzing Bangladesh's Debt Sustainability Using SimSIP Debt", by Bernhard G. Gunter and A. F. M. Aatur Rahman
- BDRWPS No. 3 (December 2008): "Mineral Extraction in Bangladesh: Some Fundamental Reform Suggestions", by Bernhard G. Gunter

Please see [Bangladesh Development Research Working Paper Series \(BDRWPS\)](#) for further details.

III.2. Children of Bangladesh

The task on Children of Bangladesh constitutes the BDRC's contribution to the Universal Children's Day (20th November 2008), providing some [general information](#), [ten facts](#) on children in Bangladesh, information on [child labor](#) in Bangladesh, a list of some [organizations that help children in Bangladesh](#), and a list of [literature on children in Bangladesh](#); most of them presented in a website-style reflecting Universal Children's Day.

III.3. Jute - Golden Fiber

Recognizing that the United Nations' FAO declared 2009 as the International Year of Natural Fibers, the BDRC created on December 30, 2008 a new task on "Jute - Golden

Fiber of the Past, also in the Future?’. This task provides [some general information on jute](#), [some economic aspects of jute](#), [some of the world’s major jute institutes/organizations](#), and [some major jute events](#).

III.4. [Publications of the Moment](#)

Recognizing some international days and events, the BDRC provided various lists with new publications related to the day/event and Bangladesh. These lists of publications were created before the day/event and are not updated. In 2008, the BDRC recognized and provided lists of publications for the following days/events:

- January 28: Congratulating Dr. Atiq Rahman for having been awarded Champions of the Earth 2008
- February 21: International Mother Language Day/ Bangladeshi Language Martyrs’ Day
- March 8: International Women's Day
- April 7: World Health Day
- June 26: International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
- Sept. 8: International Literacy Day
- October 16: World Food Day
- October 17: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- Nov. 14: World Diabetes Day
- Nov. 20: Universal Children's Day
- Nov. 25: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
- Dec. 1: World AIDS Day
- Dec. 10: Human Rights Day

Please see [Publications of the Moment](#) for further details.

III.5. [Hot Issues / Features](#)

On December 19, 2008, the BDRC created a task on [Hot Issues / Features](#) that allows the BDRC to highlight some important events and/or developments, which are considered to be of interest to the development community of Bangladesh. The following features were among the first few provided by the BDRC (please see [Hot Topics / Features](#) for further details):

- World Economic Crisis: Impact on Bangladesh
- World Bank publishes a new poverty assessment for Bangladesh
- Bangladesh made huge progress in child development
- Bangladesh demands debt relief for the first time

Annex: Chronological List of Major BDRC Work/Events of 2008

(excluding the 21 updates made in the Bangladesh Development Bibliography made in 2008)

- 01/03/08: Reorganized many BDRC websites
- 01/12/08: BDRC is formally recognized to be tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States of America
- 01/28/08: Added List with Links of Forthcoming Conferences (which now implies a list of [past and forthcoming conferences and fairs](#))
- 03/02/08: Revised and improved information on [Bangladesh Development Researchers](#)
- 03/04/08: BDRC adopts new logo (created by Fatima Gunter-Rahman) [displayed on the first page of this research report]
- 03/09/08: Launched [Bangladesh Development Research Working Paper Series \(BDRWPS\)](#)
- 04/05/08: Third Regular Meeting of the BDRC's Board of Directors
- 04/29/08: Revised and updated most of the BDRC's websites
- 05/22/08: Posted Presentations made on the first day of the International Planning Workshop on [Effective and Efficient Adaptation Policies on Climate Change in Bangladesh](#)
- 06/12/08: Posted Second Paper within [BDRWPS](#)
- 06/14/08: Presented paper at the conference on “[Bangladesh in the 21st Century](#)” at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
- 07/08/08: Added "Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), 1996-2007" for Bangladesh to the BDRC's Project on [Bangladesh's Ranking and Progress](#)
- 07/11/08: Updated and Revised the List of the [Top Millennium Researchers](#)
- 07/17/08: Added information (including links) to various non-official [Data Sources](#)
- 08/31/08: Updated information for the BDRC's research project on [Aid and Debt](#)
- Sept. 12, 17, and 25, 2008: Updated information for [Bangladesh's Ranking and Progress](#)
- 09/26/08: The BDRC's [Bangladesh Development Research Working Paper Series \(BDRWPS\)](#) has recently been added to some of the professional networks,

especially: RePEc (Research Papers in Economics) and Social Science Research Network (SSRN)

- 10/6/08: Added [CPIA Scores, Rankings, and Progress](#) (pdf) to the BDRC's Project on [Bangladesh's Ranking and Progress](#)
- 10/06/08: Added website with resources on [Universities in Bangladesh](#)
- 10/10/08: Provided [Suggestions for Bangladesh Development Literature before 2000](#), including [RePEc-List of Bangladesh-related Publications, 1973-2008](#) (pdf)
- 10/10/08: Provided list of recent [publications specifically relevant for food security in Bangladesh](#) (prepared for World Food Day, October 16, 2008)
- 10/16/08: Added two lists to the BDRC's project on [Bangladesh Development Researchers](#)
- 10/18/08: Updated and increased data coverage for [Bangladesh's Ranking and Progress](#)
- 10/27/08: Published (jointly with Bangladesh's Climate Change Cell) a comprehensive [Annotated Bibliography on Climate Change and Bangladesh](#) (pdf)
- 11/01/08: **Fourth Regular Meeting of the BDRC's Board of Directors**
- 11/06/08: Updated [RePEc-List of Bangladesh-related Publications, 1973-2008](#) (pdf)
- 11/08/08: Reorganized information on [Publications of the Moment](#)
- 11/17/08: Created task on [Children of Bangladesh](#)
- 11/27/08: Published (jointly with Bangladesh's Climate Change Cell) an updated [Annotated Bibliography on Climate Change and Bangladesh](#) (pdf)
- 12/08/08: Posted Third Paper within [BDRWPS](#)
- 12/19/08: Created new task on [hot issues / features](#)
- 12/30/08: Created new task on [Jute - Golden Fiber of the Past, also in the Future?](#)