

## FROM THE EDITOR

I would like to begin by noting that BDI, the initiator of this journal, is beginning to break new ground and forge new partnerships, encouraged by the role of the Journal of Bangladesh Studies in bringing together scholars, researchers, policy makers, retired government servants, and many ardent readers over the past seven years. Thus, the executive committee of BDI and the editorial board of JBS have begun to expand their scope of activities. Among these activities are the following: 1) In its book publication program, the third volume of "Development Issues of Bangladesh – III" is ready to be published and should be available in print by April 2006. With its focus on human development and quality of life, the book is comprised of sixteen chapters that span political, economic, education, health, population, environmental, gender, and related topics. 2) A second book focusing on Bangladesh's political agenda is also nearing completion. Entitled "Selected Writings on Bangladesh's Political Prerogatives: Editor's Choice," the book is a selection of articles that have been published in JBS over the years. The book is intended not only as a scholarly compilation of the ideas of leading thinkers; it is also intended to be widely read in the growing number of public and private universities in Bangladesh to enable the next generation to be well-versed in the political controversies and challenges facing the nation. 3) Plans are underway to organize a conference of national and international scholars to meet in Dhaka and deliberate on policy and programmatic issues facing the country. Based on this experience, BDI is likely to continue supporting and building this forum for exchange in partnership with local educational institutions and think tanks in Bangladesh. 4) A web site has been developed to feature BDI activities, as well as related developmental issues having a bearing on Bangladesh. This information is provided in [www.bdiusa.org](http://www.bdiusa.org). Readers of JBS are encouraged to contact the editor and other BDI executive body members to partake in its activities.

In this issue, we present four research articles and a note. The first article by Syed S. Andaleeb and Zachary T. Irwin, *Political Leadership and Legitimacy among the Urban Elite in Bangladesh*, addresses two fundamental questions: How national political leaders are seen by the urban elite and what characteristics in them explain their acceptability, and hence, legitimacy, expressed in the satisfaction perceived by the elites. Historically, legitimacy in Bangladesh has depended on the role of individual

personalities, whereas alternative sources of legitimate rule, such as institutions, nationalism, or foundational myths have been less important or absent. The authors surveyed upper- and middle-class Dhaka City respondents' characterization of "politicians" as a group through a ten-point scale measuring 17 attributes such as 'fair', 'trustworthy' or 'competent'. Based on the statistical technique of factor analysis, these attributes fell into three major groups to suggest that the responsiveness, public style, and character of politicians are weighed by the urban elite to formulate their assessment of politicians' legitimacy. Seven attributes of 'responsiveness' overwhelmingly explained respondents' low overall satisfaction with politicians and their lack of political legitimacy. In other words, the low esteem in which politicians are held is mostly explained by their lack of responsiveness, while character had a marginally significant effect. The findings also express the qualities of 'responsiveness' in classic work in comparative politics and confirm the 'secular/rational-survival' orientation of Bangladesh in the World Values Survey.

Mohammad S. Hassan's article, *An Empirical Investigation to Determine the Long-run Relationship between Population Growth and Per Capita Income in Bangladesh*, examines whether population growth has an enhancing or dampening effect on economic growth in the context of Bangladesh. Past research on this issue has been controversial at best, suggesting positive, negative, and null effects. The author examines empirical data to test time-series relationships between population growth and per capita income growth using annual data from Bangladesh and cointegration methodology. The study finds evidence of a long-run stationary relationship between population and per capita income and indicates a bi-directional or feedback relationship between population and per capita income. The results of a negative causality flowing from per capita income to population growth appear to indicate that per capita income tends to lower the population growth, and that population growth positively contributes to the growth of per capita income. The dire consequences of population growth predicted by many would appear to need revision by these findings. Also if this causal relationship holds, policy prerogatives would lie in harnessing this natural wealth and upgrading it (via health, education, and other social support programs) to accelerate economic growth.

Muhammad Masum's article, *Technology Transfer as an Instrument to Promote Growth and Development: The Bangladesh Experience*, reflects on the country's experience in transferring technology to various sectors of the economy. While, technology transfer took place through various mechanisms, import of machinery seems to have played a dominant role. Due to poor technology assessment capability and distortions in factor prices, however, a number of technologies transferred to Bangladesh were inappropriate. In addition, inadequate emphasis on science and technical education contributed to poor skill composition of the industrial labor force that constrained assimilation of imported technology. An underdeveloped and poorly funded national research infrastructure appears to have compounded the problem of adaptation of imported technology to suit local factor endowment, as well as the environment. As a result, technology transfer in Bangladesh was never able to attain a dynamic character and the country has remained a market for technologies developed in other countries. The author emphatically suggests the need for a comprehensive pro-poor technology development policy for the country with a well-defined role for technology transfer to strengthen the technological base of the country.

In the article, *Contract Farming and Small Farmers: A Case Study of the Bangladesh Poultry Sector*, Ismat Ara Begum and Mohammad Jahangir Alam assess the benefits of a vertically integrated contractual arrangement for rearing poultry via a team effort between small farmers and a lead firm. The study argues for strengthening the vertically integrated contract farming system to expand income generation and employment opportunities. While contract farming promises significant benefits for farmers, recent studies indicate the possibility that small farmers could be excluded from this system or that they may not get much of the benefits from this contractual arrangement. Primary data collected from 50 sample farmers of ABFL (Aftab Bahumukhi Farm Ltd) in Kishorganj, revealed that the vertically integrated farming system is profitable for all categories of farmers who are able to obtain significant benefits in terms

of income, employment and access to capital. The efficiencies garnered by this system portend the possibility of meeting the protein needs of Bangladesh's undernourished and malnourished population. Possibilities of expanding exports are also not insignificant.

Farida Khan's note on *Non-Government Organizations: Public or Private Sector?* assesses the role of the NGO sector within the economic domain of Bangladesh. The presence of NGOs is large and ubiquitous in Bangladesh, providing 65% of the rural credit and 97% of secondary level rural education. Other areas in which individual and community services are provided by the NGOs are health and family planning, water supply, skills training, tree plantation, etc. In their role, they have become key players in the economy and have also begun to serve as a counterforce to the travails experienced from the public sector. Consequently, their presence and growth raises the question of efficacy of the public sector as a service provider.

As in the past, I continue to be grateful for the assistance I receive from the editorial board and the select group of reviewers who have given unreservedly of their time to help maintain the quality of the journal. Without this team effort, it would not have been possible to present the incisive, insightful and relevant articles that we endeavor to present to our readers on important issues that pertain to Bangladesh. I am also very appreciative of the diligent efforts of Sue Pennington of the Sam and Irene Black School of Business, Penn State Erie, for patiently attending to the typing and incorporating all the materials in the desired format that enables us to present the journal in a desirable form.

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