
**CMI and Bangladesh:
40 years of
collaboration and
institutional capacity
building**

**Armino Miranda and Ole David
Koht Norbye**

R 1997: 7

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Summary

The report reviews CMI's experience of technical assistance and institutional collaboration in Bangladesh, from the involvement of individual staff members working as experts in Pakistan in the late 1950s to the formal institutional cooperation agreements between CMI and the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) since the late 1970s and until recently. The three BIDS-CMI cooperation agreements are examined in detail through their various stages of design, negotiation and implementation, providing a vivid illustration of the issues involved in institutional capacity building through research cooperation.

Armindo Miranda, Senior Research Fellow at CMI, has been active in BIDS-CMI collaboration since his stay as a visiting scholar at BIDS in 1977-78, working on population issues in Bangladesh; more recently he coordinated the BIDS-CMI collaboration agreements for CMI.

Ole David Koht Norbye, Senior Consultant at CMI, carried out numerous assignments in Bangladesh throughout his career, including a long-term period of residence in Dhaka as adviser to the World Bank sponsored Trade and Industry Policy Reform Programme (TIP). He has also written extensively about the history of CMI and its Development Research and Action Programme (DERAP).

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Acronyms

BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute for Development Studies
BIWTA	Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority
CMI	Chr. Michelsen Institute
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DERAP	Originally: Development Economics Research and Advisory Project; as from 1976: Development Research and Action Programme
DTW	Deep Tube Wells
EADI	European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes
FAFO	Institute for Applied Social Science, Oslo
FPCO	Flood Plan Coordination Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
ICDDR,B	International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISS	Institute of Social Studies, The Hague
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department, Bangladesh
MDC	Norwegian Ministry of Development Cooperation
MFA	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOSTI	Manually Operated Shallow Tubewell Irrigation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for International Development
NUPI	Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Cooperation, Paris
OIDC	Oil Importing Developing Countries
PIDE	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics
RESP	Rural Employment Sector Programme, Bangladesh
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
TA	Technical Assistance
TIP	Trade and Industry Policy Reform Programme, Bangladesh
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

The present report is an account of CMI's research and technical assistance engagement in Bangladesh and it consists of two studies: the first one, by Ole David Koht Norbye, is a broad brushed historical panorama of the collaboration with Bangladesh, including a fairly complete review of the research output; the second study, by Armindo Miranda, describes in painstaking detail the operation of the collaborative agreements between CMI and the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, which in later years has been the main vehicle for CMI's research collaboration with Bangladesh. The studies were written by different authors and for different purposes and they may be read independently from each other. But it was felt that the reader who could tolerate a little repetition here and there would benefit from taking in both perspectives.

In the 1950's, there was little reason to think that CMI would emerge as the Norwegian centre for competence on socio-economic and demographic issues in this part of South Asia. In the absence of a colonial tradition, there was also little interest in Norway in matters of overseas development economics and even less opportunity to take on advisory roles. CMI, however - true to its statutory mandate to pursue new and neglected fields of enquiry - succeeded in attracting a bright economist, Just Faaland, who was created Member of the Chr. Michelsen Institute in 1952 at the young age of 30, with international economics as field of activity. As Norbye reports, fortuitous circumstances led Faaland in 1957 to a long-term assignment in the then undivided Pakistan as member of the Harvard Advisory Group to the Planning Commission. He visited East Pakistan, and made numerous contacts with Bengali government officials and academics, contacts that have been maintained until present days. In Pakistan he was later joined or succeeded by Norwegian former colleagues who later joined the Chr. Michelsen Institute, viz. Ole David Koht Norbye and Per Tveite who in turn made additional contacts in East Pakistan: a critical mass of professional interest, competence and contacts was gradually emerging.

While Faaland still was in Pakistan, he developed the idea of establishing a research and advisory project on developing countries at the Chr. Michelsen Institute. This led to the Development Research Project in 1961 and in 1965 to the establishment of DERAP, the Development Economics Research and Advisory Project.¹ financial means to DERAP's activities. Not long after DERAP had been established, its budget included a provision for guest researchers, mostly from developing countries, and many prominent professionals from Bangladesh spent long periods as visiting scholars at Chr. Michelsen Institute. Shortly after Bangladesh became independent in 1971, Just Faaland once more worked in Bangladesh, as Resident Representative of the World Bank from 1972 to 1974. The scope for cooperation between scholars from Bangladesh and the Institute was widened considerably when an agreement, financed by the Norwegian government through NORAD, was concluded with Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) in 1978. With prolongations this agreement was in operation until the end of 1996, and until the 1990s was the only agreement of its kind between the Institute and an institute in developing countries. Also outside the

¹ Renamed Development Research and Action Programme in 1976.

framework of the BIDS-CMI cooperation agreement many members of the Institute's staff have undertaken research or been engaged in various advisory roles in Bangladesh. All these factors explain the particular relationship that has existed between Bangladesh and the Chr. Michelsen Institute for four decades, evolving from the professional interest of one individual to a sustained framework of institutionalised commitment .

Much of what has been achieved overall was made possible (or at least greatly facilitated) by the formal collaboration agreements between BIDS and CMI - the first of their kind for Norway and thus a form of development cooperation pioneered by CMI. Miranda's study, in the second part of this report, is an analytical review of the processes involved, their results and their costs. The inescapable conclusion is that the amount of administrative effort mobilised for the approval and operation of such formal cooperation agreements may be severely out of proportion with the substantive outcomes achieved. Yet - is there any better way? While the report concludes with a call for continued collaboration, it nevertheless urges BIDS, CMI and the Norwegian authorities to work out imaginative answers to that question.

Part I

General professional cooperation between CMI and Bangladesh

by Ole David Koht Norbye

Chapter 1: Overview of the history

1.1 The beginning

The circumstances of CMI's initial interest in Bangladesh were to some extent fortuitous and linked to the person of Just Faaland. Before being called to Chr. Michelsen Institute as Member in 1952, Faaland had worked in the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) in Paris for some years, and had there started to establish contacts with other people working in the field of international economics. In 1957, in a seminar in the USA, he was approached by professor Edward S. Mason from Harvard University who had established Harvard Advisory Groups in Iran and Pakistan, both financed by the time by the Ford Foundation. Faaland was invited to join the group of advisers in the Planning Commission in Karachi, initially focusing on industry, later on macroeconomics, for a two year period. Faaland accepted the invitation, and sailed with his family to Karachi in December 1957.

Pakistan had a kind of federal structure in which some authority rested with the provincial administrations in Dacca in East Pakistan and Lahore in West Pakistan. There were two Harvard Advisory Group advisers stationed in each of the provincial capitals, but all the advisers in Karachi travelled with short intervals to the provinces. Thus early in 1958 Faaland went to the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta for the first time. In undivided India both East and West Pakistan had been predominantly rural areas with almost no manufacturing industries: raw cotton from the west was turned into yarn and cloth in what later became India, and jute from the east processed in Calcutta. East Pakistan's economy, and particularly important, its transport structure were utterly dependent on West Bengal; Dacca was a small provincial town and Chittagong a local port. In the wake of the partition of India millions of Hindus fled to India, and millions of Muslims fled to the two "wings" of the new country. Among these there were many experienced military officers, civil servants and business men, and most of them ended up in West Pakistan. From the very outset the development opportunities became much weaker in the east than in the west. Faaland quickly realised that more public financed efforts were needed in East Pakistan than in the other "wing" in order to avoid that the gap in income per capita should widen further.

In his contacts with the management of the Harvard Advisory Group Faaland managed to get two of his former colleagues in OEEC to Karachi in 1959, Ole David Koht Norbye who two years later joined him in CMI, and the British economist Jack Parkinson who has also remained a close collaborator of Faaland and the CMI until these days. Norbye remembers very well that he had not been in Karachi very long before Faaland travelled with him to visit the two provinces. It was also Faaland who

recommended a third former colleague from OEEC, Per Tveite, to Harvard. Faaland was in Pakistan for two years in 1958-59; Norbye for more than two years in 1959-61; Parkinson was there in 1959-61 as well and Tveite stayed for 1 1/2 years in 1964-65, and for the last 12 months he was stationed in East Pakistan. Tveite joined DERAP when he returned to Norway.

Faaland became general economic adviser after one year when Norbye took over as industry adviser, but all members of the Harvard team worked closely together and expressed their views on general planning and economic policy issues. The older generation of academics, government officials and politicians in Bangladesh have many times in strong terms blamed the Harvard Group for the misfortune of their country. It is true that the general economists who through practical work became "development economists" looked at economic growth as a necessary condition for broader economic and social development, and already at that time were critical of the ability of government to run business on their own. They did advocate a larger role for private business less constrained by administrative interventions by the authorities. For East Pakistan this meant increasing ownership of banking, manufacturing etc. by enterprises located in West Pakistan. However, the Harvard Group did not consist of hard boiled economists only; the management was fully aware of the complexity of the situation and already in the late 1950s there was a sociologist as member of the group.

A planning organisation is not an executive agency but should be a kind of "think-tank". Analytical tools had to be used to determine the feasible rate and structure of growth inside an economic or social sector and the inter-sectoral relationships. At that stage the Planning Commission had very few, though in some cases brilliant, staff members who were able to undertake such analysis, and much of the advisers' time went into analysis. Norbye who had worked with national accounts both in Norway and in OEEC, became interested in the level and rate of growth of the regional incomes in the two provinces, and he circulated a paper in which he demonstrated that the regional income per capita in East Pakistan was lower than in West Pakistan and that the gap was increasing. Many years later, in Islamabad a top Pakistan official who had been senior staff member in the Planning Commission, told Norbye that the Chairman had been furious, and ordered that all copies of the paper should be destroyed. This illustrates how the potential conflict between the two wings was envisaged already in the late 1950s. Economists from East Pakistan also worked with this material which *inter alia* also showed that the value of East Pakistan's exports to foreign countries was considerably larger than exports from the west, and was also lower than the value of imports from foreign countries to the province. It should be added that there also were more aid financed activities in the west than in the east.

In 1958 East Pakistan had a provincial Planning Board which included M.V. Huda, A.F.A. Husain and A. Razzack as members and Mosharaff Hossain as chief economist. Huda was professor of economics and an interesting and controversial personality who became Governor General of East Pakistan shortly before the independence of Bangladesh, and later, in 1981, he assumed the office of Vice President. Razzack visited DERAP in 1979 and gave a seminar there, whereas the two others later spent long periods as visiting scholars at the Institute. At the university in Dacca Faaland met Nurul Islam and Rehman Sobhan. Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) was established, also with Ford Foundation support, in 1957, and Nurul Islam became its director in the beginning of the 1960s when Faaland had become a member

of its international advisory board. Thus he maintained contacts with Islam and other colleagues in Karachi and Dacca. In 1967-68 the late Gunnar Fløystad, then research fellow at DERAP, spent 14 months as research fellow at PIDE in Karachi. At the end of the 1960s the central government of Pakistan tried to mollify the opinion in East Pakistan by moving some federal institutions to the east, including the national assembly. PIDE was relocated to Dhaka in 1971 and could continue its work as BIDS after independence.

After Independence in December 1971, the Government of Bangladesh, at the initiative of Islam, Sobhan and Hossain, and the World Bank urged Faaland to be the "midwife" of Bangladesh's membership of the Bretton Woods institutions, and he became the Resident Representative of the World Bank from 1972 to 1974. Radical, socialist forces had strong influence on the Bangladesh government and wanted The People's Republic of Bangladesh to become a genuinely non-aligned country not dependent on Western, capitalist countries for aid and trade. Hence the initial relationship between Bangladesh and IMF and the World Bank was delicate. During his World Bank assignment Faaland worked closely with Islam, Sobhan and Hossain who were respectively Deputy Chairman and members of the Planning Commission, and established close contact with many politicians (including the then Foreign Minister Kamal Hossain), civil servants and academics, including younger ones with whom CMI has cooperated in recent years.

From the late 1960s DERAP's budget included an annual item of 24 working months reserved for external visiting fellows, mostly from developing countries. Already in 1973 professor A.F.A. Husain, in the late 1950s member of the East Pakistan Planning Board, spent some months as guest researcher at DERAP, working on educational planning; he came back for a second time in 1977-78.² In August 1975 the Awami League regime was overthrown in a military coup and the head of state Sheik Mujibur Rahman and other prominent members of Awami League killed. Others left the country, amongst them Kamal Hossain, Mosharaff Hossain, Nurul Islam and Rehman Sobhan. They were welcomed by colleges at Oxford University, and were all visiting scholars at DERAP for longer and shorter periods in the second half of the 1970s. This resulted in several important publications. Thus Rehman Sobhan and professor Muzaffar Ahmed (the latter had been chief in charge of industries in the Planning Commission when Sobhan was member), finalised their major book on public enterprises in Bergen. In the second half of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s DERAP hosted a number of other guest researchers from Bangladesh: Abu Abdullah, B.K. Jahangir, Rounaq Jahan, Barkat-e-Khuda and Raihan Sharif, (the latter had been a colleague of Faaland, Norbye and Tveite in the Pakistan Planning Commission in the period 1958 to 65). Several of these visiting scholars were not economists, and as from the middle of the 1970s DERAP's own staff was expanded to include non-economists. The two first ones were Eirik G. Jansen, anthropologist, in 1975 and Armindo Miranda, demographer, in 1976, who both did their most important academic research efforts in Bangladesh.

² Details about the visiting scholars' research efforts are found in subsection 2.1 in chapter 2.

1.2 The BIDS-CMI Cooperation Agreements

The intensification of ad hoc contacts between BIDS and CMI around the mid-70s mutual prompted the leadership of both institutes to seek an appropriate institutional framework for their collaboration. To that end, a "Memorandum of Understanding on Collaboration" between the two institutions was drawn up in July 1977 and approved by NORAD the following year; from then on - particularly after 1980 and until the mid-1990s - the collaboration between BIDS and CMI became the main (although by no means exclusive) vehicle for professional collaboration with Bangladesh. The activities undertaken under the three successive BIDS-CMI cooperation agreements are reviewed in detail in Section II of the present study.

1.3 Research by DERAP scholars in Bangladesh

Only five DERAP research fellows (and one research assistant) have spent considerable time in Bangladesh to undertake research: Tone Bleie, Gunnar Håland, Eirik Jansen, Armindo Miranda and Arne Wiig. With the exception of Bleie, some of their research was financed under the BIDS/CMI agreement. In the case of four of them: Bleie, Jansen, Miranda and Wiig, their work on material from Bangladesh qualified them for the Ph.D. degree. Håland never finished his research project as he left DERAP in 1988 to become full professor in anthropology at the University of Bergen. The research output is described in chapter 2.

Several other CMI staff members or associate research fellows have written articles, essays or books on the basis of experience from non-research assignments in Bangladesh. When Just Faaland was the World Bank's Resident Representative, his former colleague from OEEC and Karachi, Jack Parkinson was the chief economist in the Mission. Together they produced two books, of which one specifically on Bangladesh, and several articles and essays analysing their experience from Bangladesh. Faaland also produced other publications by himself, and one with Mosharaff Hossain. Eirik Jansen wrote several articles based on his experiences in different assignments in Bangladesh, and he and Jerve produced both a book and articles based on the large country boat study they had worked on. During his first years at CMI in the first half of the 1960s Norbye wrote a large analytical monograph on the development prospects of Pakistan which also was based on separate studies of the economy of East Pakistan. He also wrote some essays and articles based on material from some of the eight different assignments he had in Bangladesh between 1983 and 1994. Skutle and Tveite produced a number of papers after their return from two year assignments in Dhaka around 1980. The output of all this research is dealt with in chapter 2 below.

1.4 Advisory and consultancy work by CMI researchers in Bangladesh

Present and former CMI staff members and people who have been closely associated with DERAP and CMI have spent far more time on a great variety of assignments in or on Bangladesh than CMI researchers have spent on research there and back in Bergen on material from Bangladesh. Before the partition of Pakistan, at the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s, Faaland spent two years, Norbye more than two years and Tveite one and a half year in Pakistan, with the then East Pakistan as part of their field of work; Tveite, in fact, spent the last year in East Pakistan. They worked in the federal

Planning Commission or the East Pakistan Planning unit. Then there was a gap until 1972 when Faaland began a 2-year period in the newly independent Bangladesh, with Parkinson, later associate research fellow in DERAP as a colleague most of the time in the World Bank. Selsjord and Skutle paid a short working visit to Bangladesh in 1972; Selsjord accompanied Bjerve, who had become a member of DERAP's advisory Board, on another mission to Bangladesh in 1973, and in 1974-76 Selsjord spent 2 years as adviser to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics; to build up statistics in Bangladesh was the purpose of all these assignments. In 1979-81 Skutle and Tveite spent two years with the Planning Commission in Dhaka.

The first large assignment for which CMI had the responsibility was the Norwegian/Dutch financed study of the country boat sector on which both Jansen and Jerve worked for several years during the period 1982-84, of which 9 months on field work in Bangladesh. The Danish integrated rural development project in Noakhali was evaluated by DERAP in 1983, with associate research fellows Parkinson and Mosharaff Hossain and Håland and Norbye as members and in the summer 1983 Norbye started a two year assignment in the Planning Commission. In 1984-85 Jansen worked on a report on trends in rural poverty in Bangladesh prepared by the North-South Institute in Canada, in 1985 he evaluated DANIDA's assistance to the transport sector. Norbye and Jansen evaluated Norwegian commodity aid to Bangladesh in 1985, and the following year, Norbye, Jansen, Miranda and visiting scholar Arn undertook the Bangladesh country study for the Norwegian Ministry of Development Cooperation. Jansen spent two months in Bangladesh in 1986 on a follow-up study of the river transport programme before he in 1987 became Deputy Resident Representative, development cooperation, in the Norwegian Embassy in Dhaka, and subsequently left DERAP to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo. In 1987-89 Faaland was Review Director of the Agriculture Sector Review sponsored by UNDP, and Norbye core member of the team. and during that period Faaland went to Bangladesh more than a half a dozen times and Norbye thrice. In 1989 Miranda was in Bangladesh to make proposals on the Dutch family planning programme, and Norbye headed a team that made a case study of Bangladesh for the Nordic UN Project. Norbye was back in Bangladesh again in 1992, to evaluate the technical assistance component of the NORAD/SIDA financed RESP. Later in the same year Jerve was there to review the impact of the land acquisition for the Jamuna Bridge project, and in June 1993 Jerve joined the World Bank for 2 years during which most of his work focused on Bangladesh. Finally in 1994 Norbye was in Bangladesh for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to study the different donors' experiences with development aid to Bangladesh. Faaland was again in Bangladesh in 1995 to review the so-called Flood Action Plan for UNDP. In 1995 also Ask and Wiig were in Bangladesh to study certain aspects of Grameen Bank's operations. A number of these assignments have resulted in written material available in the names of the authors, and a survey of these is found in chapter 2.3. But it should be remembered that during long time assignments as advisers, much analytical work is done in the form of unpublished papers, and even if some of them eventually are included in documents published or made available by the host organisation, the author's name is not known.

Chapter 2: The research output

2.1 Work by guest researchers from Bangladesh

Abu Abdullah was visiting scholar at CMI for about a year during 1977 and 1978, viz. before the CMI-BIDS cooperation agreement. He returned to Bangladesh as Senior Research Economist at BIDS. His work at CMI resulted in two large studies which were published as DERAP working papers. The first one: *Modes of Production and Agrarian Structure: An Exploratory Analysis* (Abu Abdullah 78)³, is a theoretical analysis of agrarian structure with particular emphasis on the Marxian concept of mode of production which according to this approach, determines the entire political and social structure of a country. Abdullah does not arrive at any firm conclusions as to the existence of a peasant mode of production. His second study, *Landlord and Rich Peasant under the Permanent Settlement* (Abu Ahmed Abdullah 80), is a historical analysis of the Permanent Settlement, the British land policy introduced in Bengal in 1793. He reaches the conclusion "that the Permanent Settlement of 1793 did not have the profound and far-reaching impact on the structure of rural economy and society that it is some times assumed to have had. I suggest that more important was the emergence of a rich peasant class, recruited partly, perhaps mainly, from the rich peasants and partly from the more enterprising zamindars and tenureholders."

Muzaffar Ahmad, professor of economics and business administration at Dhaka University, was Chief of the industry division of the Planning Commission until the Awami League government was overturned in 1975. He was visiting scholar at CMI in 1976 when he worked together with Rehman Sobhan on their large study of the nationalised enterprises in Bangladesh, which was published by BIDS in 1980 (Sobhan and Ahmad 80). This large book is not listed as an outcome of the work of visiting scholars at CMI, but much of it was indeed written at the CMI, and commented upon by the Institute's staff.⁴

Barkat-e-Khuda, then associate professor at Dhaka University, spent two periods at CMI: 2 months in 1980 and 1 1/2 month in 1981, and was a prolific writer. His short periods in Bergen resulted in no less than 5 papers, of which 3 were issued as DERAP publications, and two as working papers. His paper *Unemployment and Underemployment in Rural Bangladesh: Levels and Differentials* (Barkat-e-Khuda 80), is a critical review of some of the past findings on underemployment in rural Bangladesh, and presents findings from a Bangladesh village, based on time-budget data. He concludes "that surplus labour exists in rural Bangladesh, and that, too, of a sizeable order.....even during the busy season." The second publication, *Time Allocation among People in Rural Bangladesh* (Barkat-e-Khuda 80a), is based on the

³ See list of references, p. 89.

⁴ Pages xvii-xviii of the Preface and Acknowledgements contain the following: "The authors would like to thank the Christian Michelsen Institute in Bergen, Norway for hosting them in the final stages of this project when the study was written up. The total cooperation and the stimulating environment of the Institute made it possible for the study to move to its fruition and can never be adequately appreciated.

The Director of the Institute, Dr. Just Faaland, apart from providing full institutional support, along with Professor J.B. Parkinson of Nottingham University, took great pains in going through the massive first draft and made detailed comments which were of great value to the authors in editing the final draft."

same survey and is an attempt to show how people in rural Bangladesh allocate time among various activities. His conclusion is that "the functional distribution of persons in the labour force and those who are "dependants" on the basis of the census approach does not make much sense in the context of rural agrarian societies.....the difference in the number of hours worked between those reported as "working" (and, hence, in the labour force) and those reported as "dependants" is not so sharp as to permit such a distinction. Such a functional distribution, meaningful as it is in the context of the developed countries, is not very relevant in rural agrarian societies, where it, in fact, leads to misleading conclusions on the extent of the dependency burden." The third publication is *Ideals and Realities in Participatory Institution in Rural Bangladesh: the Case of Gram Sarkar* (Barkat-e-Khuda 81a). Self-Reliant Village Government (in Bengali: *Swarniwar Gram Sarkar*) was introduced by President Ziaur Rahman's government in 1980. The author attempted to examine "how far the ideal behind the creation of the Gram Sarkar in Bangladesh corresponds to reality. The paper shows that the gram sarkars in the study area are controlled and managed by a handful of persons belonging to relatively affluent households. Most of these are quite old and belong to dominant social groups in the village.over time no significant change in leadership patterns has emerged." The first of the working papers, *Nuptiality in Bangladesh* (Barkat-e-Khuda 81), is a demographic study and examines marriage customs and patterns in rural Bangladesh, based on data from a Bangladesh village and various published material. "Marriage is almost universal. Age at marriage remains low, though slowly rising. At any age the proportion of females whose marriages are dissolved are higher than that of males, and the prevalence of widowhood is higher than that of divorce. Most people support the remarriage of women only under special circumstances." The second working paper, *Family Planning in Rural Bangladesh* (Barkat-e-Khuda 81b) describes the government family planning programme and examines knowledge of, attitude towards, and practice of family planning in rural Bangladesh based on data from a Bangladesh village and various published material. "The knowledge of family planning is quite widespread in rural Bangladesh and it has been increasing over time. A large number of people also have positive attitude towards family planning. Yet, the rate of contraception remains at a low level in most parts of the country. (The) higher participation rates (in the village studied) are due to its higher level of development."

Abdul Ghafur, then Research Director in charge of general economics at BIDS, spent 6 months as visiting scholar in CMI in 1988-89 under the BIDS-CMI research collaboration agreement. During this period he worked on a paper *on Food policy of Bangladesh and some constraints*, which was presented to the seminar organised jointly by CMI and BIDS in Bergen February 1989. A somewhat condensed version was published in the report on the seminar (Ghafur 90). It contains a thorough description of developments in agricultural production, and particularly of the food management system in Bangladesh and its implications for the central government budget. The food policy had two sides: to ensure that there was enough food available at prices which poor consumers could afford to pay; and to encourage increased domestic output of food. At that time more than half of the households did not have income enough to meet the minimum food requirements (in terms of calories). The centre piece of food policy was the Public Food Distribution System which operates through different channels (food for work, subsidised rations, price interventions). The author found that the system in part benefited relatively well-to-do people more than

